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'JERUSALEM IN RAGTIME': RECONSTRUCTIONS OF 'THE JEW'

IN FIRST WORLD WAR BRITAIN

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ABSTRACT

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'JERUSALEM IN RAGTIME': RECONSTRUCTIONS OF 'THE JEW'

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This thesis explores representations of Jewish identity in English literature and culture in the period during and immediately after the First World War, tracing their development through a range of texts, including press articles, sermons, political speeches and pamphlets, poetry, novels and plays. The study is constructed around four rhetorical themes - those of 'crusade', 'conversion', 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse' - and explores the uptake of these tropes of righteous embattlement in suffragette and anti-vice propaganda, into the war and the post-war period.

Popular rhetoric portrayed Britain as a devoutly Christian nation engaged in 'holy war' against the forces of non-Christian 'evil'. Ostensibly the enemies were 'pagan' Germany and the Muslim Turks, but Jews also became the focus of hostility. In the context of rhetorically-constructed 'Christian warfare', old allegations made by Christians towards Jews began to re-circulate. Popular uptake and expansion of the stock Christian narratives of betrayal and sacrifice in the crucifixion story, and the battle of the 'last days' described in the Book of Revelation, provided the antisemitic closure that these stories require for their coherence and dramatic effect. The image of Judas, in particular, emerged in relation to events in Bolshevik Russia and the fear that socialism would take hold in Britain. Representations of 'Jewish Bolshevism' combined religious, political and sexual fears linked to Jews, to produce new images of the threat that 'Jews' represented to the Christian nation-state.

The thesis examines the function of the image of 'the Jew' in representations of British national identity during this period, and explores the responses of Anglo-Jewish writers to corresponding representations of Jewish collective identity, focusing mainly on the work of Isaac Rosenberg, Gilbert Frankau and Gladys Bronwyn Stern.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Religions which appear dead are so often discovered to be only sleeping.[1]

In 1909, the Liberal MP Charles Frederick George Masterman observed that in modern Britain, Christian doctrine was being superseded by 'a non-dogmatic affirmation of general kindliness and good fellowship, with an emphasis rather on the service of men than the fulfilment of the will of God'.[2] This he regarded as progress, although he acknowledged that the rational, tolerant society was always potentially threatened by outbursts of religious fanaticism, through which 'the vision of blood and fire' might enter into everyday life.[3] In a sense this was what happened during the First World War, when Germany and Britain, two Protestant nations whose monarchs were related, and who shared a sense of historical and cultural connection, entered into armed conflict. In this context, it was imperative that the similarities between the two countries should be put aside, and a clear differentiation made between them for the duration of the hostilities. Religious language, or 'the vision of blood and fire', became one of the means by which this differentiation was made, and was used in order to demonise Germany and glorify the Allies, as leading clergymen and politicians spoke of Britain's involvement in a 'holy war' against the 'pagan' forces of 'Prussianism'.

In political speeches and pamphlets, and in the British national press, Germany was charged with having renounced Christianity, replacing the worship of God with, in

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[1] C F G Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909), p.264.
[2] Masterman (1909) p.268.
[3] Masterman (1909), p.276. Masterman was head of the secret wartime bureau for propaganda at Wellington House in London during the First World War.

the view of the former diplomat Viscount Bryce, the worship of the state.[4] Britain, by contrast, was imagined as a devoutly Christian nation, despite the secularisation that Masterman noted in 1909, and the fact that the pre-war decline in church attendance had been a matter of concern to the higher Anglican clergy. It should be noted, however, that there was no religious revival to accompany the rhetoric of a Christian England engaged in a 'holy war'; rather, this was a revival of religious notions of national identity. Yet the idea of Britain as a devoutly Christian nation was already an old-fashioned idea in 1914. Civil rights had been granted to religious minorities through the emancipation of Catholics in 1829 and Jews in 1858, and subsequently full participation in national life was no longer dependent upon swearing Protestant affiliation. But as the crisis of the First World War revealed the idea of the nation to be unstable, efforts were made to stabilise and homogenise national identity through the idea of collective resistance against a 'godless' enemy and the rhetorical use of Christian themes.

The God of the New Testament, however, is not interventionist, unlike the Old Testament Yahweh, who is deeply connected to his 'chosen people' and alternately benign and punitive, depending on their observation of the covenant. The wartime desire for an interventionist God, to give manifest support to the Allied cause, prompted the use of Old Testament imagery in some instances, as this collection of texts provides a number of examples of divinely-sanctioned righteous warfare. But the Old Testament, of course, concerns the Jews as the 'chosen people', a small problem in the context of claims that God was on the side of the (Christian) British, and the Evangelical rhetoric of the British as the new 'chosen people', who would lead the Christian nations in creating the

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[4] Viscount Bryce, *Neutral Nations and the War* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914), p.6.

kingdom of God on earth. Ultimately, therefore, Old Testament imagery was not compatible with constructions of Britain as a Christian nation engaged in 'holy war', and New Testament tropes, chiefly those of 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse', were mobilised instead.

The widespread use of religious language with regard to the British nation, the nature of the enemy, and the purpose of the war, meant that not only did Christian idealism emerge in public discourse - in the rhetoric of self-sacrifice for the good of others and of the war itself as a purging and renewing process for Britain - but also that aspects of religious antisemitism came to the fore. The Christian narratives of 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse', particularly that of 'crucifixion', have an antisemitic component which, I argue, is necessary to their dramatic impact, coherence and completion. These stories allocate a specific role to 'unbelieving' Jews as hostile towards Christians and Christianity: as Judas the betrayer of Christ in the crucifixion story, and as the followers of Antichrist (or potential converts to Christianity) in the Revelation narrative and in exegetical work on this text. The Christian concept of the Jewish 'threat', then, is embedded in the New Testament, in the figures of Judas and Antichrist, and also in early Christian theology, in which Antichrist was in some cases aligned with the Jews.

The books of the New Testament were written during a period in which the new Christian faith and Judaism were engaged in a struggle over religious identity and authority in Palestine, and reflect this rivalry. Thus in the crucifixion story it is the Jewish high priest, Caiaphas, whose authority the young Jesus threatens, who is portrayed as scheming for his death, and it is Judas who facilitates it. In Revelation it is 'those who profess to be Jews, but are liars, because they are no such thing' (3: 9) - that is, the Jews

who deny the divinity of Christ - who will bow to the two witnesses of the Antichrist (11: 3-9) and perish in the apocalypse, along with everyone else 'of false speech and false life' (22: 15). The embattled Christian imagination has historically sought a 'Jewish' enemy: during the period of the crusades, at the time of the Black Death, and in more recent history, as I aim to show. In the context of the First World War, the figures of Antichrist and Judas entered into popular discourse with regard to both Germany and Bolshevik Russia. These two representations of anti-Christian 'evil' were central to rhetorical constructions of 'Prussianism' and Bolshevism as the enemy against which the Allies fought, and provided the imagery of Christian warfare with its necessary components for completion.

I argue that such emotive and familiar narratives as 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse' could not be used selectively or mobilised in isolation from their other essential components. If one has a rhetorical 'Christ' then a 'Judas' is required to complete the analogy and make it recognisable. Similarly, where there is a construction of 'Antichrist' there must also be his followers, the 'anti-Christian hordes', and Christian apocalyptic tradition clearly identifies the Jews in this regard. Without Judas the betrayer the crucifixion narrative loses some of its dramatic impact, and becomes a story of the punishment of a dissident by the Roman occupying powers. Without 'unbelievers', or non-Christians, Antichrist has no followers in the battle of the 'last days'. The narratives of crucifixion and apocalypse are reliant, therefore, upon these malevolent 'Jewish' figures for their coherence and dramatic effect, and I show how those figures emerged in the context of the First World War and its aftermath.

Those public figures of authority that launched the tropes of the soldier as 'Christ' and 'Prussianism' (and later Bolshevism) as 'Antichrist' into public discourse - such as politicians and members of the higher clergy - were unable to control the popular uptake of these narratives, and the antisemitic components which are integral to these familiar Christian stories were provided by popular interpretation and expansion of these themes Whether or not the intention was to arouse hostility towards Britain's Jewish population, these narratives, with the distinct and adversarial role they ascribe to Jews, in a sense 'completed themselves' in popular discourse of the period. Like Vladimir Propp's analysis of the folk tale, in which certain components and characters will always combine to create predictable and expected narrative outcomes, the Christian tropes discussed below found their familiar and necessary antisemitic closure in the context in which they were launched - that of modern 'total war' and the political turmoil of the immediate post-war period.

Yet there are links between Judaism and Christianity that cannot be overlooked, and these were ironically revealed in rhetoric that sought to assert a stable and independent Christian national identity, as I demonstrate. One obvious link, of course, is the fact that Jesus was a Jew, but in addition to this, the New Testament clearly draws on the Old for some of its most dramatic components. Revelation borrows from Daniel's vision, and also draws on the apocalyptic imagery of the Fall and the Flood in Genesis. The crucifixial trope of the sacrifice of a son according to the will of God has a precedent in the story of Abraham and Isaac (although in that case the command to sacrifice was ultimately withdrawn). Just as Christianity is theologically indebted to Judaism, so the narrative of 'crusade' - which has been used to promote a collective 'Christian' identity -

has an underlying 'Jewish' theme, as Karen Armstrong has pointed out. Armstrong argues that the concept of 'holy war', with its attendant stages of journey, invasion and conquest, has a precedent in the Exodus story, in which the returning Israelites fought and conquered the Canaanites in order to establish their own community.[5] Exodus, therefore, can be seen as underlying 'crusade' to an extent, and this combination of themes is found in the early twentieth-century 'crusades' that I discuss below.

Although the notion of a 'holy war' was far from unique to the First World War, during this period it became tied to Christian representations and interpretations of international politics. Both Christians and Jews were redefining nationhood at the time: Christians in relation to a war between rival imperial powers, and Jews in relation to both Palestine and Britain. The rhetorical construction of the British as a Christian nation drew on chivalric and biblical imagery to create a nostalgic image of English society that would be restored after the conflict. Not only were Jews in Britain under pressure from the wartime reassertion of a retrograde Protestant national identity, but also political Zionism had gained the interest of the French, German and British governments for strategic reasons, and support for Jewish nationalism became politically expedient for non-Jewish politicians. To many assimilated Jews the idea of Jewish nationalism was itself old-fashioned, and the writers discussed below asserted both 'Jewish' and 'English' identities, insisting that the two were compatible.

The title of this thesis illustrates the blend of archaic and modern imagery that was being used in constructions of both British and Jewish identity during the early

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[5] Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and their Impact on Today's World* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p.5.

twentieth century. 'Jerusalem in ragtime' is a quotation from the Anglo-Jewish writer G

B Stern's *Pantomime* (1914), a novel which explores the similarities and differences

between Jews and gentiles through the relationship between a young Jewish woman and a

Christian man. Stern uses the phrase to describe the incongruous sound of Blake's solemn

hymn being played on a pianola in a Turkish cabaret bar off Oxford Street in London. I

use it because it juxtaposes the ancient and the modern; the religious and the secular, and

is, I think, an apt metaphor for the struggles and conflicts over the nature of British and

Jewish identities and their interrelation that were taking place at the time. 'Jerusalem'

evokes not only the rhetoric of the 'new Jerusalem', through which some of the higher

clergy expressed their hope that Britain would emerge from the war as the leader of the

Christian nations, but also the nostalgic constructions of 'England' that developed during

a period of rapid political, cultural and technological modernisation. The phrase also

suggests the dualistic imagery that circulated at this time: of the Jews as a 'biblical'

people and, through Bolshevism and Zionism, as a threateningly modern force in the

world. The phrase 'reconstructions of "the Jew"' alludes to Bryan Cheyette's work on

representations of Jewish identity, which has been a strong influence on my research,

and also refers to the reworking of religious constructions of Jewish identity that I think

was taking place in the early twentieth century.

This thesis is structured around four rhetorical themes that circulated widely in

Britain during the war years - those of 'crusade', 'conversion', 'crucifixion' and

'apocalypse'. These themes are all interrelated, but it has been necessary, in order to lay

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G B Stern, *Pantomime, A Novel* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1914), pp.160-161.

Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

out my argument clearly, to keep them apart through the use of themed sections. This is an artificial device, and it will be seen, for example, that the narrative of 'crusade' implies conversion, as does that of 'apocalypse', but I have adopted this structure for the purposes of clarity. The concluding chapter of the thesis brings all these themes together.

I have indicated the ways in which the 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse' tropes functioned during the period covered here, and these will be discussed in chapters Five and Six. Chapters One to Four engage with the other two themes, those of 'crusade' and 'conversion', and show how these narratives found the antisemitic closure that is crucial to their impact in the context described. Chapter Two draws on the medieval crusades as an example of popular antisemitic uptake of the Church's call to 'holy war', and compares this with events in wartime Britain. During the crusades, the higher Catholic clergy asserted the right of Christians to make pilgrimage to Palestine, then (as in the First World War) under Turkish control. They did not, for the most part, advocate violence towards Jews, and many were horrified when this occurred. Some clergymen attempted to provide Jews with sanctuary, but it was difficult, however, to protect them from popular interpretations of the call to crusade and a 'holy war' against 'unbelievers' as an opportunity to avenge the death of Christ. As a result, Jews were faced with a choice of conversion or death, and many chose the latter. Thus the Church's sanction of religious warfare against the Muslims provided an outlet for popular prejudices against the Jews.

As in the medieval crusades, once the rhetoric of collective Christian embattlement had been unleashed in wartime Britain, it could not be fully controlled, and Jews became the focus of hostility even though ostensibly it was the German and Turkish

forces that were the enemy. The function of 'the Jew' in the rhetoric discussed below seems to have been to re-stage Christian dramas of embattlement, such as the idea of 'crusade', in the modern context, and thereby consolidate constructions of 'English' identity through reference to a religious, national and political 'other'. Whilst the identification of 'the Jew' with 'excess', whether defined as political, emotional or material, may have appeared to resolve issues and answer needs, this construction of the 'other' destabilises the coherence of the subject, because the notion of 'us' requires constant self-definition against the 'other'. For 'us' to be Christian, the 'other' must be non-Christian. Jews have traditionally filled the role of the anti-Christian threat: in the New Testament and the subsequent development of Christian theology, in the crusades, during the time of the Black Death, and in more recent history, as I aim to show.

One historical response to the presence of the Jewish 'other' has been conversion: this was Catholic orthodoxy during the crusades, and the approach taken by the Protestant conversionist societies that flourished in nineteenth-century Britain. Conversion, or the transformation of 'the Jew' has been the gentile 'solution' to the 'Jewish question', and represents the impulse to homogenise and absorb threatening difference, yet retain elements of that difference so that full equality is impossible (as some of the Jewish writers discussed below suggest). The two chapters on the theme of 'conversion' examine religious and political examples of the desire to transform the threat of 'Jewish difference', and thereby construct a reassuring homogeneity. The overarching theme of this discussion is the perception that Jews have an inherent capacity for self-transformation and that this should be mobilised in accordance with the values and concerns of the majority group.

Because the idea of Christian nationhood was a popular response to the war, I have focused on expressions of and responses to this in popular literature and discourse. The tropes which this thesis examines - 'crusade', 'conversion', 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse' - extended into all areas of textual production, and are found in press articles, sermons, political speeches and pamphlets, poetry, novels, and cartoons. The range of texts discussed here has been selected in order to demonstrate just how widespread the adoption of religious imagery was, in relation to the war and the changes it brought about. The First World War produced a large amount of poetry, some of it glorifying the conflict, but some, written by combatants, criticising the society that had sent them to the Front. In the work of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, Christian imagery becomes a means of attack on the values and hypocrisy of civilian society, and on the rhetoric of 'holy war'. In fiction, the orthodoxy of the soldier as 'Christ', the war as a 'crusade', and British identity as 'Christian' could be contested and debated. Fictional writing provided a space in which the issues raised by the war could be interrogated, and their resolution framed. The Anglo-Jewish writers discussed below engage with the debate over the nature of 'English' and 'Jewish' identities and the interrelation between the two in a similar way, and are responding to the political images of the pro-German or pro-Bolshevik Jew, as well as the question of Jewish nationalism, by providing counter-constructions of 'Jewishness' in the fictional realm.

Bryan Cheyette's analysis of the dual nature of images of 'the Jew' and the use of this figure as a repository for the fears and fantasies of the non-Jewish majority has been an important and overall influence on this thesis. In what follows I undertake to show how this duality was represented during the war years and those immediately following

it. In the preface to *Constructions of 'the Jew'*, Cheyette argues that 'race-thinking' is central to the formation of modern British cultural identity, and that racialised images of 'the Jew' are central to liberal self-construction. I examine this dynamic in the context of the First World War, and suggest that the formation of a Christian national identity during this period was dependent upon a rhetorically-constructed 'religious other'. Initially this was Germany, but reactions to the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 combined images of the religious and political enemy, in which the 'apostate Bolshevik Jew' became cast as the political enemy of the Christian state.

As Cheyette observes, 'the Jew', far from being an unchanging, historically-transcendent signifier, is one that shifts in relation to specific political and social anxieties, and as these change, so does the representation of the threat.* My research has focused on the construction of a Christian national identity in Britain during and after the war, and the ways in which this appeared to generate a reworking of biblical representations of the 'Jewish' threat, in the rhetorical figures of 'Judas' and 'Antichrist'. These representations are undeniably modern, and specific to the war, yet they are also insistently biblical, and it is this combination of ancient and modern fears regarding Jews that the thesis explores. Such reworkings, or reconstructions of 'the Jew' are not necessarily overt in some of the examples I give, but they are always there by implication, and sometimes emerge in relief, as a result of the strongly Christian rhetoric that was being used with regard to the nation. There was a general climate of xenophobia, exacerbated by the crisis of the war, which created the conditions for hostility to develop

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* See Cheyette (1993), p.3.

towards Britain's Jewish population, and facilitated their portrayal as a threatening group.

Fears of the 'dilution' of national identity through pre-war immigration, and exaggeration

of the dominance of assimilated Jews in national life in the post-war period helped to

create a context of suspicion and mistrust in which the Christian narratives I explore

below readily found their predictable antisemitic components and closure.

Given my argument that the wartime representation of the nation as Christian

generated popular identification of the enemy as non-Christian (and ultimately Jewish), I

take issue with W D Rubinstein's view, as set out in the following passage:

> In my opinion the oft-recurring, and virtually automatic use of biblical
> terminology and metaphor to describe Anglo-Jewry, especially recent immigrants,
> should be seen as a favourable, positive cue, and not as a negative one. It
> immediately gives the Jews both a reference point and, more significantly, a
> genuine legitimacy in the eyes of likely British readers, linking obviously alien,
> even criminal Jews with the founders of Britain's culture and religion, and hence
> heavily qualifying the contrasting negative images and stereotypes. I do not
> believe either that the use of Biblical imagery is primarily meant ironically, as a
> way of contrasting the majesty of the Hebrews with the degradation of their
> descendants – although there may be an element of this – nor, still less, as a
> reminder of the Crucifixion and subsequent damnation of the Jews, which is quite
> alien to Protestant British culture. Instead, it must be taken in large part at face
> value, as a positive linkage of modern Jewry, even at its most unattractive, with
> the heroes of the Old Testament.

Whilst I agree with Rubinstein that Old Testament imagery was one of the more positive

ways through which Jewish identity was constructed during the period discussed, my

research suggests that in some cases this was indeed used to draw unflattering

comparisons between the Jews of antiquity and those of the early twentieth-century

present. I disagree with Rubinstein's suggestion that the damnation of the Jews and

revenge for the crucifixion are themes that are alien to Protestant culture, and give

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W D Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain*, Studies in Modern History Series, Gen. Ed. J C D Clark (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.146.

examples to support my argument that under conditions of crisis, these themes do emerge in popular discourse. Rubinstein goes on to assert that the widespread criticism of and distaste for Jewish immigrants in early twentieth-century writing is 'not unmixed with admiration'. This is true, but the implications of the ubiquitous use of biblical imagery during the First World War - with regard to both Christians and Jews - are more complex, subtle and revealing than his comments suggest. This thesis undertakes to demonstrate that complexity, and its significance with regard to the changing ideas of national identity and rapid political developments of the early twentieth century.

The Christian identity that was being constructed and promoted during the First World War was embattled, vulnerable, and insufficiently grounded in fact to serve as an authentic representation of the British nation at that time. Yet I have been struck during my research by the persistent use of biblical imagery with regard to the nation and its role in the war in a wide variety of texts produced in that period. As Alan Wilkinson has observed in *The Church of England and the First World War* (1978), 'Perhaps the most powerful (and ambiguous) contribution which the Churches made to the nation during the Great War was in the realm of imagery'. It is that realm of imagery and its ironic capacity to reveal the links between Christianity and Judaism, Christians and Jews, when its purpose was to differentiate and distinguish, that is the subject of this thesis.

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[16] Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SPCK, 1978), p.11.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Moral 'crusades': The Anti-Vice and Suffragette Campaigns

### Introduction

When Pope Urban II preached the crusade in 1095 he linked pilgrimage, traditionally undertaken without arms, to warfare, and thus sanctioned violence against 'unbelievers' in the name of Christianity. Through the idea of 'crusade', Christian identity was presented as simultaneously authoritative and embattled, and an urgent call for its consolidation and defence through 'holy war' was made. Although the enemy was ostensibly Islam, popular interpretation of the crusade often translated into attacks upon Jews, whose presence within Christendom directly challenged Christian beliefs. Hatred of Jews during and after the crusades became sufficiently widespread to produce legislative changes that restricted their freedom, and brought their expulsion from most European countries from the twelfth century onwards.[1] By the late Middle Ages, as Gavin Langmuir notes, "'The Jews' had become the great symbol of hidden menaces of all kinds within Christendom."[2] Beneath the Christian piety and unity associated with the crusades, then, lay a strong current of antisemitism.

As a trope of righteous warfare, 'crusade' – with, I will argue, its antisemitic subtext – has been adopted since the Middle Ages in relation to a variety of causes, and specific examples from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British

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[1] Jews were expelled from England in 1209, France in 1306, Germany in 1348, Spain in 1492 and Portugal in 1496. Source: Hermann Kinder and Werner Hilgemann, *The Anchor Atlas of World History*, Vol 1 (New York: 1974), p.155.
[2] Gavin I Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* (London & New York: I B Tauris & Co., Ltd., 1990), p.303.

history are discussed below. This chapter focuses on the use of the 'crusade' trope in the pre-war anti-vice and women's suffrage campaigns, and, briefly, during the First World War. These modern 'crusades' were concerned with social and political conflicts - issues of morality, gender politics and national identity - but the notion of divine sanction underpinning the venture was retained, as was the function of the 'crusade' as an outlet for religious and 'racial' hostility. As in the medieval period, this was not necessarily an outcome that was intended by those who mobilised the 'crusade' trope as part of their campaign propaganda. Nevertheless, even if used in a secular context, the rhetoric of 'holy war' implies a religious conflict, and therefore a religious enemy. Christian culture, drawing on the accusation of 'deicide' in the Gospel of St John, has traditionally identified that enemy as the Jews. The use of Christian rhetoric with regard to the projects discussed below meant that as in the medieval period, some of these modern 'crusaders' perceived Jews as their enemies, as this chapter and the next will demonstrate.

Although the imagery of 'crusade' was widely used, the registers and meanings of this trope varied considerably, as did the way in which it related to the popular antisemitism of the period. Both anti-vice and suffrage campaigners used chivalric imagery to depict women as a group under threat, but with different implications and in very different ways. The anti-vice movement, led by the National Vigilance Association (NVA) used the rhetoric of 'crusade' to promote an international moral alliance against the traffic in prostitution, then popularly perceived as dominated by Eastern European Jews. Their campaign gained a sense of urgency through the immigration of large numbers of Jews from Russia and Poland from the 1880s to 1914, and the fears associated with this. The militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) portrayed the suffragette as both warrior and martyr, most

frequently in the figure of Joan of Arc. In suffragette crusader imagery, however, the 'enemy' was not identified as of another 'race', religion or nationality, but as the sexual inequality which was inherent in Britain's political and social infrastructure and upheld by the law.

The different use of crusader imagery by the NVA and the WSPU relates perhaps to the different perspectives on femininity held by their members. The alarmist tone of much of the NVA literature on 'white slavery' tended to cast women as a vulnerable group requiring protection from the ever-present threat of entrapment. Some of this alarm may have stemmed from fears relating to the feminist movement in general, even though many anti-vice activists also campaigned for the vote. The argument ran as follows: if women gained greater freedom and their 'sphere' was broadened by work, for example, they might also be more likely to come into contact with procurers. 'White slavers' would feed on the growing independence of women because they were now less protected. In this respect, part of the reaction to 'white slavery' was anxiety over feminism and the perceived corruptibility of women. Yet there was also an argument that 'white slavery' was one of the evils of modernity, and feminism its antidote. As John Cameron Grant wrote in *The Heart of Hell* (1913), 'this terrible modern evil is indeed of modern growth. It has come in with the swift steamship, the railway, the telegraph and the telephone'. Another aspect of modernity, the women's franchise, would counter this threat: 'where women have the vote, and through the influence of that vote on legislation, are able to protect themselves, the White Slave Traffic cannot exist'.

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[3] John Cameron Grant, *The Heart of Hell: A Note Upon the White Slave Traffic* (London: New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage, printed by the Women's Printing Society, 1913), pp.6-7.

According to the suffragette perspective, women were not corruptible in themselves: in fact they were portrayed as the moral voice of the nation. Christabel Pankurst argued that it was men who were sexually corruptible and corrupting, passing venereal disease on to the women they married. This was why she urged women not to marry and campaigned for the vote, which would give them greater independence from men. In NVA literature there is support for the franchise but also a bid to retain elements of women's dependence upon men, for protection against entrapment. There is no ambivalence regarding feminism in Christabel Pankhurst's writing, hence the figure of Joan of Arc as the self-reliant suffragette crusader and the absence of any male rescuer. Hence also, the absence of any distinction, racialised or otherwise, between 'good' and 'bad' men – all were regarded as exploiting women or at least benefiting from their inequality.

Neither the NVA nor the WSPU made overt use of antisemitic imagery in their crusade rhetoric, but both were campaigning in the context of a high level of Jewish immigration from eastern Europe, and a popular association between the Yiddish-speaking Jew and international vice. What links them, then, is the way in which their propaganda, whilst not directly racist in itself, fed into existing prejudices regarding Jews and their sexuality. What separates them and provides a contrast between their respective uses of the crusade theme is their representations of women: as vulnerable by the NVA, and as chaste warrior-martyrs by the WSPU. The NVA perspective assumes an inherent susceptibility to sexual corruption in women that links them by association to the sexually corrupting 'Jew'.

It is, therefore, the context of Jewish immigration and the association of Jews with 'white slavery' that completes these early twentieth-century narratives of 'crusade', in terms of the antisemitism that underlies this trope. The relationship

between NVA and WSPU literature and the popular racism of the period is explored in section one of this chapter. The rhetoric of 'exodus' and 'crusade' with regard to the purity campaigns and the notion that the British were 'chosen' to lead the nations against vice is compared with suffragette use of chivalric imagery and millennial rhetoric. Section two introduces representations of the First World War as 'crusade'. and examines the continuing preoccupation with femininity and the role of women in British society during the war years. The construction of passive femininity seen in the ideology of 'the woman's part' in the wartime 'crusade' is compared with the mass entry of women into the workforce. and a number of poetic responses to this are discussed.

# 1. The Purity and Women's Suffrage Crusades

During the late nineteenth century, fears were aroused over the extent of prostitution in European cities, and the international traffic in vice, or 'white slavery', as it was then called.[4] A moral 'crusade' was launched in Britain in 1899, which spread throughout the world, and the first International Conference for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic was held in London that same year. William Coote, who initiated the venture, claimed to have received divine inspiration for the idea in a 'day-dream' he experienced in September 1898.[5] God, he stated, was working through his conscience, and through this 'revelation' it became clear that he must launch an international movement against vice.[6] Coote used military metaphors to describe his sense of mission, feeling himself constrained

> To enlist in the army of those who would wage war against the men and women who, for the greed of gain, seek victims to satisfy the insatiable lust of men, of whom it might truly be said that their appetite grows with eating.

As a result, he formed the National Vigilance Association (NVA) in 1899. His account of its work draws upon the imagery of 'crusade' and 'exodus'; with 'crusade' expressing the chivalric fantasies and sense of religious mission found in literature on 'white slavery', and 'exodus' acting as a metaphor for the liberation of society from

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[4] Provocatively-entitled pamphlets such as Alfred Dyer's *The European Slave Trade in English Girls* (London, 1880), fuelled alarm over international prostitution.
[5] William Alexander Coote, *A Vision and Its Fulfilment: Being the History of the Origin of the Work of the National Vigilance Association for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic* (London: NVA, 1910), p.19.
[6] Coote (1910), p.19.
[7] Coote (1910), p.17.

vice.[8] Coote extended the exodus analogy, declaring that his 'revelation' was 'as direct a Divine Command to go forward as any that Moses received when he was leading the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt to the freedom of Canaan', and thus cast himself as the Christian 'Moses', leading the 'Hebrews' to the Promised Land of a life free from prostitution.

It is important to note the differentiation that is implied here between 'Hebrews' and Jews. The Hebrew-British analogy originates in eighteenth-century millennialism, and rests on an identification between the British and the Hebrew slaves in Egypt which is based on the idea of the small, embattled, but righteous nation, whose destiny it is to lead the others. When used in relation to the British, therefore, the 'Hebrews' metaphor is concerned with Protestant and Evangelical notions of 'chosenness' and embattlement. Its function is to claim for the British the privileged relation to the deity that is ascribed to the Jews of the Old Testament, but not necessarily to create an association with the Jews of the present. In this respect it is similar to British Israelism, which identifies the British as the direct descendants of the lost tribes of Israel who were dispersed as a result of the Assyrian invasion. By comparing himself to Moses in the context of the 'white slavery' scares, Coote claims

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[8] Coote (1910), p.24.

[9] It was Richard Brothers who formulated the idea of 'invisible Jews' as the descendants of the lost tribes in A Revealed Knowledge (1794-5), partly in response to millennial expectations aroused by the French Revolution. He identified himself as 'the Prince of the Hebrews' and 'the nephew of the Almighty'. See J F C Harrison, The Second Coming: Popular Millennialism 1780-1850 (London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp.58, 60-62. Brothers, born in Newfoundland in 1757, promoted an international Christian Israelism rather than British Israelism. The identification of the British as one of the lost tribes was a gradual development linked to the idea of 'chosenness' in relation to British imperial success. It was John Wilson, whose date of birth is unknown, but who died in 1871, that disseminated the theory through public lectures and the popular and influential book Our Israelitish Orgin, of which there were five editions by 1876. The Association of British Israelites was formed in the 1870s. See John Wilson, 'British Israelism: The Ideological Restraints on Sect Organisation', in Bryan R Wilson, ed., Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements (London: Heinemann, 1967), pp.345-376. On these particular points, see pp.353-354, 360-363.

for the NVA the moral superiority associated with the Hebrew slaves and suggests that the British are 'chosen' to lead the nations against vice. This and his account of divine inspiration for the NVA implies a new Christian 'covenant', the observation of which would secure God's protection and the fulfilment of the promises made in the Old Testament. The background of slavery and the lapses into depravity that are also components of the Exodus story become, in the context of 'white slavery', the threat that the 'chosen' are fighting, and these characteristics are conferred onto prostitutes and procurers.

But who was responsible for the enslavement of women through prostitution? Here, Coote's use of the exodus theme becomes more ambiguous, and perhaps takes on a different significance, as the popular perception at the time was that the international vice trade was dominated by Jews from Eastern Europe.[10] This view was undoubtedly informed by antisemitism, aroused by the migration westwards of large numbers of Jewish refugees from pogroms in Russia and Poland.[11] Despite widespread condemnation of tsarist antisemitism, there was also alarm at the numbers of refugees entering Britain (around 120,000 settled in major British cities, particularly London), and the concentration of immigrants in the East End of London fuelled fears of an 'alien invasion'. The migration of Jews became linked to existing concerns over prostitution, and gave rise to inflated accounts of the involvement of Jews in international vice. There was some justification for this view, as a number of migrants, faced with economic difficulties, did become involved in the trade, both as

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The dominant image of the 'white slave trafficker' was the Yiddish-speaking Jew, but most of the participants in the trade, particularly as prostitutes, were Japanese and Chinese. See Edward J Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, Rowman & Littlefield, 1977), pp.46-47.

Lloyd Gartner puts the overall figure for Jewish migration during this period at 3,000,000. See Lloyd P Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914*, Studies in Society No. 4 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), pp.270, 274.

procurers and prostitutes. Jewish women were sometimes tricked into prostitution through false job offers or secret marriages before emigration, and were then sold to brothels or forced into the trade through poverty. In addition, Argentina and Constantinople were the two main centres for traffic in prostitution during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and large Jewish communities existed in both places.[12] The number of Jews in Britain who were involved in prostitution was exaggerated,[13] but the association between Jews and prostitutes prevailed. Coote's rhetoric of 'exodus', therefore, would have appealed to popular prejudices in ways that he did not perhaps anticipate.

Sander Gilman has discussed the imaginative links made between prostitutes and Jews in nineteenth-century medical literature, which were based on the sexual deviancy attributed to both.[14] In the context of the 'white slavery' scares, these sexual fears took a nationalistic turn, becoming linked to concerns regarding venereal disease and its effects on the future health of the nation.[15] In this respect, Coote's reference to 'Hebrews' may have had a different resonance, reinforcing the connection between Jews and vice. At the same time his rhetoric of 'slavery' could be taken to apply to prostitutes, thereby introducing a note of compassion into attitudes towards 'fallen' women. The portrayal of prostitutes as 'Hebrew slaves' would render them not fearful but powerless figures, to whom the Christian could safely offer charity and

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[12] The *Zwi Migdal* was an organisation of Jewish brothel-keepers which originated in Buenos Aires in 1906, and members of the large Ashkenazi community in Constantinople were involved in the vice trade. See Edward J Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery 1870-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp.182-183.

[13] Only a quarter of the arrests in London in the 1900s for trafficking involved foreigners, including French, German and Belgian nationals as well as Russian and Polish Jews. See Bristow (1977), p.170.

[14] Sander L Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York & London: Routledge, 1991), p.120.

[15] As a result of fears regarding 'degeneration' and miscegenation, the figures of the prostitute and the 'Jew' came to represent all that was feared about human sexuality. Jews were believed by some to infect prostitutes with syphilis, who then transmitted the disease to their gentile clients. The notion that Jews were particularly susceptible to syphilis was upheld in medical literature of the period. See Gilman (1991), p.93.

guidance.[16] As 'Hebrews', however, they would remain a group distinct from Christian society, and even when rehabilitated through the rescue homes, would be unlikely to completely shed the taint of their former profession. It is difficult to be certain exactly how Coote was using the exodus metaphor, although the notion of 'chosenness' seems most likely. The purpose of this extended discussion of his analogy, however, is to show how, in the context of the promotion of Christian unity under conditions of real or perceived crisis, biblical metaphors can become subject to multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations. Whether taken from the Old Testament or the New, their meaning cannot be fixed and although ostensibly religious images, they may feed into existing social and political tensions, an argument that is one of the main strands of this thesis.

Some biblical rhetoric was to be expected in a movement initiated and led by revivalist Christians, Evangelicals and Nonconformists, as the anti-vice 'crusade' was But the campaign against international prostitution was not confined to the churches. Broad secular support for the purity 'crusade' was demonstrated in 1911, through the National Council's 'Manifesto on Public Morals', which expressed concern over the declining birth rate, 'degeneration', and the effects of sexual incontinence on the future health of the British people. The Manifesto boasted sixty-six signatures, including those of Ramsay MacDonald, Beatrice Webb, and the Speaker of the Commons.[17] It was the NVA, however, that dominated the anti-vice movement. Its success depended on international co-operation against prostitution, and Coote received support from powerful figures throughout the world. The enthusiasm of the

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[16] After the First World War, the NVA became more sceptical regarding stories of entrapment, and campaigned for responsible sex education for future generations. See Roy Porter and Lesley Hall, *The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp.264, 238.

[17] Bristow (1977), p.145.

Empress of Germany prompted him to draw another analogy with Exodus, observing that 'Here certainly was the Pillar of Cloud by day'.[18] The support of a European monarch seemed to confirm Coote's belief that his cause was divinely-sanctioned.

The NVA was also an interdenominational movement, and therefore concerned that Jews should participate in its campaigns. Some of the campaigners used biblical rhetoric in appealing to Jewry for support, as in this exhortation from the author of *The Heart of Hell*, a booklet on 'white slavery' published in 1913:

> O Children of the Orient, where I first saw the light, Sons of far-off Isles and Continents, arise for the honour of your great religious leaders, the great souls that you have given to the ages, and with us in the name of, and for the sake of, our common humanity, strike down for ever and abolish this accursed thing.[19]

This appeal to the prophets was not lost upon Jews involved in the purity campaigns. In his contribution to Coote's book, Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler stated that fighting vice was indeed in obedience to the will of God as described by the prophet Ezekiel, which he quoted as 'That which is lost I will seek again; that which has gone astray, I will bring back'.[20] In making this assertion he avoided the implication that Jewish anti-vice campaigners were following a Christian revelation, and drew authority for the movement from a far earlier source than Coote's 'day-dream' inspired by the Holy Ghost, suggesting that Jews who fought against vice were fulfilling their own religious duty by obeying the prophets.

Another reason for Jews to become involved in the purity movement was in order to counter antisemitism. Although Jewish traffickers generally recruited Jewish

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[18] Coote (1910), p.36.
[19] John Cameron Grant (1913), p.17.
[20] Dr Hermann Adler, in Coote (1910), p.176. I have not found these exact words in Ezekiel, but Adler seems to have been referring to 34:16, which reads 'I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong.'

women, this did not prevent rumours that they targeted Christians, and the medieval fear of the Jewish attack on the Christian body took a new form, focusing on the perceived threat of the corruption and enslavement of British Christian womanhood by Jewish procurers. It was this that prompted Anglo-Jewry to act, recognising the issue as, in Edward Bristow's words, 'the sexualization of blood libel'.[21] After some debate over whether participation in the anti-vice movement would appear to confirm the popular view that Jews dominated the trade, and thereby provoke more antisemitism, Anglo-Jewry joined the campaign. There was, however, no rhetoric of 'crusade' or 'exodus' in their literature on the subject. They participated partly in order to counter the antisemitic context to which the movement related.

In fact, it was Jewish women who initiated and led Anglo-Jewry's campaign against prostitution. In 1885 Constance Rothschild Battersea founded the Jewish Ladies' Society for Preventive and Rescue Work, which later became the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGW). This organisation modelled itself on the Christian anti-vice groups, providing religious education and domestic training for 'fallen women', but its function was also anti-conversionist: existing Jewish philanthropy did not address prostitution, thus Jewish prostitutes were forced to approach Christian societies for assistance or remain in the trade.[22] The JAPGW also had links with the women's temperance and suffrage movements, as Jewish women saw the connection between sexual, economic, religious and political inequality, and began to seek change.[23] The twin concerns of prostitution and

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[21] See Bristow (1982), p.46. The Board of Jewish Deputies supported the work of the NVA.
[22] See Linda Gordon Kuzmack, *Woman's Cause: The Jewish Woman's Movement in England and the United States, 1881-1933* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1990), p.53.
[23] Bertha Pappenheim, one of the most well-known Jewish feminists of the time, discussed the role of Jewish women in religious reform, in a book entitled *The Jewish Woman in Religious Life* (London, 1913, reprinted from *The Jewish Review*, January 1913).

inequality brought Jewish feminists into contact with the broader women's movement, and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), was a guest at the first Conference of Jewish Women, held in London in 1902. Delegates sought a compromise between tradition and reform, discussing ways to expand the existing women's 'sphere' of activity (education, domestic matters, religious reform and philanthropy), whilst keeping it within recognisable parameters, and advocated social work and continuing religious reform.[24]

It was not until November 1912, however, that a specifically Jewish suffrage organisation was founded, in the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage (JLWS). This group sought both religious and political equality for women, and members sometimes adopted controversial tactics. In October 1913, campaigners interrupted a synagogue service in order to protest at the support of the Anglo-Jewish politicians Herbert Samuel (then Postmaster General) and Rufus Isaacs (then Attorney General) for the forcible feeding of hunger strikers. They were thrown out of the building.[25] Like the JAPGW, the JLWS addressed the involvement of Jews in 'white slavery', but in more direct terms, describing its aims as 'to influence Jewish thought about women … and thus to remove from the Jewish name the reproach of an oriental attitude towards women'.[26] It was perhaps statements such as this that aroused hostility in the Anglo-Jewish press towards the JLWS. In the context of exaggerated accounts of Jews' involvement in 'white slavery', this statement could be construed as a tacit admission that Jews regarded women as commodities and a confirmation.

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[24] See Kuzmack (1990), p.49.
[25] Kuzmack (1990), p.134.
[26] Leaflet issued by JLWS, 1912.

therefore. of the antisemitic viewpoint. The *Jewish Chronicle* repeatedly attacked the JLWS. fearing its activities would fuel perceptions of Jews as 'troublemakers'. The group had powerful allies. however. being led by Lily Montagu. sister of the politician Edwin Montagu. and having the support of the well-known Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill. who regularly spoke on its behalf.

These concerns - antisemitism. the involvement of Jews in prostitution and sexual inequality within Jewry - are also reflected in some of the literature of the period. and a more or less contemporary novel that engages with all these themes is Celia Anna Nicholson's *The First Good Joy* (1923).²⁷ This novel. a sympathetic account written from the perspective of the 'white slave' herself. gives a complex and imaginative rendering of the issues of prostitution and the inequality of Jewish women. Written shortly after the First World War. when the vice traffic and the campaigns against it were reviving. *The First Good Joy* attempts to show the economic reasons why young Jewish women might become involved in prostitution. and interrogates the idea of 'rescue' through marriage as a solution. Zosia. the daughter of a Polish Jewess and a French aristocrat. is tricked into the trade in Brussels after escaping from the convent in which she has lived since her mother's suicide. She is rescued by Justin Davis. a young Anglo-Jewish man who is on a tour of Europe in the company of Harry Grossmann. a vulgar and lecherous family acquaintance. On the instruction of Justin's father. the tour is to include his son's sexual initiation before he goes to Cambridge. Grossmann embodies the predatory

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²⁷ Celia Anna Nicholson. *The First Good Joy* (London: Hutchinson & Co.. 1923). Subsequent references to this novel will be included in the text. All my efforts to find biographical information on this writer have so far been unproductive. but Nicholson's novels make it clear that if not Jewish herself. she was certainly conversant with issues such as Zionism and assimilation: feminism and Jewish tradition. and antisemitism and ambivalence. with which early twentieth-century Anglo-Jewry was faced.

sexuality ascribed to the Jewish immigrant procurer, while Justin is the equivalent of the Jewish purity campaigner. When Grossmann takes him to Brussels' red light district, therefore, Justin is repelled. He and Zosia escape to England where they are married, and Zosia becomes pregnant, but the baby dies. Justin then returns to Cambridge while Zosia lives alone. In her isolation she considers Zionism as an answer to her feelings of displacement and loss, which are not just linked to the death of her child but also to a sense of deracination. Justin mistakes her interest in Palestine for political idealism, and dismisses this with scorn, arguing that the exploitation of the poor by the rich would continue even in a Jewish state. But Zosia's identification with Palestine stems from the alienation produced by inequality and antisemitism. She then argues that Zionism is the only solution to antisemitism, and challenges Justin to tell his Cambridge friends that he is Jewish, something he has so far avoided. When Justin does this and experiences rejection he decides Zosia is right, and that they will emigrate to Palestine, where he will write 'big, serious plays' for a National Jewish Theatre (p.137). Finding Zosia has left him, however, he returns to London, where he joins the wealthy Anglo-Jewish community and begins to write.

Zosia, meanwhile, has drifted back into prostitution through poverty. Her upbringing and experience have not equipped her to support herself in any other way and as a prostitute she is an outcast, her husband being her only support within the Jewish community. The novel makes no mention of the Jewish anti-vice and rescue organisations, which has the perhaps intentional effect of making the situation of the Jewish prostitute appear all the more desperate and therefore deserving of compassion. Justin eventually finds her and they resolve their differences, move to the country and start a family. Having briefly explored Zionism as a means of escape from sexual exploitation and antisemitism the novel ends on an assimilationist note.

as Zosia finds 'Zion' in family life, and Justin turns to culture rather than nationalist politics to express his Jewish identity, through writing plays for Jewish audiences.

Nicholson's novel offers a sympathetic and intelligent engagement with the issues of migration, vice, political Zionism and antisemitism that Anglo-Jewry faced in the early twentieth century. Her young Jewish characters have considered all these matters, particularly Zionism, and have opted for assimilation, their collective identification as Jews 'safely' channelled into art and community life. They do not, therefore, represent a radical political threat, nor are they 'a nation within a nation', and any involvement with 'white slavery' on their part is prompted by either poverty or philanthropy. Those Jewish characters who have an 'oriental' attitude towards women, namely Harry Grossmann and Justin's father, are of the older generation, whose influence is depicted as waning.

Nevertheless, there is a strong feminist note in Nicholson's novel, in its analysis of sexual politics. Zosia decides that her suffering is the result not of 'racial' or religious persecution but of sexual economics: women, like animals, will be treated as commodities because there is a market for women and therefore they will be exploited in order to meet that demand. The concept of the Promised Land is briefly considered as a solution - as a place of potential sexual equality - but eventually a compromise is reached, in which the couple's needs are met through family life and connections with Anglo-Jewry. Nicholson's linking of the abused Jewish woman with the Promised Land, however, draws on biblical narratives of deliverance through divine intervention, and in this respect there is a similarity to the rhetoric of the anti-vice campaigns, in which divine intervention was explicitly claimed and invoked. Alan Mintz has discussed the trope of the abused woman as an image of Jewry in *Hurban*, and notes that sections of Second Isaiah or the Book of the Consolation of

Israel are read in Synagogue on the 9th of Ab, the day on which the destruction of the Temple is mourned.[28] In this text Jerusalem is portrayed as a woman violated by gentiles, and grieving over the loss of husband and son. God intervenes and promises to restore all that she has lost.[29] Mintz notes that the resonance of this image as a metaphor for Jewry lies in the 'continuing exposure to victimization' which it suggests.[30] Nicholson's Zosia functions in a similar way, but she represents not so much the prolonged suffering of Jewry as that of women, and Jewish women in particular, who must deal with both antisemitism and inequality. *The First Good Joy*, therefore, places the biblical image of the abused Jewish woman in a modern feminist context. Although she is proud of her Jewish ancestry, Zosia realises that Zionism cannot free her, since women's inequality is part of Jewish culture. In this novel, an 'exodus' to Palestine is not the answer, but rather, a re-negotiation of the balance of power between Jewish women and men.

The inequality of women is also of course, part of Christian culture, and the Church acknowledged the need for change, lending its support to calls for the franchise. Whereas the anti-vice campaigns had been widely represented as a 'crusade' against prostitution, the linked campaign for the vote was not generally portrayed in these terms.[31] It was the militant suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) who adopted the theme of 'crusade', applying the language

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[28] Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p.45.
[29] See Isaiah 2.51:18 onwards. The image of Israel as an abused woman is also found in Lamentations 1: 8.
[30] Mintz (1984), p.24.
[31] Some of the more moderate suffrage groups did, however, use religious imagery in their campaigns. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) organised a Women's Pilgrimage during June and July 1913, in which women from all over the country marched to London. See Diane Atkinson, *Votes for Women*, Women in History Series (Cambridge University Press, 1988, reprinted 1989), pp.34-35.

of slavery to themselves,[32] and reappropriating the image of the crusader in their icon, Joan of Arc. Her function in their propaganda, as Lisa Tickner notes, was as an image of female rebellion and 'spiritualised militancy', who had transcended the constraints of femininity to become leader of the French army.[33] But Joan was also betrayed and condemned to death for heresy, and for the suffragettes, she was 'the paradigm both for female militancy and its persecution'.[34] Although she was not canonised until 1920, the WSPU adopted Joan as its 'patron saint', and suffragette processions were often led by a woman in armour mounted on a white horse, in emulation of her.[35]

The themes of battle and martyrdom associated with Joan appeared frequently in suffragette rhetoric. Christabel Pankhurst, Secretary of the WSPU, compared suffragettes to the 'saints and martyrs of the past' and portrayed their campaigns as a struggle between the forces of 'good' and 'evil', in which the victims would eventually triumph.[36] Front covers of the *Suffragette*, which she edited, portrayed the campaigner as a crusader, wearing chain mail and leading the march to freedom. Much of the language used was apocalyptic, and the cover of the issue dated 27 December 1912 (see Figure 1) featured verses from Charles Kingsley's poem 'The Day of the Lord', used here to suggest 1913 as the year of redemption, or the gaining of the franchise. In this context the lines 'True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God, / And those who can suffer, can dare' related not to the second coming of Christ

[32] Christabel Pankhurst's autobiography is entitled *Unshackled: The Story of How We Won the Vote* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1959).
[33] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987), p.211.
[34] Tickner (1987), p.290.
[35] Tickner (1987), p.210.
[36] Christabel Pankhurst, *Suffragette*, 11 April, 1913, quoted in Andrew Rosen, *Rise Up Women : The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union 1903-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p.196.

**Greetings to All.**

The

# Suffragette

EDITED BY CHRISTABEL PANKHURST.

The Official Organ of the Women's Social and Political Union.

VOL. I.—No. 11.                    FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1912.                    Price 1d. Weekly (ᵐᵖ)

JUSTICE.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

EQUALITY

## THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The Day of the Lord is at hand, at hand:
   Its storms roll up the sky:
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold;
   All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
   And the Day of the Lord at hand.

Gather you, gather you, angels of God
   Freedom, and Mercy, and Truth:
Come! for the Earth is grown coward and old,
   Come down and renew us her youth.

Wisdom, Self-sacrifice, Daring, and Love,
Haste to the battlefield, stoop from above,
   To the Day of the Lord at hand.

   *   *   *   *   *   *

Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
   While the Lord of all ages is here?
True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God,
   And those who can suffer, can dare.
Each old age of gold was an iron age too;
And the meekest of saints may find stern work to do,
   In the Day of the Lord at hand.
               *By* CHARLES KINGSLEY.

**Figure 1**

**Front cover of *The Suffragette*, 27 December 1912**

but the battle for women's equality. By 1913 the theme of crucifixion appeared in the *Suffragette*, in a reference to 'Judas' in verses from a poem entitled 'The Present Crisis' by the Victorian poet James Russell Lowell (see Figure 2). The verse that concerns 'Judas' reads as follows:

> For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,
> On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands:
> Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling faggots burn,
> While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
> To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.[38]

The effect of this confusion of images is to portray the suffragette as Christian martyr: she becomes a Christ-figure and her enemy becomes Judas, thus the crucifixion is mapped onto the struggle for the vote. Exactly who or what 'Judas' represented in Lowell's poem is not clear, nor is it clear who Christabel Pankhurst saw as the betrayer, but mention of 'Judas' in the *Suffragette* in 1913 indicates that the battle was intensifying. This was indeed the case: 1913 was a year in which militant suffrage activity escalated, as, frustrated by the prevarication of the political parties, members of the WSPU adopted more violent tactics.[39] These alienated some of the membership, and as hostility towards the cause grew, the rhetoric of martyrdom in the *Suffragette* increased. In June 1913 the WSPU found its 'Christ' figure, in Emily

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[37] Charles Kingsley, 'The Day of the Lord', in *The Works of Charles Kingsley, Vol. 1. Poems* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1887), pp.259-60.

[38] James Russell Lowell, 'The Present Crisis', December 1844, in *Poems 1* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1890), pp.178-184. Verses 5 and 14 are used on the cover of *Suffragette*, 21 March 1913.

[39] Liberals and Conservatives feared women's suffrage would benefit their political opponents, and the Labour Party believed working-class men should gain the franchise before women. In February 1913 suffragettes burned down Lloyd George's new country house. The government retaliated, passing the Prisoners' Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act ('Cat and Mouse') in April that year, in response to hunger strikes by suffragettes.

The
# Suffragette

EDITED BY CHRISTABEL PANKHURST.

The Official Organ of the Women's Social and Political Union.

No. 23.—VOL. I.      FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1913.      Price 1d. Weekly (Post Free)

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide;
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the
    bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left side, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and
    that light.

For Humanity sweeps onward; where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling
    faggots burn.

While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers' graves.
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime.

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good
    uncouth.
They must upward still and onward who would keep
    abreast of Truth.

— Extract from "The Present Crisis," by James Russell Lowell.

Figure 2

**Front cover of *The Suffragette*, 21 March 1913**

Wilding Davison. Shortly before she died. Davison had written an article entitled 'The

Price of Liberty'. in which she described the role of the militant as 'to re-enact the

tragedy of Calvary for generations yet unborn'.[40] Her death at Epsom in June 1913

gave the suffrage movement a sacrificial figure. and after her funeral the *Suffragette*

published a collection of tributes under the heading 'A Christian Martyr'.[41]

    Throughout the rest of 1913. the *Suffragette* continued to wage 'holy war'

against vice and inequality. and published articles of an apocalyptic tone that

described prostitution and venereal disease as poisoning the nation 'morally. mentally.

and physically'.[42] The cure for this was for women to avoid marriage and its

accompanying risk of venereal infection: votes for women. which would lessen their

economic reliance upon men. and male chastity. The WSPU initiated a Moral Crusade

in support of this.[43] Given the popular and exaggerated association of Jews with vice.

and the image of 'the Jew' as the carrier of disease. particularly syphilis. Christabel

Pankhurst's rhetoric of attack on the health of the nation fitted neatly into antisemitic

discourse. It was not, however. antisemitic in itself. She did not blame women's

exploitation and inequality on 'Jews' but on men, and the semitic discourses found

elsewhere are lacking in her engagement with these issues.[44] In fact. suffrage

propaganda in general avoided racism. although there is one early exception. A

postcard designed by Edward Llewellyn in 1907 and entitled '*This* is Allowed to

Vote' compared the position of the British middle-class woman with that of

[40] Emily Wilding Davison. 'The Price of Liberty'. published posthumously in the *Daily Sketch*. 28 May 1914. In Andrew Rosen. *Rise Up Women!: The Militant Campaign of the Women's Social and Political Union 1903-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1974). pp.199-200.
[41] *Suffragette*. 13 June 1913. pp.578-579.
[42] *Suffragette*. 11 April 1913.
[43] See Rosen (1974). p.207.
[44] Bryan Cheyette's term 'semitic discourses' is useful here in conveying the ambivalence that the NVA literature. for example. displays. See *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society. 1875-1945* (Cambridge University Press. 1993). p.8.

immigrants to the USA, using racialised images which included that of a Jewish man
(see Figure 3). The postcard is thought to have been independently produced, and has
not been linked to any of the women's suffrage groups.[45] Similarly, Christabel's
increasingly millennialist perspective on the suffrage campaign might prompt one to
expect some blame to be allocated to 'the Jew', but again, this is not the case.
Traditionally, millennialists have attacked Jews rhetorically for their alleged role in
the death of Christ, in the belief that this had prevented the establishment of the
kingdom of God on earth, for which they must now wait. Their arguments, therefore,
frequently end not with a description of the utopia that will follow the second advent,
but with the denunciation of the Jews for 'deicide' (see Chapter Three for examples).
Yet despite the millennial rhetoric, Lowell's figure of Judas is the only 'Jewish' threat
identified in the pages of the *Suffragette*, and exactly what he represents is unclear.
Although the WSPU used similar imagery to millennialists and purity campaigners, it
did not rely upon antisemitism to explain the oppression of women or the delay of the
feminist utopia. After the First World War, however, Christabel Pankhurst's
millennialism became increasingly 'orthodox' in its expression. From 1921 to 1940
she travelled and preached on the subject of the second coming, and published a
number of millennialist texts.[46] Even in this capacity she did not denounce the Jews,
unlike other millennialists, but imagined conversion as a simple matter of persuasion
and agreement. In *The Lord Cometh!* (1923) she wrote that the 'Jewish Question'
would be resolved by 'the simple condition of faith in Jesus Christ – whereupon all
distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears'.[47] For her, the 'Jewish Question'

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[45] See Tickner (1987), p.57.
[46] Millennialist texts written by Christabel Pankhurst after the war include *The Lord Cometh!* (1923), *Pressing Problems of the Closing Age* (1924), *The World's Unrest: Visions of the Dawn* (1926) and *Seeing the Future* (1929).
[47] Christabel Pankhurst (1923), p.91.

**Figure 3**

**'*This* is Allowed to Vote'**

Suffrage postcard designed by Edward Llewellyn, 1907. This was apparently independently-produced, and therefore not affiliated to any of the suffrage societies.

Source: Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987), p.37.

seemed to arise only in the religious millennial context. and not in relation to suffragism. Within the campaign for the vote. the themes of crusade. crucifixion. and millennium seem to have been adopted more for their emotive appeal and rich metaphorical content than out of any direct hostility towards Jews. In addition. Anglo-Jewish writers on feminism were well received by the WSPU: W L George's *Woman and To-Morrow* (1912) was described by a suffragette reviewer as `a splendid bit of suffrage propaganda`.[48] and Israel Zangwill spoke frequently in support of the cause.

To summarise. although both the NVA and the WSPU made use of the `crusade` trope and religious imagery with regard to vice and the vote. the function of these themes within their propaganda differed considerably. as did the relation of their campaigns to contemporary antisemitism. As founder of the NVA. Coote. a Christian. repeatedly referred to the movement as a `world-wide crusade` prompted by `a Divine impulse`.[49] He combined this with themes from Exodus. casting himself as `Moses` and implying the British as the biblical `Hebrews`. chosen by God. His `Hebrews` analogy was ambiguous. however. since the vice traffic was popularly perceived as controlled by Jews and medical literature of the period upheld the association between Jews. prostitutes and syphilis. The NVA campaign was a male-led `crusade` against immorality that portrayed women as vulnerable to corruption by `outsiders` and became linked to fears concerning immigration. In suffragette language and iconography. however. women were the `crusaders` - their own deliverers. The WSPU regarded vice as a direct result of women's inequality. and their enemy was

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[48] `A H`. Review of W L George's *Woman and To-Morrow* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd.. 1913). in *Suffragette*. 15 November 1912. p.7. Walter Lionel George (1882-1926) was born in Paris to Jewish parents. He trained as an analytical chemist. but was also a barrister. engineer. journalist and drama critic. He wrote short stories. essays and novels. and served in the French army during the First World War. He was a friend of the Anglo-Jewish writer G B Stern. whose work is discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

[49] Coote (1910). pp.18. 17.

the legal establishment that denied women the vote that would empower them. Despite drawing on the imagery of crucifixion and millennium - Christian narratives that allocate a specific role to Jews - and the concern over vice, the WSPU 'crusade' did not invoke 'the Jew' for its completion in the same way as did NVA propaganda. There was an absence of nationalism in the WSPU campaigns that the NVA, despite leading an international movement, retained, in the theme of the British as 'chosen' to lead the nations against vice.

Jewish feminists, already part of a minority, drew attention to sexual inequality within Jewry itself. The actions of the JLWS in particular aroused hostility within a community that was already embattled, and it was feared their campaigns would bring reprisals for Anglo-Jewry. Jews participated in the anti-vice movement partly to counter antisemitism, but unlike their Christian counterparts, they used no language of 'crusade' or 'exodus', and where they gave religious significance to their involvement it was in response to the rhetorical excesses of the Christian majority. Mindful of the antisemitism that was aroused by immigration and prostitution, they were out of necessity more circumspect than their Christian counterparts, and focused their approach on philanthropy rather than religiosity.

The anti-vice and suffrage campaigns were interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914, and the language of 'crusade' found a new focus, being applied to the nation at war, a development that will be briefly discussed in the next section, and in full in Chapter Two. As a result of the war the role of women in British society underwent dramatic changes, which are examined below.

## 2. 'I tell you what we call Belgium: we call it the Suffragette country'

On 24 October 1914, Christabel Pankhurst explained to the audience at Carnegie Hall, New York, why former suffragettes were co-operating with the government that had so vigorously opposed their aims. Her portrayal of Belgium as 'the Suffragette country'[50] suggests that she regarded the German invasion as a violation on a par with the pre-war 'torturing of British women'[51] by the government. 'Prussianism', however, was male violence on an international scale, and must be stopped.[52] She described the war as a battle for the future of women's rights, arguing that Germany was hostile to women's equality, and that although they did not yet have the vote, British women were better off than their German counterparts, who were 'unduly subordinated to the men'.[53] A German victory, Christabel declared, would be 'a disastrous blow' to the women's movement in all countries, and added 'we will not allow a male nation to dominate the earth'.[54] The war, then, was part of the international gender struggle, in which, if necessary, former suffragettes were willing to take up arms,[55] in emulation of Joan of Arc. The suffragette image of Joan as both victim and warrior now appeared to become divided: the mantle of martyrdom was conferred onto a feminised Belgium and the warrior aspect of Joan became more pronounced and linked to Britain, as former militants postponed their pursuit of the franchise and campaigned vigorously in support of the new militarist 'crusade'.

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[50] Christabel Pankhurst, *The Great War*, a speech given at Carnegie Hall, New York, 24 October 1914 (London: WSPU, 1914), p.10.

[51] Christabel Pankhurst (1914), p.8. The reference to 'torture' relates to the forcible feeding of suffragette hunger strikers.

[52] Belgium's neutrality had been guaranteed by a treaty between Prussia, France and Britain, ratified in 1839 and renewed in 1870. German forces invaded on 2 and 3 August 1914.

[53] Christabel Pankhurst (1914), p.16.

[54] Christabel Pankhurst (1914), pp.15, 16.

[55] Christabel Pankhurst (1914), pp.15-16. In response to a question concerning 'a revival of the spirit and mission of Joan d'Arc', Christabel Pankhurst stated that women would fight if necessary.

The outbreak of war had split the suffrage movement. The United Suffragists, established by the Pethwick-Lawrences in February 1914, continued to campaign for suffrage and pacifism throughout the war, and a group of former suffragists launched a Women's Peace Crusade in 1915, which undertook relief work among Germans in Britain.[56] The majority of the NUWSS, led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, supported the war and took up morale-boosting activities. The *Suffragette* was renamed *Britannia* in April 1915, and the WSPU became the Women's Party. Some of the members objected to this and the movement's new militarist stance. As Annie Kenney, a key figure in the WSPU noted, 'They were quite prepared to receive instructions about the Vote, but they were not going to be told what they were to do in a world war.'[57] Sylvia Pankhurst joined the anti-conscription movement, while Christabel and her mother embraced militarism, their supporters distributing white feathers to unenlisted men whilst they travelled the country campaigning to dissuade workers from industrial action.[58]

This abrupt transition from militancy to unequivocal militarism was not always approved of, and to some, the former suffragettes' enthusiasm for the war was simply another example of their 'unladylike' behaviour.[59] Women were generally expected to embody the principles of piety and self-denial, and to accept bereavement with patriotic pride, leaving militarism to the men. Patient suffering was their role in the 'crusade' against Germany. Elma Paget, wife of the Bishop of Stepney, published

[56] Jill Liddington & Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Virago, 1978), pp.257-258.
[57] Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant* (London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1924), p.255.
[58] See Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War: Britain and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), pp.706-707.
[59] See, for example, Herbert Gray, M.A., *The War Spirit in our National Life*, Papers for War Time Series, No.7 (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), in which the author expressed the hope that after the war, the 'unfeminine' behaviour of suffragette-militarists would cease (p.15).

a pamphlet entitled *The Woman's Part*, in which she wrote 'We sow in sorrow that

others may reap in joy', and urged women to take comfort in the knowledge that their

loved ones had died in the service of God.'[60] In 1916, the year of huge losses at the

Somme, the Irish novelist and poet Katharine Tynan published a collection of poetry

entitled *The Holy War*, dedicated to 'the mourners of the War ... who praise your God

although he slay'.[61] Tynan (1861-1931) also published fiction and autobiography, and

was associated with a number of Irish nationalist writers, particularly William Butler

Yeats. Her wartime poems use the 'crusade' trope to signify male endeavour,

solidarity and sacrifice, while women are allocated a passive and vicarious role in the

'holy war'. 'To the Others' expresses women's excitement at the spiritual

regeneration of the soldier through battle, in the lines

> Your son and my son, clean as new swords.
> Your man and my man and now the Lord's!
> Your son and my son for the Great Crusade,
> With the banner of Christ over them - our knights, new-made.

The image of 'knights' united under the 'banner of Christ' is a chivalric

representation of war that also has feudal associations and therefore appears nostalgic

for a 'lost' model of society. These themes are found in another of Tynan's poems,

'New Heaven', in which death in battle appears as a rite of passage, and 'Paradise' is

reminiscent of a baronial hall in which the ghostly 'knights' bask in the approval of

their 'lord':

> PARADISE now has many a Knight,
> Many a lordkin, many lords ...
>
> Some have barely the down on the lip,
> Smiling yet from the new-won spurs.

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[60] Elma K Paget, *The Woman's Part*, Papers for War Time Series No. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p.5.
[61] Katherine Tynan, *The Holy War* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1916).

Another Catholic, Alice Meynell, who knew Katherine Tynan, took a different view of bereavement through war, in her poem 'Parentage'.

> Ah! No, not these!
> These, who were childless, are not they who gave
> So many dead unto the journeying wave,
> The helpless nurslings of the cradling seas;
> Not they who doomed by infallible decrees
> Unnumbered man to the innumerable grave.
>
> But those who slay
> Are fathers. Theirs are armies. Death is theirs -
> The death of innocences and despairs;
> The dying of the golden and the grey.
> The sentence, when these speak it, has no Nay.
> And she who slays is she who bears, who bears.[65]

Here, women's role in war is not passive: they bear the children who fight and die in conflicts initiated by men; thus men and women between them sentence their children to death in a world in which war seems inevitable. In some respects, this analysis echoes Christabel Pankhurst's remedy for the spread of venereal disease and the exploitation of women in marriage – that they refuse to marry – and the logic of Meynell's poem implies that if women truly want to stop war, they should stop

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[65] Alice Meynell, 'Parentage', in *Collected Poems of Alice Meynell* (London: Burns and Oates, 1914), p.86. Alice Meynell (née Thompson) (1847-1922) was an English writer who published her first collection of poetry in 1875. She converted to Catholicism in 1868 and much of her poetry engages with religious themes. In 1877 she married the author Wilfred Meynell in 1877 and they had eight children. She continued to write, publishing collections of poetry and essays, and writing for periodicals including *The National Review* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. She also produced biographies of Holman Hunt (1893) and John Ruskin (1900). A feminist, Meynell was involved in the suffrage movement. Source: Margaret Drabble, ed., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5th edition, (Oxford, New York, Tokyo, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.645. Meynell's daughter Viola asserts that her mother supported the war, but 'Parentage' suggests ambivalence.

bearing children.[66] Neither 'solution' was possible or realistic: women often married for economic reasons, and in the case of Catholic women, like Meynell, contraception was at odds with religious doctrine. What links these two analyses, though, is the idea that, however unlikely, a sexual embargo imposed by women could bring about the profound changes desired.

Women contributed to the mass slaughter of the First World War not only through the sacrifice of their loved ones, but also through their war work. Christabel Pankhurst and her mother led what Lloyd George termed the 'new crusade' for the 'industrial conscription' of women.[67] At the same time Sylvia Pankhurst was campaigning against military conscription, which was introduced in 1916. For a short time Jewish refugees in England were exempt from this because Home Secretary Herbert Samuel (himself Jewish) sympathised with their reluctance to fight in alliance with tsarist Russia. This exemption provoked hostility and they were eventually faced with a choice between conscription and deportation, a development examined in Chapters Two and Four. In this context it seems likely that the much-discussed entry of women into war work fuelled accusations that unlike women, Jews were not 'doing their bit'. The Anglo-Jewish writer Joseph Leftwich[68] commented on the enthusiasm with which women had joined the industrial 'crusade' in the following poem, written in 1914:

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[66] An idea that would, of course, conflict with Roman Catholicism.

[67] This was highly successful and by November 1918 over 1,587,300 women were employed in government work, many of them in munitions. David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1933, reprinted 1936), pp.291, 292.

[68] Joseph Leftwich (born 1892) was a journalist and writer who edited and translated anthologies of Yiddish poetry and was part of a group of East End Jewish writers and artists that included John Rodker, Isaac Rosenberg, David Bomberg, Mark Gertler, Simon Weinstein (later Stephen Winsten) and Paul Nash. He knew the gentile anarchist leader Rudolf Rocker, and wrote an introduction to Rocker's memoir, *The London Years* (London: Robert Anscombe & Co., Ltd., 1956).

Song of the Women

> We are women and mothers and mothers-to-be.
> And we work in this horrible factory.
> We are making munitions. we work with a will.
> We sing at our work. for our working will kill
> The fathers and sons of such women as we.
> We are women and mothers and mothers-to-be.[69]

The poem reveals the irony of the situation. whereby women. the biological producers

of life. had gained the independence. recognition and financial security they wanted

by becoming the industrial producers of death. manufacturing shells for the Front

They were not only sacrificing their own families to the war. but also producing the

means by which the families of German women would be killed. Some women

writers expressed ambivalence. others horror. at women's contribution to the

slaughter by this means. Madeline Ida Bedford's poem 'Munition Wages' depicts a

working-class woman enjoying her prosperity and independence while she can. and

giving no thought to the consequences of her labour:

> Earning high wages? Yus.
> Five quid a week.
> A woman. too. mind you.
> I calls it dim sweet.[70]

Any criticism of the woman munitions worker in this poem is implied. rather than

stated, and the dialect style suggests that she lacks the education to recognise the

irony of the matter. Mary Gabrielle Collins' poem 'Women at Munition Making'. on

the other hand, expressed the view that it was sacrilegious for women to do this work:

the prospect of men destroying one another was familiar if tragic.

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[69] Joseph Leftwich. 'Song of the Women'. in *Along the Years. Poems 1911-1937* (London: Robert Anscombe & Co.. 1937).
[70] Madeline Ida Bedford. 'Munition Wages'. in Catherine Reilly. ed.. *Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (London: Virago. 1981. reprinted 1993). p.7.

> But this goes further,
> Taints the fountain head,
> Mounts like a poison to the Creator's very heart.[71]

Taking such an active and integral part in the 'crusade' was somehow 'anti-feminine', and in both Meynell's and Collins' poems the culpability of women in war is shifted, becoming closer or equivalent to that of men.

It was in relation to munitions that the Church brought the 'crusade' to civilians in 1917, having previously applied this rhetoric mainly to recruitment and combat.[72] Despite the relatively high munitions wages there were occasional labour disputes at the armaments factories during the war.[73] In the spring of 1915 King George V began visiting workplaces in order to boost morale and counter the threat of industrial unrest.[74] His visit to the Woolwich Arsenal in March was successful in this respect, but a similar effort made by the Church two years later was less so. During the first two weeks of September the clergy mounted what it termed 'the Woolwich crusade', a simultaneous attempt to mediate in a dispute at the munitions factory and bring the gospel to the workers. Prior to the war, Anglican clergymen had been troubled by the failure of the Church to attract the working classes in significant numbers. This was not due to a lack of working-class religious feeling so much as perceptions of the Church as a class institution, reflected in the background of most of the clergy and in practices such as pew-renting, which continued until the late nineteenth century.[75] Successive Anglican Convocations had attempted to address the

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[71] Mary Gabrielle Collins, 'Women at Munition Making', in Reilly, ed. (1981), p.24.

[72] Clerical 'crusader' rhetoric will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

[73] The Pankhursts negotiated a minimum wage for women with Lloyd George in July 1915.

[74] David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George* (London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1933, reprint 1936), p.318.

[75] See E R Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp.160, 162, 165.

situation. but church attendance among this group remained low.[76] The 'Woolwich crusade' was an effort by the Church to establish contact with the working classes. It may also have been an attempt to avert the threat to Christian authority represented by political radicalism. as seen in recent events in Russia. and by doing so. to secure its place in post-war reconstruction.[77] As workers in a vital war industry. the munitions employees represented a means for the Church to gain influence among an important group. and one that was dominated by women. who would soon receive the vote.

The 'crusade' was attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Randall Davidson. and numerous high-ranking clergymen. including Winnington-Ingram. Bishop of London. Events opened with a procession of 'crusaders'. who carried banners and wore the emblem of St George and the dragon. after which a letter of support from Prime Minister Lloyd George was read out. The workers were then addressed by the Reverend H J Warde. who stated that in 'the new England' Christ would settle employment disputes.[78] On the last day. Archbishop Davidson noted the many recent and rapid changes in British society - in industry. education. and relations between men and women - and reminded his listeners that the Church could offer spiritual guidance. both during and after the war.[79] The Anglican journal *Christian Challenge* followed the progress of the Woolwich crusade. noting that although the workers expressed interest in the clergy's message. church attendance

[76] Norman (1976). p.162.

[77] A revolution occurred in Russia in February 1917. and Tsar Nicholas II abdicated shortly afterwards. A provisional government was formed. of which Alexander Kerensky became Prime Minister in July. By September the Kerensky administration was faltering. and the Bolsheviks were gaining ground. This aroused fears that Bolshevism would spread to Britain. through the labour movement. Church leaders attempted to mediate in various wartime and post-war disputes. quite possibly with Bolshevism's hostility to religion in mind.

[78] *Christian Challenge*. 7 September 1917. p.296.

[79] Archbishop Davidson. sermon reported in the *Times*. 17 September 1917. p.5. Randall Thomas Davidson (1848-1930) was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1903-28.

remained low.[x] Nevertheless, the event enabled the Church to identify some of the reasons why it was losing authority. The matter was largely one of class: most of the leading clergy were Oxbridge educated, and the Church was perceived as hierarchical and therefore unsympathetic to the growing demand for full democratisation. If it was to lead the nation towards moral and spiritual regeneration after the war, significant changes were necessary. As the official report on the Woolwich crusade concluded, 'the need for ecclesiastical reform is overwhelming'.[81]

In all the 'crusades' discussed above, women were a linking theme. In the NVA campaigns they were the victims or potential victims of international vice, to be protected or rescued by the purity 'crusaders'. Underlying this was the fear of moral and social deterioration and the effects of prostitution on the health and strength of the nation. NVA literature drew on Old Testament themes of enslavement, escape, and the building of a new society in a 'Promised Land' free from vice. Jewish purity campaigners joined the cause out of philanthropy and self-defence, aware that the combined issues of immigration and prostitution aroused antisemitism. The NVA and affiliated groups focused on prevention, rescue and rehabilitation, but their literature did not explicitly address the poverty that was often the cause of prostitution and the legal inequality that facilitated the 'enslavement' of women through vice. It was the suffrage campaigners who focused on this, particularly the WSPU. Their literature argued that society could not change for the better unless the balance of power between the sexes was shifted. Women, through activism and self-sacrifice if necessary, were to be their own 'rescuers', and the themes of female strength,

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[x] *Christian Challenge*, 14 September 1917, pp.302-303.
[x] *The Woolwich Crusade*, report issued by Southwark Diocesan Council (London: SPCK, 1918), discussed in *Challenge*, 31 May 1918, p.67.

chastity, exploitation and martyrdom were combined in the figure of Joan of Arc. The militant tactics of the WSPU and their confrontation of sexual inequality brought them under attack by the wider community. Similarly, the JLWS, some of whose members emulated WSPU tactics, were regarded as potential troublemakers, and attracted criticism from within Anglo-Jewry. The issue of women's political and sexual inequality was divisive, creating tensions both in British society generally and among an already embattled Anglo-Jewry.

The war and the need for a collective effort alleviated some of the tension over women's inequality, albeit temporarily. Sermons and pamphlets detailed 'the woman's part' in the war and encouraged women to bear the loss of their loved ones bravely and to embody the virtues of humility, temperance and chastity. Katherine Tynan's poems reflect this attitude, apparently celebrating the death of the 'knight' and portraying women as united in pride and sadness. In fact women took a far more active role in the war, making up a large percentage of the workforce, and replacing men in many occupations. The former WSPU was instrumental in this, and in co-operation with Lloyd George embarked upon the 'industrial crusade', which mobilised women for war work. This direct involvement of women raised new concerns and the poems discussed above question the morality of this, particularly with regard to munitions, taking the view that it was wrong for women, as the biological creators of life, to produce the means of death and profit by it. There is a suggestion of betrayal in Joseph Leftwich's juxtaposition of 'women and mothers and mothers-to-be' with the woman munitions worker, which relates to pacifist constructions of femininity based on women's reproductive function. But pacifist womanhood was at odds with the needs of the nation at war, and, given the sheer numbers of women who undertook war work, unrealistic. The mass entry of women

into the workforce during the war helped to support arguments for the franchise, and by June 1917 preliminary suffrage legislation was being approved by parliament, despite the fact that the campaign had been generally postponed

Ironically, then, it was through the suspension of the suffrage 'crusade' that its aims were partially realised, and it was occupational change among women that paved the way for political reform. Christabel Pankhurst exchanged feminist millennialism for the anti-Marxist rhetoric of 'industrial salvation', to counter the 'industrial Bolshevism' promoted by German agents in Britain. The enemy was now the German-Bolshevik alliance, which she framed in gender terms, declaring that class war appealed chiefly to men, and that women would use their vote against socialism.[52] Unlike other critics of Bolshevism, she did not specifically identify it as a 'Jewish' politics (see Chapter Four for examples of this), once again taking up a mainstream concern but avoiding the popular antisemitic viewpoint associated with it, as she had with regard to vice and immigration.

The next chapter examines the imagery of 'crusade' as it was used in relation to wartime constructions of national identity, the purpose of the war, and the role of the British within it. The widespread representation of the conflict as a defence of Christianity against the 'pagan' forces of Germany provoked what might be termed a 'Christian anti-Germanism', which in some cases found a target in the Jews.

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[52] Christabel Pankhurst, *Industrial Salvation* (pamphlet published by the Women's Party, London, October 1918), p.12. The suggestion that women were somehow inherently opposed to revolution is refuted by historical fact: the revolution that took place in Russia in February 1917 (23 February / 8 March) began as a women's protest against the war and food and fuel shortages, to mark International Women's Day. This was followed by a general strike, mutiny in the armed forces and the overthrow of the tsar, events that occurred over a period of three days. See Jane McDermid, *Midwives of the Revolution: Female Bolsheviks and Women Workers in 1917* (London: UCL Press, 1999), pp.146-54.

## CHAPTER TWO

## The First World War as 'holy war'

**Introduction**

By August 1914, the purity and suffrage campaigns were overshadowed by another form of 'crusade', in the First World War, which was widely portrayed in Britain as a 'holy war' against 'pagan' Germany. Politicians, clergymen and the press made use of religious imagery to glorify the conflict, and the clergy in particular portrayed the soldier as defender of the faith, and encouraged civilians to join the 'crusade' through prayer. For some, however, the strongest link between the medieval crusades and the war was the Palestine campaign, and the capture of Jerusalem from the Turkish army in December 1917. This was often referred to as the 'last crusade', and prompted the most explicit portrayals of the British soldier as an idealised medieval knight.

But the imagery of 'crusade' in the construction of ideals of 'Englishness' was already well established prior to the war, and some examples have been discussed in Chapter One. As Mark Girouard has demonstrated, the code of chivalry and the image of the 'gentlemanly knight' were revived in Britain during the late eighteenth century, and became central to the construction of a romanticised upper-class masculinity that continued into the nineteenth century and was disseminated through public schools and institutions, art and literature.[1] Girouard traces the chivalric ideal in English culture throughout this period into the First World War, which, he suggests, provided both a climax and a 'natural termination' to Victorian and Edwardian notions of chivalry.[2] This chapter complements Girouard's work by extending his analysis of the

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[1] See Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981) for a full discussion of this subject.
[2] See Preface to Girouard (1981).

image of the 'knight' during the First World War to include the Palestine campaign.

and explores the antisemitic subtext of the war as 'crusade'. Section one gives

examples to demonstrate the ubiquity of the idea of 'holy war'. and examines both the

popularity and the fragility of this concept Section two focuses on the xenophobia

and religious hostility generated by the rhetoric of 'crusade' and its effects on

Britain's Jewish population. both at home and at the Front. The third section of this

chapter considers the Palestine campaign as the most literal example of 'crusade' that

the war produced, and discusses the self-comparison with the medieval crusaders of

soldiers who served in Palestine.

## 1. 'Huns of Satan'[3]

Although there was a high level of popular support for the war, there was also unease,
particularly in the Liberal press, at the outbreak of hostilities. Unlike their Tory
counterparts, the Liberal papers were initially ambivalent with regard to Britain's
involvement, and did not fully subscribe to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey's view
that this was in the nation's vital interest, as a means of maintaining the balance of
power in Europe and protecting against German invasion.[4] The *Daily News* and the
*Daily Chronicle* analysed responsibility for the war, and on 5 August 1914 the former
published a full-page announcement by the Neutrality League, urging Englishmen to
'DO YOUR DUTY and Keep Your Country out of a WICKED AND STUPID
WAR'.[5] The *Nation*, a popular liberal publication, reluctantly acknowledged that
Britain was indeed bound to defend Belgian neutrality by the treaty made between
France, Britain and Prussia in 1870, and began to justify British involvement on moral
and religious grounds. The conflict now became a 'crusade' against war. In an article
entitled 'The Holy War', G Lowes Dickinson noted 'the dominance of the Power of
Darkness' in Europe, and added 'the words of Jesus, spoken to redeem mankind from
just such a desolating crime as this, are as if they had never been said'.[6] H G Wells
published articles on the theme of 'The War to End War' in the *Daily News*, the *Daily*

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[3] The phrase 'Huns of Satan' is taken from Junius Redivivus, (pseud.), 'Diabolus', in *The Holy War. Diabolus. Extremes: Generosity and Avarice*, (London: John Bale, Sons, and Danielsson, Ltd., 1915).
[4] See Irene Cooper Willis, *England's Holy War: A Study of English Liberal Idealism During the Great War* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1928). Willis argues that much of the rhetoric of a 'just' war and a 'final battle' fought for a righteous cause was prompted by liberal ambivalence, and that the conflict between abhorrence and acceptance gave rise to the compensatory idea of 'holy war'. This chapter draws in part on her views, but focuses mainly on the antisemitic subtext of the war as 'crusade'.
[5] Announcement by the Neutrality League published in *Daily News*, 5 August 1914, p.7.
[6] G Lowes Dickinson, 'The Holy War', in *Nation*, 8 August 1914, p.692.

*Chronicle*, and the *Nation*, in which he called for the moral regeneration of Germany rather than its destruction, and argued that if the Germans could be made to reject 'the idea of war', the rest of humanity would follow.[7] The present conflict, he suggested, was partly owing to the failure of the Church, and the Christian must now become as ruthless 'as any evil doer' in the - albeit rather paradoxical - fight for peace.[8] It was, therefore, a Christian's duty to support the war.

The theme of Christian warfare also appeared in political speeches and pamphlets, in which Germany was charged with having renounced God for the worship of the state. In a speech delivered at London Guildhall in September 1914, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith announced that the Germans had 'made force their supreme divinity', and added 'This is not merely a material, it is also a spiritual conflict.'[9] No longer guided by Christian principles, Germany had become ruthlessly expansionist, as the invasion of Belgium showed, while Britain, on the other hand, was portrayed as a benign imperial power, whose dominions might almost have volunteered for incorporation into the empire. In another speech, given at Cardiff in October 1914, Asquith declared, with no apparent irony, 'We do not covet any people's territory. We have no desire to impose our rule upon alien populations. The British Empire is enough for us.'[10] Asquith was careful, however, not to represent the 'spiritual conflict' as a solely British or Christian matter, and acknowledged the contribution of the Hindu and Muslim subjects of the empire to the war effort. David

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See, for example, H G Wells, 'The War That Will End War', *Daily News*, 14 August 1914, p.4; 'The War of the Mind', *Nation*, 29 August 1914, pp.788-790; 'Opportunity', *Nation*, 15 August 1914, pp.732-734, and 'The Sword of Peace', *Daily Chronicle*, 7 August 1914, p.4.

[8] H G Wells, 'The War of the Mind', *Nation*, 29 August 1914, pp.788, 789.

[9] H H Asquith, speech delivered at the Guildhall, London, 4 September 1914, in *The War: Its Causes and its Message: Speeches Delivered by the Prime Minister, August - October 1914* (London: Methuen & Co., 1914), p.15.

[10] H H Asquith, speech at Cardiff, 2 October 1914, in *The War: Its Causes and its Message: Speeches Delivered by the Prime Minister, August - October 1914* (1914), p.35.

Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, was more explicit regarding the nature of the conflict, and in a speech entitled 'Honour and Dishonour', given in London on 19 September 1914, asserted that 'The new philosophy of Germany is to destroy Christianity.'[11]

A flurry of pamphlets, many of them written by Oxford academics, picked up the theme, arguing that since the invasion of 'little Belgium' Germany could no longer be regarded as Christian, and that Britain, therefore, was fighting a pagan power.[12] The more moderate pamphleteers suggested that there were, in effect, two Germanys; the nation that had produced Luther, Beethoven and Kant, and the Germany that had been temporarily seduced by Prussian militarism.[13] Most, however, focused on denouncing militarism as Germany's new 'creed', a 'gospel' of violence based on the ideas of the 'unholy trinity' of Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardi, and a threat to Christianity.[14] Ernest Barker, a member of the Oxford Faculty of Modern History, traced the development of the new German 'paganism' through reductive accounts of Kant's ideas on the importance of duty, Hegel's views on the state as an absolute, and Nietzsche's attacks on Christianity, and concluded that this combination

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[11] 'Honour and Dishonour', a speech by the Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George, at Queen's Hall, London, 19th September, 1914 (London: Methuen & Co., 1914), p.9

[12] See, for example, C S Burne, Might Gives Right. The New Gospel of Germany, Papers for the People Series, No. 2 (London: Central Committee of Patriotic Organizations, 1914); W E Orchard, D. D., The Real War, Papers for War Time Series, No. 10, (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), and E Barker, Nietzsche and Treitksche: the Worship of Power in Modern Germany, Oxford Pamphlets Series (London: Oxford University Press, 1914).

[13] See, for example, M E Sadler, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, Modern Germany and the Modern World, Pamphlets on the European Crisis Series (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914), and Viscount Bryce, Neutral Nations and the War, Pamphlets on the European Crisis Series (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1914).

[14] Heinrich von Trietksche (1834-1896) was an eminent German professor of Political Science. His Politik (1899) argued that war was vital to the establishment and continuity of the State, was cited as one of the origins of Germany's new 'paganism'. General Friedrich von Bernhardi's Deutschland und der nachste Krieg (1911), based on Treitksche's writings, was regarded as a statement of German imperial policy, and, in effect, a warning unheeded.

had produced the nationalistic heroism that had now gained the status of a religion in Germany.[15]

German theologians defended their country, and in September 1914 the *Westminster Gazette* published a document entitled *Address of the German Theologians to the Evangelical Christians Abroad*, which until then had been circulating mainly in the USA.[16] Bearing the signatures of a number of prominent academics, this document expressed regret at the prospect of 'fratricidal war', and blamed Russia for the conflict, claiming that while Germany had striven for peace, the tsar had effectively declared war against 'Teutonism and Protestantism'.[17] The British were admonished for their alliance with 'heathen Japan', and the address ended with a reminder that by involving their dominions in the conflict, the British were endangering the international missionary enterprise, and that 'a war of white against white' would undermine the Christian message.[18] Twenty-five Oxford scholars put their names to a rejoinder that acknowledged the contributors to the German Address, but refuted their claim that Germany was not responsible for the war. In response to their criticism of Britain's alliance with non-Christian Japan, the Oxford group argued that Germany was no better, since as they put it, 'Turkey is religiously just as much of an Asiatic Power as Japan'.[19] Finally, the Oxford response suggested that the clamour of nationalism and militarism in Germany had rendered the Christian message of peace and brotherhood inaudible, and implied that this was not the case in Britain.

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[15] Ernest Barker, MA, *Nietzsche and Treitschke: the Worship of Power in Modern Germany* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914).

[16] First published in the *Westminster Gazette* on 9 September 1914, the *Address of the German Theologians to the Evangelical Christians Abroad* was reprinted with a reply, in a pamphlet entitled *To the Christian Scholars of Europe and America: A Reply from Oxford to the German Address to Evangelical Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914). References apply to this text.

[17] *Address of the German Theologians* (1914), pp. 19-21.

[18] *Address of the German Theologians* (1914), p. 21.

[19] *To the Christian Scholars of Europe and America* (1914), p. 13.

This was. of course. untrue. A belligerent Christian nationalism had developed in Britain since the outbreak of the war - to which clergymen. academics. and politicians contributed alike - which was couched in the language of 'crusade'. although secular commentators did not generally use this term directly. Such rhetoric was more frequently used by members of the Anglican clergy. Ironically. prior to the war. attempts had been made to strengthen religious links between Britain and Germany.[20] After August 1914. however. ecumenism gave way to Christian nationalism and the rhetoric of 'holy war' against a religious enemy. which. it was asserted. threatened the very existence of Christendom. and must. therefore. be fought without mercy. The most outspoken proponent of this view was Winnington-Ingram. Bishop of London.[21] The Bishop had previous experience of 'holy war'. having been involved in the purity campaigns as chairman of the Public Morality Council since 1901. He now applied his evangelical and rhetorical skills to the 'crusade' against the Germans, describing them as 'a people who. for the time at least. are animated and dominated by pagan and unchristian ideas'.[22] Other members of the clergy. dismayed at the prospect of a war between Christian nations. blamed the conflict on capitalism. or imperialist arrogance. and warned against jingoism. In a sermon preached at Westminster Abbey on 2 August 1914. the Archbishop of Canterbury. Randall Davidson. advocated diplomacy. and advised his congregation that the 'resolute and unshakeable disbelief' in the necessity of war was gaining ground.[23] Despite initial

[20] The Associated Councils of Churches in the British and German Empires for Fostering Friendly Relations Between the Two Peoples was launched in 1911. See Wilkinson (1978). p.23
[21] Other clergymen who adopted a strongly militaristic tone during the war included Handley Carr Glyn Moule. Bishop of Durham. 1901-1920; Basil Bourchier. Vicar of St Jude's. Hampstead; Basil Wilberforce. Archdeacon of Westminster. and Bishop Taylor-Smith. Chaplain-General to the Armed Forces. 1901-1925.
[22] A F Winnington-Ingram. 'The National Faith'. in *The Church in Time of War* (London: Wells Gardner. Darton & Co.. Ltd.. 1915). p.39.
[23] Randall Davidson. 'The Eve of a Great War'. in *The Testing of a Nation* (London: Macmillan & Co.. 1919). p.7.

reservations, however, most of the Anglican clergy adopted the popular view of the war as a battle between the forces of 'good' and 'evil' By 1915, Archbishop Davidson had exchanged pacifism for righteous belligerence, stating at St Paul's that the British were fighting for 'a cause which we can, with clear conscience, commend to God', that of 'resistance to the ruthless dominance of force, and force alone'.[24] The Bishop of London was more explicit In June 1915 he gave fellow clergymen his view of the role of the Church in wartime

> I think the Church can best help the nation first of all by making it realise that it is engaged in a Holy War, and not be afraid of saying so. Christ died on Good Friday for Freedom, Honour, and Chivalry, and our boys are dying for the same things ... You ask for my advice in a sentence as to what the Church is to do. I answer MOBILIZE THE NATION FOR A HOLY WAR.[25]

This statement was published in the *Church Guardian*, and provoked a certain amount of controversy. As one correspondent reminded the Bishop,

> No one was more certain than St. Bernard that the last Crusade was a Holy War and was fought against the devil and for God, and when it ended in utter failure the falsification of his predictions did infinite harm to the Church and religion.[26]

Nor could the idea of Britain as a devoutly Christian country withstand much scrutiny. As one commentator observed, 'The English people will always shrink from blasphemy and try to keep respectable, but it cannot be said that there is a Christian England in the sense that there is a Christian Russia, or a Christian Ireland.'[27] Nevertheless, Winnington-Ingram continued to preach the doctrine of 'holy war' throughout the conflict, and in December 1915 informed the congregation at Westminster Abbey that they were

[24] Randall Thomas Davidson (1919), p.30.
[25] Statement by Bishop Winnington-Ingram, published in *Church Guardian*, 10 June 1915, p.539.
[26] Bernard Holland, letter to the Editor, *Church Guardian*, 1 July 1915, p.606.
[27] Shane Leslie, *The End of a Chapter* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1916), p.106.

> ... banded in a great crusade - we cannot deny it - to kill Germans: to kill
> them, not for the sake of killing, but to save the world ... and to kill them lest
> the civilisation of the world should itself be destroyed.[28]

The Reverend Basil Bourchier held similar views, informing soldiers that 'Not only is this a holy war, it is the holiest war that ever has been waged', in which 'Odin is ranged against Christ, and Berlin is seeking to prove its supremacy over Bethlehem'. To die for England, he told them, was 'to taste the sweetest vintage of death that can be offered to English lips ... and to pass to that which is to come in a veritable ecstasy'.[29]

Such rhetoric may have inspired some, but it drew criticism from others, on the grounds that the clergy were preaching a crusade in which, being exempt from enlistment, they were not prepared to participate. One writer, under the pseudonym 'Junius Redivivus', published a parody of John Bunyan's *The Holy War* (1682), in which he attacked clerical exemption and urged priests to 'Take up the Cross presented to them', while ordinands were exhorted to '*Unfrock -- Enlist*'.[30] The 1918 Conscription Bill raised the enlistment age to fifty, and made the clergy eligible, but this part of the Bill was retracted a few days later, owing to concerns about the political effects of conscripting the Catholic clergy in Ireland, particularly after the Sinn Fein revolt of 1916.[31] Most of the eligible clergy in England were already involved in war-related work by this time, whether as army chaplains, or in the war industries.

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[28] Winnington-Ingram, 'The Potter and the Clay', sermon preached in Westminster Abbey, December 1915. Quoted in Wilkinson (1978), p.217.
[29] Reverend B Bourchier, *For All We Have and Are* (London, Skeffington & Son, 1915), pp.2-3, 48-49.
[30] Junius Redivivus, (pseud.), 'The Holy War', in *The Holy War, Diabolus, Extremes: Generosity and Avarice,* (1915), pp.6, 7.
[31] Wilkinson (1978), p.40.

Clerical exemption from enlistment was perhaps a contributing factor to the decline of Church authority during the war, despite the fact that many clergymen lost sons, and army chaplains ran similar risks to the enlisted men. Winnington-Ingram's assertion that 'Moses holding up his hand above the battle swayed it as well as Joshua fighting in the thick of it'[32] lacked persuasive power, and the Church continued to face criticism, regarding not only conscription but also its perceived inadequacy in addressing the spiritual needs of the nation. Prior to the war, Church leaders were aware of dwindling congregations, and the failure of Christianity to attract the working classes in significant numbers. When war broke out, some regarded it as an opportunity to re-establish Christianity at the centre of national life, with the Church providing spiritual guidance for the nation, and thereby securing its place in post-war reconstruction. At the start of the conflict, the churches were suddenly and briefly full, and there was talk of a religious revival, but this was short-lived.[33] Yet in some respects the Church remained a powerful force in Britain during the war. Politicians approached Archbishop Davidson, seeking his support for various proposals. In November 1915 Lord Derby requested that the pulpit be used to promote recruitment, which Davidson refused, but in 1917, in response to the threat of a food shortage, he gave Bonar Law, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, his approval for agricultural work to be undertaken on Sundays.[34]

But despite wielding a certain amount of power, in other respects the Church appeared inadequate, preaching a doctrine of everlasting life for which it could produce no evidence. Whilst the Church of England declined in influence, a growth of

[32] Winnington-Ingram, 'Drinking the Cup', a sermon preached in St Paul's Cathedral, 9 August 1914, and published in *Kaiser or Christ?: the War and its Issues* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1914), p.8.
[33] See Wilkinson (1978), pp.71-72.
[34] Wilkinson (1978), pp.32, 107.

interest in spiritualism occurred during the war years, in spite of adverse publicity

from cases of the prosecution of fraudulent mediums under the archaic Witchcraft and

Vagrancy Acts.[35] The growth of the spiritualist movement both during and after the

war was assisted by the conversion of a number of prominent people. In 1916 Sir

Oliver Lodge published *Raymond*, in which he claimed to have received messages,

through a medium, from his dead son.[36] In 1917 Arthur Conan Doyle joined the

spiritualist movement and in March 1918 published *New Revelation*, in which he

professed his belief in life after death.[37] Spiritualism came under regular attack from

both the press and the clergy, but nevertheless remained popular, and by 1919, 309

spiritualist societies were affiliated to the Spiritualists National Union, compared with

145 in 1914.[38]

Another problem for the Church was that many regarded the militarism of

clergymen like Winnington-Ingram and Basil Bourchier as incompatible with the

principles of brotherly love and forgiveness. But while Winnington-Ingram's rhetoric

of Christian patriotism may have damaged the spiritual authority of the Church, it was

effective in recruiting for the army. Initially, at least, some soldiers clearly identified

with the notion of self-sacrifice in the name of Christianity, and in the early months of

the war, an entire brigade of the London Territorial Rifles reputedly volunteered for

the Front after hearing one of his sermons.[39] Harry Sackville Lawson, headmaster of

Buxton College and a lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, regarded the war as the

[35] See G K Nelson, *Spiritualism and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p.156.
[36] Sir Oliver Lodge, *Raymond, or, Life and death with examples of the evidence for survival of memory and affection after death* (London: Methuen & Co., 1916).
[37] Nelson (1969), p.157. In 1925, Hannen Swaffer, the well-known journalist and editor of *The People* announced his conversion to spiritualism (p.159).
[38] Nelson (1969), p.157).
[39] Wilkinson (1978), p.35.

latest in a long line of righteous conflicts. and wrote to his former pupils from the

Front. saying

> I've got one thing in particular to say to you all -    It's a Christian thing. and
> it's a British thing. It's what the Bible teaches – it's what the Christian martyrs
> suffered in persecution for  It's the story of the Crusaders. of the
> Reformation. of the downfall of the power of Spain. of our colonization. of the
> destruction of Napoleon's might. of the abolition of slavery. and of the coming
> awakening of Germany. The thing is this: Playing the game for the game's
> sake.[40]

This statement exemplifies the upper-class chivalric tradition that Mark Girouard has

discussed in detail and which was largely disseminated through institutions such as

that at which Lawson had taught. The idea of 'playing the game' - originally related to

the public school view of the moral value of sport - became transferred onto the war.

and young upper-class men who had been imbued with the 'knightly' values of

honour, devotion to duty and protection of the weak. responded to the call to fight.

Patriotic and Christian notions of chivalry had also been relayed to the working classes

through the boys' clubs established by the churches and charities in poor areas.[41] and

recruits from all classes were encouraged. by the clergy in particular. to regard

themselves as participating in a moral and spiritual conflict. As Girouard notes.

however. 'knightly epithets were more likely to be attached to upper class soldiers'.[42]

But this was not a war fought solely by noblemen. and 'chivalry' was at odds both with

modern warfare and. with its feudal echoes. a society that was progressing towards

mass democratisation. In addition. 'crusade' was an inappropriate metaphor for the war

itself: the idea of the soldier as 'knight' relying upon comparisons with the cavalry.

which were hardly used during a war that was largely fought in trenches. and in which

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[40] Harry Sackville Lawson. letter from France dated 3 July. 1917. In John Laffin. ed.. *Letters from the Front. 1914-1918* (London: J M Dent & Sons Ltd.. 1973). p.83.
[41] Girouard (1981). pp.250-253.
[42] Girouard (1981). p.287.

men of all classes effectively became foot soldiers. Yet the imagery of 'crusade' took

hold, and was also found in popular songs generated by the war. A selection of these,

entitled *Songs of the Last Crusade*, was published in 1917.[43] The titular song, dated

January 1915, is attributed to the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC), and

portrays the army doctor as a 'knight', whose insignia is the (red) cross:

> ... (From treacherous invader,
> From scathe in field or fight,
> God guard my young crusader,
> Geneva's swordless knight) ...
>
> The prayers of those that love them
> Be more than shield or blade -
> Spread Thou Thy might above them:
> God bless the Last Crusade!

An appeal for funds on behalf of the St John Ambulance Association also drew an

analogy between the medical auxiliary and the medieval crusader, in an advertisement

that appeared in *Punch* in October 1914.[44] This shows Red Cross workers tending to a

wounded soldier, and being watched by a shadowy knight who holds his sword over

them to make the sign of the cross (see Figure 4). The significance of the ghostly

crusader is complex: he evokes the Christian 'martyrs' of a much earlier 'holy war',

and in holding the cross over the scene, seems to be both a priestly figure and a

conduit for divine protection. He also signals the longevity of the St John Ambulance

Association, and the text reminds readers that the group's name derives from the

Knights Hospitallers, the Order of St John in Jerusalem, which was founded during

the crusades.

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[43] Ella McFadyen, *Songs of the Last Crusade: Verses of the Great War* (North Sydney: Winn & Co., Printers, Ridge St., 1917).

[44] Advertisement for St John Ambulance, in *Punch*, 21 October 1914, p.334.

The St. John Ambulance Association, which forms part of the Red Cross Organisation of Great Britain, derives its name and traditions from the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitallers), founded at the time of the Crusades. It has at this moment many thousands of workers engaged in tending the wounded at the seat of war and in the hospitals of the Order.

In peace time it does not appeal to the public for subscriptions, but under the stress of war it finds itself in urgent need of help, and is absolutely compelled to ask for funds. Gifts should be sent to the Chief Secretary, Colonel Sir Herbert C. Perrott, Bt., C.B., at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, E.C., and cheques should be crossed " London County and Westminster Bank, Lothbury," and made payable to the St. John Ambulance Association. In aid of its work, a Concert (at which Madame Patti will sing) is to be given at the Albert Hall on Saturday afternoon, October 24th.

Figure 4

**Finding appeal for St. John Ambulance, in *Punch*, 21 October 1914, p.334.**

Despite criticism from some quarters. then. the idea of the war as a battle for the future of Christendom took hold. particularly among the civilian population. But this did not necessarily amount to a religious revival. One need not have been a regular churchgoer to respond to the idea that the British were united in a moral and therefore justified struggle against Prussian expansionism. Not only was the Christian rhetoric dramatic and emotive. it also suggested Britain's moral superiority in the conflict and offered a basis for the expression of a sense of national unity. In pamphlets, sermons and the popular press. Germany was depicted as having renounced Christianity. and 'evidence' was produced in support of this. In September 1914 *Punch* reprinted a cartoon that had originally appeared in October 1898. in response to the Kaiser's visit to Damascus. during which he had pledged German support for the Muslim nations. It portrays the Kaiser as a false crusader. *en route* to the Holy Land in the guise of a Christian. but actually seeking an alliance with Turkey (see Figure 5). By 1914 the two nations were allies. and the cartoon was presented as 'prophetic' [45]

In the context of a 'holy war'. in which divine sanction was being invoked even as huge numbers of people were dying. it is not surprising that there was a strong desire for 'proof' of the existence of an interventionist God. This is apparent in the stories of 'miracles' that emerged in relation to the war. of which the account of 'the Angels at Mons' is an example. The origin of the story was a piece of fictional writing by Arthur Machen entitled 'The Bowmen'. published in the *Evening News* on 29 September 1914. in which the English archers of the Battle of Agincourt provided

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[45] In 1898. Britain and Germany were negotiating a possible alliance to relieve tension over the building up of German naval power. The Kaiser's Damascus speech aroused suspicion over his sincerity in the discussions with Britain. particularly as Germany had economic interests in the Near East. in the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railway

8  The New Rake's Progress.

COOK'S CRUSADER.

*Imperial Knight Templar (the German Emperor—to SALADIN).* "WHAT!! THE CHRISTIAN POWERS PUTTING PRESSURE UPON YOU, MY DEAR FRIEND!! HORRIBLE! I CAN'T THINK HOW PEOPLE CAN DO SUCH THINGS!"

*October 15, 1898.*

.·. The Kaiser sympathises with the Turk.

**Figure 5**

'Cook's Crusader', cartoon appearing in *Punch*,
16 September 1914, p.8. Reprinted from *Punch*, 15 October 1899.

covering fire for the British forces retreating from Mons. This fantasy of divine intervention on behalf of the Allies, demonstrated by the 'resurrection' of the dead from an earlier war, took hold. The Nonconformist minister Dr R F Horton referred to the tale as 'truth' in a sermon of 1915, and Bishop Moule of Durham expressed his belief in the story. The government exploited the story's propaganda potential, and gave the Reverend A A Boddy permission to publish *The Real Angels of Mons* (1915), a collection of purportedly 'eyewitness accounts' of the event.[46] Such stories, combined with pseudo-academic discussions of German history and philosophy and the denunciation of Germany as 'godless' by both clergy and politicians, served to justify Britain's involvement in the war and to glorify its purpose. The idea of a 'holy war' rendered Christianity and warfare compatible, and allowed British participation in the conflict to be portrayed as a matter of chivalry, piety, and service to God, rather than the result of imperial rivalry. It also, perhaps, served partly to assuage civilian guilt at the scale of the slaughter. Most soldiers, however, quickly became disillusioned by their experience of war, and the rhetoric of 'crusade' found in Lawson's letter and in the AAMC song became less common. Modern warfare was far from glorious, chivalrous, or 'playing the game'. As an officer at the Somme in 1916 put it: 'I shall never look on warfare either as fine or sporting again. It reduces men to shivering beasts'.[47] Many lost their faith as a result of their experiences. One officer wrote to his wife concerning the religious education of their three-year-old son, saying

> Don't encourage Vallie to talk about God ... tell him all the fairy tales or
> nonsense stories you please but about God and religious subjects only tell him

[46] Wilkinson (1978), pp.194-195.
[47] Letter from Graham Greenwell, Light Infantry officer, from the Somme, 17 August 1916. In Laffin, ed. (1973), pp.54-55.

> what you yourself unfeignedly believe to be true: if nothing, tell him
> nothing.[48]

While the 'crusade' trope as described above was meant to promote a Christian sense

of unity and collective mission during wartime, ironically the experience of modern

'holy war' resulted, for some, in a loss of religious faith and disillusionment with the

chivalric ideal. In what follows, I examine the role of this imagery in providing an

outlet for the collective hostility and xenophobia that is inevitably generated by the

conditions of war.

## 2. 'You can't make a fellow German by saying he is'

During the medieval crusades, despite the fact that ostensibly it was Islam that

threatened Christian hegemony, Jews in Europe became subject to attack as the

perceived enemies of Christianity. Similarly, in wartime Britain the Jewish population

became the focus of suspicion, as the emphasis on a Christian national identity

inevitably aroused hostility towards both foreign nationals and non-Christians. The

non-Christian status ascribed to Germany and the fact that many Jews had German-

sounding names meant that some of the anti-German feeling generated by the war

became directed towards them. Many anglicised their names to distract attention from

their German connections, and even George V felt compelled to change the royal

name from Saxe-Coburg Gotha to Windsor in 1917.

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[48] Letter from the actor and playwright Harold Chapin to his wife, 1 September 1915, in Laffin, ed. (1973), pp.32-33.

Because of their perceived German connections. Jews were regarded by some as disloyal to Britain. and cast as potential traitors or pacifists. Any grounds for such accusations. usually slim. became greatly exaggerated as a result of the Christian nationalism engendered by the conflict. In June 1914. for example. the Jewish Peace Society. presided over by Chief Rabbi Dr Hertz. met at the Jews' College in London to discuss the prospect of a European conflict. At the time. members of the group considered pacifism to be consistent with their religious duty and an important part of Jewry's participation in British current affairs. Hertz admitted that Jewish financial interests in Britain and Germany were also a consideration. but aside from this. he argued that Jews should 'have a corporate profession of their protest against war … as other religions had'.[49] The existence of this group and its acknowledgement of international financial links between Jews helped fuel later suspicions regarding Jews' loyalty to Britain. Yet unlike the medieval 'holy wars'. the First World War was a 'crusade' in which Jews participated. When war broke out. Jews in Britain enlisted in a higher proportion than did gentiles. but despite this. their loyalty remained under suspicion as the war progressed.[50]

Another fear associated with Jews in Britain was that they acted as spies for Germany.[51] In 1914 Isaac Rosenberg and David Bomberg were arrested on suspicion of espionage whilst on holiday at Sandown on the Isle of Wight. The two men were students at the Slade School of Art and had been sketching fortifications near their

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[49] Meeting of the Jewish Peace Society. June 1914. reported in the *Times*. 8 June 1914. p.54.
[50] Figures in the *British Jewry Book of Honour* (1922) indicate a higher proportion of enlistment among Jews than in other social groups. See Sharman Kadish. *'A Good Jew and a Good Englishman': The Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade 1895-1995* (London: Valentine Mitchell. 1995). p.60.
[51] In fact. 30 German spies were arrested in Britain during the war. of whom 12 were executed. 1 committed suicide. and the rest were imprisoned. See Phillip Knightley. *The Second Oldest Profession: The Spy as Bureaucrat. Patriot. Fantasist and Whore* (London: Deutsch. 1986). p.39.

lodgings. They were not released until their landlady verified their identities.[52] Under more suspicious circumstances. Princess Lowenstein-Wertheim, a naturalised German by marriage, was arrested in 1917 under the 'Five Mile Act' for exceeding this distance from her registered address without a permit. Prior to her wedding in 1897 she had been known as Lady Anne Savile, daughter of the Earl of Mexborough. Her husband had died in 1899. She had gone to Manchester to enquire about the progress of an aeroplane she was having built, which she wanted finished as soon as possible. The urgency of the matter and the fact that she refused to give a name or address aroused suspicion, but despite this, a combination of class factors and her English parentage secured her release with a fine.[53]

Others were not so lucky. In 1915 - a year which brought zeppelin raids; the use of poison gas by the German army; the Bryce report on alleged German atrocities, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and the execution of nurse Edith Cavell - 'anti-German' riots took place in Leeds and London, and Jewish shops and homes were attacked. The Anglo-Jewish writer Gladys Bronwyn Stern's novel *Children of No Man's Land* (1919) explores the complexities of national, religious, and ethnic identification for Jews living in Britain during the war, and describes the effects of anti-Germanism on the Anglo-Jewish community.[54] Stern (1890-1973) was born in London to a middle-class Jewish family. She had no strict religious upbringing and considered her orthodox cousin 'a strange animal indeed',[55] but she was familiar with the work of

[52] Joseph Cohen, *Journey to the Trenches: The Life of Isaac Rosenberg 1890-1918* (London: Robson Books, 1975), p.93.
[53] *Daily Graphic*, 6 October 1917, p. 8
[54] G B Stern, *Children of No Man's Land* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1919). All other references to this novel will be made within the text. Stern wrote a number of novels, the most well-known being the series on the Rakonitz family, which included *Tents of Israel* (1924, reissued as *The Matriarch* in 1948), *A Deputy was King* (1926), *Mosaic* (1930), *Shining and Free* (1935), and *The Young Matriarch* (1942). She also wrote essays, and published work on Jane Austen.
[55] G B Stern, *Monogram* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1936), pp.286-7.

other Anglo-Jewish novelists, and read Grace Aguilar as a child.[56] Stern knew the

Anglo-Jewish writer W L George, but as she put it, 'nearly all my friends happened to

be Goyem'.[57] She converted to Catholicism in 1947. Her early novels engage with the

question of assimilation, particularly with regard to Jewish women, and *Pantomime*

(1914) and *Twos and Threes* (1916) are discussed in Chapter Three.

*Children of No Man's Land* describes the war experience of an Anglo-Jewish

family of German descent, and seems to have been aimed at a general rather than a

specifically Jewish readership.[58] Ferdinand Marcus was born in England to German

Jewish parents and has his certificate of naturalisation. At Christmas 1914 he is forced

to resign from his job at the Stock Exchange, accused of spying and treason, and the

family move to a boarding house for the duration of the war. His son Richard wants to

enlist, but is too young. Walking through the East End in 1915, shortly after the

sinking of the *Lusitania*, Richard becomes involved in an 'anti-German' riot, in which

a baker's shop, with the name 'Gottlieb Schnabel' painted on the window, is attacked.

To Richard, the riot represents an opportunity for vicarious involvement in the war:

'this was action; this was war; he was in direct contact with it at last' (p.73), and he

pushes to the front of the mob as they enter the building. He finds the Schnabel family

cowering in the bakehouse, and, seeing with a shock that they do not resemble the

caricature of 'the Hun', diverts the crowd away. Arriving home, he announces his

determination to enlist, only to be informed by his father that he is in fact German,

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[56] Stern (1936), p.38.

[57] Stern (1936), pp.286-7.

[58] Stern seems to have been ambivalent with regard to becoming a writer of 'Jewish' fiction and attempted to balance the particular and the universal in her work. Her early novels at times draw on the Victorian 'apologist' tradition of Anglo-Jewish literature - her characters are preoccupied with transcending a problematic 'Jewishness' in order to assimilate - but she also engages with the persistence of 'racial' and gender stereotypes in liberal culture, and their impact on Jewish women in particular. For an analysis of these issues in Anglo-Jewish writing, see Bryan Cheyette, 'The Other Self: Anglo-Jewish Fiction and the Representation of Jews in England, 1875-1905', in David Cesarani, ed., *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp.97-111.

and, since he is nearing military age, is likely to be interned. Richard protests that 'You can't make a fellow German by saying he is', but it is no use (p.79).

From the soldier's perspective, no man's land was a dangerous territory, a place where the wounded became stranded and alienated from their group, caught between the lines of national demarcation. In Stern's novel this territory becomes a metaphor for the experience of Jews in wartime Britain, who inhabit a space between national identities, and become a threat in a war widely portrayed as waged in defence of Christianity. The Marcuses and other Jewish families live a nomadic existence, moving between boarding houses, 'the half-and-half-people' who regard themselves as English but are perceived as German (p.85). At the end of the novel Richard, having endured hostility from people who were formerly his friends, prepares for internment, a fate that he accepts as inevitable, if unfair.

There were some attempts to stem the tide of anti-alienism that swept through Britain during the war. In a pamphlet entitled *Christian Conduct in War Time*, W H Moberly reminded readers of the Christian duty to love one's enemies, stating that 'for private individuals to treat all Germans as pariahs and to boycott them socially is ... cruel as well as unnecessary'. Such attitudes were not 'Christian', and to regard the Germans as 'unclean' was to share the snobbish and segregationist views held by 'Jews ... of Gentiles, aristocrats of the multitude, white men of coloured men'.[57] As the war progressed, however, the idea of the 'Unseen Hand' - the notion that German influences were undermining the war effort from within Britain - gathered strength. In March 1917 the Women's Imperial Defence Council passed a resolution demanding a Royal Commission to investigate 'that treacherous influence in our midst known as

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[57] W H Moberly, M.A., *Christian Conduct in War Time*, Papers for War Time Series No 8 (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), pp.14, 15.

the Unseen Hand'.[60] The meeting was presided over by Mrs Parker, sister of the late

Lord Kitchener, and addressed by, amongst others, the antisemitic alarmists Arnold

White and Henry Beamish.[61] But whilst the 'Unseen Hand' prompted alarm in some

quarters, it caused amusement in others. In July 1916 a contributor to *Punch* wrote 'I

LIKE the *Unseen Hand*. It makes excellent copy … And you are not under the

disagreeable necessity of proving your facts.'[62] The writer attributed the origins and

popularity of the idea to the press, particularly the *Daily News* and the *Daily Mail*, and

satirised the hysteria over 'enemy aliens' as follows:

> Who is it that protects Government officials possessing wives with German
> uncles? The Unseen Hand. … Who lets the alien enemy in our midst go
> uninterned? Why, an Unseen Hand slams the prison gates in their very faces.[63]

The notion of the 'Unseen Hand' informed suspicion of Jewish soldiers at the

Front, and even Jewish chaplains came under scrutiny. Michael Adler, senior Jewish

chaplain to the armed forces, was almost arrested as a German spy by an officer who

did not recognise his *Magen David* badge. Whenever possible Adler organised

services for Jewish soldiers, often holding these in cinemas, which he referred to as

'cinema-gogues'.[64] To assist him in his arrangements he was given access to the battle

plans, which he copied down in Hebrew. This aroused the interest of Staff officers,

who, as Adler put it, 'joked' that the information might fall into enemy hands.[65]

Anxious to portray an atmosphere of harmony at the Front, Adler described incidents

in which Jewish soldiers would attempt to undermine enemy morale by shouting

[60] Meeting of the Women's Imperial Defence Council, reported in the *Times*, 5 March 1917, p.5.
[61] Arnold White later became a founder member of the ultra-nationalist British Brothers League, formed in 1901, and Henry Beamish a member of the Britons' Society, founded in 1919.
[62] N R Martin, 'The Unseen Hand', in *Punch*, July 12, 1916, p.42.
[63] Martin, 'The Unseen Hand', in *Punch*, July 12, 1916, p.42.
[64] Michael Adler, *A Jewish Chaplain on the Western Front 1914-1918*, (Reprinted from *The Jewish Guardian*, 1920), pp.24, 22.
[65] Adler (1920), p.9.

insults in Yiddish, which the Germans could understand." For this, he suggests, they earned the praise and admiration of their fellow-combatants. Private Frank Richards of the Royal Welch Fusiliers gave a different view, and describes the soldiers' hostility towards a German-speaking platoon officer, who would get drunk and roam about no man's land, shouting abuse at the enemy. The men suspected him of giving away secrets, and a sergeant was detailed to watch him.[67]

Adler's account of his experiences suggests that there was mutual respect among Jewish and gentile soldiers, and that the war provided an opportunity for him to educate Christians about the tenets of Judaism. The letters of Isaac Rosenberg, who enlisted as a private in 1915, reveal a different experience.[68] Rosenberg enlisted in October 1915, partly to alleviate his family's poverty, since the families of soldiers received a small payment from the government. At the Front, he encountered antisemitism from both ranks and officers,[69] and wrote the poem 'The Jew':

> Moses, from whose loins I sprung,
> Lit by a lamp in his blood
> Ten immutable rules, a moon
> For mutable lampless men.
> The blonde, the bronze, the ruddy,
> With the same heaving blood,
> Keep tide to the moon of Moses.
> Then why do they sneer at me?[70]

[66] Adler (1920), p.13.
[67] Private Frank Richards, *Old Soldiers Never Die* (London: Faber & Faber, 1933, reprinted 1964), pp.159-160.
[68] See Cohen (1975), p.64. Rosenberg (1890-1918) was born in Bristol to Lithuanian Jewish parents. His father had fled Russia to escape conscription into the tsarist army. In 1897 the family moved to the East End of London, and Isaac attended Baker Street School, a State school that sought to anglicise the children of Jewish immigrants and to provide a secular alternative to the Jews' Free Schools. Rosenberg was a highly-skilled poet and painter and was supported by, among others, Edward Marsh, patron of the arts and private secretary to Churchill during the Dardanelles campaign. He also received support from Anglo-Jewry, and in 1911 entered the Slade School of Art, his fees paid by Mrs Herbert Cohen, Mrs E D Lowy, and Lily Delissa Joseph. During his studies he met a number of other Jewish artists and writers, including David Bomberg, Mark Gertler, Simon Weinstein (later Stephen Winsten), Joseph Leftwich, John Rodker, and Lazarus Aaronson.
[69] Cohen (1975), p.127.
[70] Isaac Rosenberg, 'The Jew', undated, but written whilst he was in France as a soldier. In Ian Parsons, ed., *The Collected Works of Isaac Rosenberg* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979), p.101

The reference to the Ten Commandments in this poem reminds Christians that they, too 'Keep tide to the moon of Moses', yet as the final line makes clear, Christian respect for Moses the lawgiver did not extend to the Jews of the modern period. The hostility he encountered, combined with the effects of trench conditions upon his health, prompted Rosenberg to seek alternatives to active service. In 1916 he expressed an interest in joining the camouflage corps led by the Jewish artist Solomon J Solomon, and a year later was considering a return to civilian life, working as a draughtsman, or in munitions.[1] In 1918 Rosenberg applied for a transfer to the recently-formed Jewish Legion and told Edward Marsh, one of his patrons, that he wanted to write a battle song for the Jewish troops.[2] His application for transfer was never answered, and he was killed on 1 April 1918.

Jewish officers also encountered hostility at the Front. Gilbert Frankau was born into a Jewish family but baptised an Anglican.[3] He enlisted at the start of the war, and went to France with the Royal Field Artillery in March 1915. Prior to the war he worked for his father's cigar importing business, and had also published some fiction. He continued to write whilst at the Front, both for civilian readers and for the trench journals, to which he was a regular contributor. These journals, the *Wipers*

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[1] See Rosenberg's letters to Edward Marsh, the first dated August 1916 and the second postmarked 18 January 1917. In Parsons, ed. (1979), pp.242-3 and 251 respectively.

[2] Letter from Isaac Rosenberg to Edward Marsh, France, 28 March 1918. In Parsons, ed., (1979) p.272.

[3] Gilbert Frankau (1884-1952) was the eldest son of Julia Davis and Arthur Frankau. His grandfather Joseph had emigrated to Britain from Bavaria in 1837, and set up a cigar import business in London. His mother Julia used the pen name 'Frank Danby', and wrote the novel *Dr. Phillips: A Maida Vale Idyll* (1887), a sharply critical satire of the preoccupations and aspirations of London's middle-class Jews. The Frankaus discouraged all their five children from identifying with Judaism, and Gilbert was baptised into the Anglican Church in 1897, aged thirteen. He was educated at Eton, and was expected to go to Oxford, but joined the family cigar business instead. He served in the 9th East Surrey Regiment and the Royal Field Artillery during the Great War, but resigned his commission in 1917, suffering from war neurosis. He wrote poems, short stories and novels. He was married three times, in each case to gentile women, and converted to Catholicism in the last years of his life.

*Times*, the *B.E.F. Times* and the *New Church Times*, were unofficial satirical

publications, and almost every issue included one of Frankau's poems. Eventually the

editor of the *Wipers Times* received complaints that the journal was dominated by

poetry, and Frankau came under attack. A feature entitled 'Aunt Annie's Corner'

included a poem that suggested that Frankau was less than a full participant in the

war, and read

> There was a little man.
> He had a little gun.
> He shoots it when he can.
> But has never hit a Hun.[74]

Frankau had a breakdown in August 1916, precipitated by his experience at the

Somme, and was transferred to Italy on propaganda work. Following this, the *B.E.F.*

*Times* published a poem that referred to Frankau directly as 'valiant with his motto

"Write is Might"' and suggested that his literary ambitions had detracted from his

military performance. Not only did the play on Germany's perceived 'motto' of

'Might is Right' insinuate a German connection, based on Frankau's name and his

apparent lack of commitment to the war effort, but the final line of the poem implied

that he was a bad poet, in the assertion that

FRANKAU WOULD NEED A KEATS IF HE WERE SHOOTING!![75]

The tension between Frankau and his fellow-soldiers, which seems apparent from the

trench journals, may have been partly owing to his continuing pursuit of literary

success whilst serving his commission. During his time at the front, he published two

collections of war verse which were well received by civilian readers, entitled *The*

[74] 'Aunt Annie's Corner: Tender Talks to Tiny Tots', *New Church Times*, 26 May, 1916.
[75] 'Apologia Pro Vitus-Ejus', by 'Bees Even', *B.E.F. Times*, 5 March 1917.

*Guns* (1915)[76] and *The City of Fear* (1917)[77] This, in combination with his German name, seems to have prompted suspicions that he was not fully committed to the war.

In summary, despite the fact that Jews and gentiles fought and died alongside one another in the First World War, Jewish civilians faced ostracism and attack, and Jewish soldiers encountered hostility from their fellow-combatants. Sometimes this was based on soldiers' envy of the extra leave that Jews were occasionally granted for religious holidays. George Coppard, an infantryman in the Queen's Royal West Surrey regiment and later a gunner in the Machine Gun Corps, recalls that

> There was only one person I knew whose professed religious belief did him
> any good, and that was a Jew named Levinsky. He came to our company on a
> draft, and had only been with us for about four weeks when he was given a
> week's leave in Blighty to attend customs in connexion with the Passover.[78]

Resentment and suspicion were also generated by the exemption of Russian Jewish immigrants from the 1916 Conscription Act. The Anglo-Jewish Home Secretary Herbert Samuel had allowed the principle of voluntarism to remain open to them, in recognition of their status as refugees from tsarist Russia, and in acknowledgement of their understandable reluctance to fight on the same side as the regime that had oppressed them. After the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in March 1917, however, politicians and newspapers in the East End launched a 'conscription or deportation' campaign, which spread to the national press, and in July 1917 the Conscription Act

[76] The collection of war verse entitled *The Guns* is incorporated into Gilbert Frankau, *The City of Fear and other poems* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1918). *The Guns* is dated September 1915.
[77] Gilbert Frankau, *The City of Fear and other poems* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1918).
[78] George Coppard, *With a Machine Gun to Cambrai: The Tale of a Young Tommy in Kitchener's Army 1914-1918* (London: HMSO, 1969), p. 73.

was extended to include Russian Jews.[79] Some of these men served with the Jewish

Legion in Palestine, and their experiences are discussed in Chapter Four. The Balfour

Declaration, issued in November 1917, pledged British support for a Jewish homeland

in Palestine, and the deployment of Jewish battalions in that country prompted

sections of the press to draw comparisons with the Exodus story. This aspect of the

Palestine campaign was obscured, however, by its more widespread representation as

the last Christian crusade.

## 3. The 'last crusade'

Palestinian Jews also suffered as a result of the outbreak of war. Alexander

Aaronsohn was born in the Jewish settlement of Zicron-Jacob. In his memoir *With the*

*Turks in Palestine* (1917), he notes that as citizens of the Turkish empire both Jews

and Christians were called up under the Young Turk Constitution of 1909.[80] Initially,

there was broad support among Palestinian Jews for the Turkish side, since 'we could

not forget that for six hundred years Turkey has held her gates wide open to the Jews

who fled from the Spanish Inquisition and similar ministrations of other civilized

countries'.[81] Following the alliance with Germany, however, Aaronsohn notes that

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[79] Sharman Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp.46, 47. Newspapers covering the 'conscription or deportation' campaign included the London *Evening Standard*, the *Evening News*, the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Mail*.

[80] Alexander Aaronsohn, *With the Turks in Palestine* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1917). The book promotes the idea of a mutually beneficial alliance between the Jews and the British with regard to Palestine. Alexander Aaronsohn was working for British military intelligence in the Middle East when his memoir was published. He received a Distinguished Order of Service (DSO) for his work. His brother Aaron, a scientist of international renown, and his sister Sarah also worked for British intelligence. See Anthony Verrier, ed., *Agents of Empire: Anglo-Zionist Intelligence Operations 1915-1919. Brigadier Walter Gribbon, Aaron Aaronsohn and the NILI Ring* (London & Washington: Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1995), p.226. NILI stands for the Hebrew motto 'Nezah Israel Lo Ieshaker' ('Jewish Eternity shall not lie').

[81] Alexander Aaronsohn (1917), p.14.

Jewish and Christian conscripts were discriminated against, and made to serve in labour battalions under Arab supervision, which, he suggests, had the effect of arousing their support for the Allies.[82] Eventually Alexander, along with his older brother Aaron,[83] and his sister Sarah, became spies for the British in Palestine, and the information they supplied was used in planning the invasion led by General Allenby in 1917.

The British plans to invade Palestine meant that the idea of the war as a 'crusade' took on a more literal meaning. As in the medieval period Palestine was occupied by an Islamic power, and a 'Christian' army proposed to recapture it from Turkey and return Jerusalem to Christian control. The notion of historical repetition, the idea that 'Christian' soldiers of the twentieth century were retracing the steps of the medieval crusaders, appealed to many, including King George V, who referred to the Palestine campaign as the 'final crusade'.[84] Nor was this view confined to civilians: Donald Maxwell, who served in Palestine with the Admiralty during the war, described his realisation when writing his diary of that period, that he was 'unconsciously piecing together a story, the story of the Last Crusade'.[85] His memoir, entitled *The Last Crusade*, expresses his excitement at following in the path of his medieval predecessors, and with regard to the location of the British Headquarters, situated between Ramleh and Ludd, he wrote

[82] Alexander Aaronsohn (1917), p.39.
[83] Aaron Aaronsohn kept a diary whilst working for British military intelligence from 1915-19, in which he recorded the frustration of working with the British, and noted that typically, he 'encountered nothing but distrust and reticence, smallness and pettiness'. See Verrier, ed. (1995), p.226.
[84] See Colonel R Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary 1917 to 1956* (London: The Cresset Press, 1959), p.11. Meinertzhagen was Chief Intelligence Officer to the British forces in Palestine during the war. His diary records the hostility among the British forces in the Middle East to the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish soldiers.
[85] Donald Maxwell, *The Last Crusade* (London: John Lane, 1920), ix.

> History repeats itself, for here was General Headquarters and from here the attack on Jerusalem was planned, as here in the days of the First Crusade the march on Jerusalem was begun eight hundred and eighteen years before.[86]

Raymond Savage, a British officer who served under Allenby in Palestine, described his sense of historical repetition when looking out over the Plain of Sharon, prior to the final battle with the Turkish army:

> I thrilled until I literally shuddered, for I realized that along this identical sea-road, centuries before, had ridden Coeur-de-Lion and his Knights to fight for an ideal, a quest not so vastly different from that upon which these soldiers of the Empire had set out this morning in September 1918.[87]

Savage did not specify what that 'ideal' was, but his account suggests that British officers in Palestine did not regard the campaign as a moral or Christian 'crusade' in the way that the clergy and some politicians in Britain did; their interest was grounded in military history and imperial expansion. There was, however, for both soldiers and civilians a strong romantic appeal in this fantasy of the repetition of history, which this time would end in success for the British 'crusaders'. Led by General Allenby, the British captured Jerusalem from the Turkish army on 9 December 1917 and made a triumphal entry into the city two days later. Allenby's biographer, Brian Gardner, notes that although he was not a religious man, the event generated stories of the piety of the 'Victor of Jerusalem': 'One account held that Allenby had entered Jerusalem with a crucifix in his right hand and a Bible in his left. Another had it that he had prayed on his knees, in mud, on entering the city'.[88] *Punch* celebrated the victory with a cartoon, dated 19 December 1917, which showed a ghostly Richard the Lionheart gazing with satisfaction on Jerusalem (see Figure 6). By this means, Britain's imperial

[86] Maxwell (1920), p.104.
[87] Raymond Savage, *Allenby of Armageddon: A record of the career and campaigns of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, GCB, GCMG* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925), p.257
[88] Brian Gardner, *Allenby* (London: Cassell, 1965), p.257

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—December 19, 1917.

## THE LAST CRUSADE.

Cœur-de-Lion (*looking down on the Holy City*). "MY DREAM COMES TRUE!"

**Figure 6**

'The Last Crusade', cartoon appearing in *Punch*,
19 December 1917, p.415.

expansion in the Middle East was romanticised, and the capture of Palestine in 1917 portrayed as the realisation of an ancient British dream. Allenby's success, it is suggested, had concluded a venture begun centuries before, and now the dead king could rest in peace, assured that Jerusalem was finally under British control. Allenby's return to Britain was celebrated in another cartoon published in *Punch* in September 1919, which depicted him as a victorious crusader, being welcomed home by Britannia (see Figure 7). In this image the crusader is a chivalric figure, the handsome 'knight' who returns to Britain, his imperial 'Lady-love', bearing the gift of Palestine. Allenby's 'crusader' status had been made 'official' shortly after the capture of Jerusalem, when the Duke of Connaught awarded him the Knighthood of the Order of St. John at a ceremony in the city.[86]

It was through the Palestine campaign and the British entry into Jerusalem that the popular view of the war as a Christian 'crusade' was consolidated and found its strongest imaginative appeal. As Karen Armstrong notes, however, the Christian concept of 'holy war' has a precedent in the Old Testament. The themes of pilgrimage, invasion and conquest that are combined in the idea of 'crusade' are also found in the Exodus story, in the long journey through the desert and the battles between the returning Israelites and the Canaanites over settlement of the land.[87] In British press representations of the significance and purpose of the Palestine campaign, 'exodus' was briefly in competition with 'crusade' as a rhetorical theme. 'Exodus' was used specifically with regard to plans for a Jewish Legion which were announced in mid-1917, and also the Balfour Declaration, issued in November that

[86] Savage (1925), p.246.
[87] Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p.5.

THE RETURN FROM THE CRUSADE.

FIELD-MARSHAL ALLENBY. "'SINGING FROM PALESTINE HITHER I COME;
LADY-LOVE, LADY-LOVE, WELCOME ME HOME.'"
BRITANNIA. "I DO INDEED—WITH ALL MY HEART!"

Figure 7

**'The Return from the Crusade', cartoon appearing in *Punch*, 17 September 1919, p.251.**

year, the anticipated return of Jews to Palestine being trumpeted as a re-enactment of the biblical narrative. These aspects of the Palestine campaign will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

To conclude this chapter, prior to August 1914, Church leaders in Germany and Britain had been closely involved, through the missionary project and their efforts to promote ecumenism. After 4 August 1914, various means were used to overcome the fact that Britain was at war with another Christian nation, and one of these was the portrayal of Germany as a religious enemy. Academics lent authority to representations of Germany as anti-Christian, through pseudo-intellectual discussions of German philosophy and history, which, it was argued, had produced the doctrine of the supremacy of the German state. These ideas were popularised in pamphlets, political speeches, sermons, and the press. There were also rumours, based on the alliance between Germany and Turkey, that the Kaiser had converted to Islam and was claiming that Germans were descended from the prophet Mohammed.[91] Alternatively, the Kaiser appeared in the guise of Herod, an analogy in which the war became the massacre of the innocents ordered by the king in an attempt to prevent the birth of Jesus, and consequently, the Christian faith. Germany, therefore, was portrayed not only as non-Christian, but actively hostile towards Christianity.[92] The construction of Germany as a 'pagan' power provided moral justification for Britain's entry into the war, and gave rise to the notion, particularly among civilians, that this was a 'holy war', waged in defence of Christianity itself. In this respect, the Church

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[91] See, for example, Alexander Aaronsohn (1917), pp.36-37, and Figure 4, the *Punch* cartoon showing the Kaiser as a false crusader, discussed earlier in this chapter.
[92] See 'Herod!', in Ella McFadyen, *Songs of the Last Crusade* (1917), and C. L. Graves, 'The Imperial Infanticide', in *Punch*, 30 December 1914, p.537.

had an opportunity to regain some of the authority it had lost through its failure to keep pace with the political and social changes of the pre-war years. The patriotism expressed by many leading clergymen and their efforts to mediate in wartime industrial disputes indicate concerns regarding the effect of the war upon Christianity in Britain, and a desire to ensure that the Church had a role in post-war reconstruction.

The Christian imagery with which Britain waged its propaganda war aroused hostility, which, although initially applied to the Germans as a 'pagan' people, also became directed towards an older and closer target, the Jews. As the war progressed, Jews living in Britain became conflated with Germans in the popular imagination, whether out of ignorance or racist opportunism, and came under attack. The effect of this confusion between Jews and Germans was the subject of G B Stern's novel *Children of No Man's Land* (1919), in which Jewish characters go into hiding in boarding houses during the war, or change their names in an attempt to conceal their origins. The pressure to efface 'Jewishness' in pursuit of 'Englishness' is a frequent theme in early twentieth-century Anglo-Jewish literature, and Chapter Three discusses examples of this produced during or shortly after the war. But it was not only Jews that were engaged in a struggle with origins in wartime Britain. In its efforts to assert a hegemonic Protestant national identity, the Anglican Church came into conflict with its Catholic origins. In what follows I explore how both 'Jewishness' and Catholicism threatened wartime constructions of a Protestant national identity that was itself retrograde and deeply nostalgic

# CHAPTER THREE

## Conversion, Assimilation, and National Identity

In the following poem, written in 1917, the Anglo-Jewish writer Joseph Leftwich

reminded Christians of the origins of their faith:

### The Jew (II)

All I have been, you are.
All that you are, I am.
How looks your arc-light there,
Against that dim-eyed star?

I see the East aflame.
Our Temple burns there still.
And these are but the sparks,
The great lights that you claim.

You have lain with me, and these
Your children are mine too.
Instead of conquering me,
You have my blood in you.[1]

Leftwich's poem raises a number of issues: not only does it challenge the notion of

separate 'racial' identities, it also asserts the antiquity of Judaism and the Jews' claim

to Palestine, and emphasises the relative youth of Christianity and the futility of its

struggle with its origins as a Jewish sect. It is this struggle with origins, however, that

underlies Christian proselytising towards Jews. Another factor is apocalyptic thinking;

the belief in the second coming of Christ, for which the conversion of the Jews is

considered a prerequisite. This, according to the Book of Revelation, will be followed

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[1] Joseph Leftwich, 'The Jew II', in *Along the Years. Poems 1911-1937* (London: Robert Anscombe & Co., 1937). See Chapter One note 68 for biographical information on this writer. Unlike some of the other Anglo-Jewish writers discussed in this thesis, Leftwich did not convert to Christianity, and wrote a number of poems during and after the war in which he criticised Catholicism in particular as idolatrous, and Christians in general as unsympathetic towards Jews. See 'Rome' (1924), 'In the Tube' (1916) and 'They Laugh' (1917), in Leftwich (1937).

by the final battle between the forces of 'good' and 'evil', after which the kingdom of God on earth will be established. At times of religious tension and political change, the Revelation narrative has entered into the foreground of Christian thinking, prompting renewed conversion activity, as in the English Civil War and the period following the French Revolution.[2] Millennial thinking, with its narrative of cataclysm followed by utopia has, as Mel Scult points out, offered Protestants an explanation for crisis and upheaval and the promise of a better future.[3] That future, however, is dependent not only upon the conversion of 'unbelievers', but also upon demonstrable Christian piety, in order to set the conditions for the Second Advent. Linked to the conversion of the Jews, then, is the salvation of Christians, and consequently, conversion activity has frequently been accompanied by evangelical revivals, in a dual process of proselytising and evangelising which has sought to establish a stable national identity through religious homogeneity.

Evangelical activity reflects another struggle with origins: that of Protestantism in relation to Catholicism as an older form of Christianity. Until the mid-nineteenth century the authority of the Established Church was reinforced by political disabilities against Catholics and Jews, which were removed in 1829 and 1858 respectively. Reflected in the nineteenth-century emancipation debates was a struggle over ideas of 'Englishness', since with legal rights no longer dependent upon Protestant affiliation, the notion of a Protestant national identity was destabilised. A similar struggle over religious constructions of 'Englishness' took place during the First World War, when

[2] For information on conversion discourses in Britain in the seventeenth, the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Mel Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties: A Study of the Efforts to Convert the Jews in Britain, up to the Mid Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1978).
[3] Scult (1978), p.17.

the Church attempted to claim the national tradition as Protestant. The Anglo-Catholic revival that took place at this time was perceived as a threat and suppressed. In this respect, the Church appears to have been struggling with its origins in Catholicism, and defending its authority against the resurgence of an older, more ritualised form of worship, which, under the conditions of war, was perceived by some as more appropriate. There was also a wartime increase in antisemitism which in the early years, I have argued, was related to the rhetoric of 'holy war' and a popular association between Germans and Jews. Both 'Jewishness' and Anglo-Catholicism, then, disrupted Protestant constructions of national identity at a time when this was being asserted, with the result that both groups were subject to hostility.

Prior to and following emancipation in 1858, some Jews in Britain opted for religious conversion, for what Todd Endelman has termed 'pragmatic reasons',[4] while others sought to acculturate without baptism, and find a balance between integration and the preservation of links with the Jewish community. In either case, the price of acceptance was the at least partial effacement of Jewish identity. The pressure upon Jews to transform themselves derives chiefly from gentile anxiety over the nature of Jewish 'difference', whether constructed in religious, national or cultural terms, and the internalisation of this anxiety by acculturating Jews[5] The capricious nature of such constructions can be seen in the development of political and 'racial' antisemitism after 1858. These discourses erected new barriers to assimilation to replace the old legal disabilities, and portrayed Jews as a moral, sexual or political threat to the Christian

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[4] Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1990), p.7.
[5] See Sander L Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986) for a description of the mechanisms of projection and internalisation of constructions of the Jewish 'other'.

nation. One of their effects was to increase the pressure upon Jews to assimilate, although the concept of 'racial' difference also represented 'Jewishness' as something that could not be transcended. This became intensified in the anti-alien climate of the war years, and the politics of assimilation is a recurrent theme in Anglo-Jewish writing of the period, which I discuss below.

Section one of this chapter discusses the wartime Anglo-Catholic revival and the anxieties that this generated within the Anglican Church. Many churchmen saw the war as an opportunity for Protestantism to regain its place at the centre of national life, and the Anglo-Catholic revival threatened this by revealing divisions within the Church at a time when it was seeking to strengthen its position. At the same time, the Church launched a drive to 'convert' the nation to temperance and piety, through an evangelical mission aimed at civilians, and some clergymen claimed that through the experience of war, soldiers were rediscovering their faith. I compare these claims with soldiers' use of conversion as a metaphor for what they felt was the necessary suspension of religious belief under conditions of combat. Section two looks at wartime religious conversion discourse, and concludes that despite the widespread use of millennial rhetoric in relation to the war, the conversion of the Jews remained a marginal Protestant concern. In section three I examine how some Anglo-Jewish writers, as non-Zionist Jews, attempted to define an English identity for themselves which also allowed for the preservation of Jewish traditions, and sought the resolution of seemingly conflicting ideas of 'Englishness' and 'Jewishness' in their fictional writing.

## 1. An 'exodus Romewards': conversion anxiety and national identity

During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church claimed the position of the sole Christian authority in Europe, its hegemony challenged only by Judaism and Islam. The Church launched campaigns against both Jews and Muslims, in the medieval crusades (1096-1215), and the Inquisitions of the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. The sixteenth-century Reformation, however, brought Christians into internecine conflict, over different approaches to worship.⁶ In Britain, the split with Rome occurred in the 1530s, when Henry VIII (1509-1547) declared himself Head of the Church in England and confiscated Catholic property to raise funds for the treasury. When the devoutly Catholic Mary Tudor (1553-1558) attempted to reinstate papal authority in English religious life, large numbers of Protestants were killed for their beliefs, while the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) which saw the consolidation of the Church of England, brought a return of anti-Catholic feeling. Judaism was not considered a threat to Protestant hegemony at this time, as most Jews had been expelled from Britain in 1290.⁷

Those who were not communicants in the Church of England were subject to political disabilities, which were not removed until the nineteenth century. Opposition arguments focused on the idea that membership of the Established Church was an essential component of patriotism and national consciousness. Some felt that legal

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⁶ The German Reformation took place in 1520, and the movement spread to Switzerland in 1523, Prussia in 1525, Denmark in 1536, Netherlands in 1566, and Scotland in 1560. France remained Catholic partly because Francis I was reliant on income from the Church. Hermann Kinder & Werner Hilgemann, *The Anchor Atlas of World History*, Volume I (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Anchor Press, 1974), pp.230-238.

⁷ A few Marranos (Jews of Spanish and Portugese origin, whose ancestors had been forced to convert) remained in London during the expulsion, and some Jewish merchants and physicians temporarily entered the country, but their numbers were too low to constitute any real threat to Protestantism. See Endelman (1990), p.9.

recognition of different faiths would compromise Protestant national identity, while others feared eventual domination by the previously excluded groups. In the case of Catholics, this was expressed as the threat of the possible conversion of English national identity, and stories of the horrors of the Inquisition were cited as a warning of the effects of unrestricted Catholicism upon national character.[8] The irony was, as Michael Ragussis notes, that this fear of Catholic proselytising was expressed at a time when Protestant missionary activity throughout the British empire was at its height.[9] Protestant *conversion activity* in the dominions, therefore, was matched by *conversion anxiety* at home, over the possible effects of religious heterogeneity on the authority of the Established Church.

A similar irony is found in Britain during the First World War, when a combination of Protestant self-assertion and insecurity developed with regard to the Church's role in national life. As in the nineteenth century, conversion discourse had a dual focus. In the context of war, the idea of national 'conversion' provided an imagined cause or rationale for German belligerence, and Germany was widely portrayed as an apostate nation, with militarism replacing Christianity as its new 'creed'. The proposed remedy for German 'apostasy' was its symbolic conversion back to Christianity through military defeat, and religious and secular commentators alike spoke of the 'awakening' of Germany and the restoration of its people to the worship of God rather than the deification of the state. In rhetorical terms, then, the war

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[8] See Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995), pp.131-132. Ragussis gives John Stockdale's *History of the Inquisitions* (1810) as an example of this. Stockdale suggested that Catholic proselytising during the Inquisition had 'perverted' the Spanish national character, and implied that the emancipation of Catholics in Britain would have a similar effect upon the English national character.
[9] Ragussis (1995), p.132.

became a battle to save the 'soul' of Germany. This notion of Britain's missionary

function within the conflict, however, was reliant upon a construction of Britain as a

devoutly Christian nation. Aware that this was not the case, the Church launched the

National Mission of Repentance and Hope in 1916, with the aim of promoting national

unity by strengthening the Protestant faith. As chairman of the Mission, Bishop

Winnington-Ingram urged repentance for national sins, which he identified as

drunkenness, a love of entertainment and luxury, and the failure to raise the age of

consent in 1912.[10] Despite his best efforts and those of other leading clergymen,

however, the anticipated religious revival did not take place. Rather than increasing the

authority and influence of the Church, the war revealed its internal divisions, and

fuelled existing tensions between Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics and liberal churchmen

over how religious worship should be conducted. The apparent growth of Anglo-

Catholicism during the war threatened to further undermine the authority of the

Church at a time when an image of unity was desirable. In response, some clergymen

expressed strong anti-Catholic feeling, and in the later stages of the war, 'Catholic'

practices within the Church of England were suppressed.[11]

     The origins of this internal conflict could be traced back to the Reformation of

course, but more recently to 1904, when a Royal Commission was appointed to

investigate alleged 'clerical lawlessness', particularly over the question of ritual in

services. The Commission's report, published in 1906, identified among the *Practices*

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[10] See 'Heaviness and Joy', an address given at Islington Parish Church, 1914-1915, in A. F. Winnington-Ingram, *The Church in Time of War* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1915), pp.227-228, and 'In Time of War', a sermon preached at St Paul's Cathedral, 9 August 1914, in *Kaiser or Christ? The War and Its Issues* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1914), p.6.
[11] Wartime anti-Catholic feeling was mainly directed towards Anglo-Catholicism, as existing internal divisions in the Church of England were exacerbated. Generally, Roman Catholic and Anglican clergy co-operated, both at home and at the Front.

*of special gravity and significance'* the invocation of or confession to the Virgin Mary or the Saints; observation of the festivals of the Assumption of the Virgin and the Sacred Heart; Corpus Christi processions with the sacrament, and 'The veneration of images and roods'.[12] Any practices, in fact, that could be construed as Roman Catholic. The report concluded that discipline had indeed broken down, but that Anglican law should adapt itself to accommodate the broadness of modern religious life.[13] By 1913 some felt this had gone too far, and Bishop Gore of Oxford threatened resignation over 'modernism' among the clergy, or the view that the miracles described in the New Testament were not to be taken literally. Archbishop Davidson dissuaded him, pointing out that this would cause alarm and possibly an 'exodus Romewards', and Gore withdrew his threat.[14] Eventually a statement was issued which acknowledged that the clergy were entitled to their private views on the interpretation of the Scriptures, but advised them that as representatives of the Church of England they had a public duty to profess orthodoxy.[15] This orthodoxy, however, should remain recognisably distinct from Roman Catholic doctrine.

In effect, then, the issue was never fully resolved, and the tensions between an orthodoxy that some felt was too 'Catholic' and a 'modernism' which to others seemed blasphemous, continued into the war years. Religious hegemony became more important in a 'holy war', and Anglo-Catholicism came under direct attack. In 1915 the Reverend Basil Bourchier declared that

> When men exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, to know them is to love them, but oh!
> if they come labelled "strictly orthodox," vaunting themselves as Catholics,

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[12] G K A Bell, *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, second edition (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp.470-471.
[13] Bell (1938), pp.461-471.
[14] Letter from Archbishop Davidson to Bishop Gore, 25 February 1913, quoted in Bell (1938), p.673.
[15] Bell (1938), pp.671-687.

with snarls and sneers on their lips, talking Beatitudes, but acting Inquisitions, exalting Churchianity over Christianity and converting Religion into Religionism. I fail to recognise them. They are impostors, frauds, shams.[16]

Bourchier's words are an extreme example of anti-Catholic feeling in wartime Britain. For the sake of an appearance of unity, most clergymen sought to reconcile the Catholic, Evangelical and liberal elements within the Church, but during 1917 several incidents occurred which necessitated responsive action. In October that year the vicar of one London church announced his intention to conduct a Holy Communion service based on that found in the English Prayer Book of 1549.[17] The 1549 Prayer Book contained England's first Protestant Mass, in which prayers were offered for the dead and the saints and martyrs; the prophets and patriarchs were venerated, and the priest was required to wear Mass vestments. In these respects it was more derivative of the Roman Catholic Mass than the service in the more frequently used 1552 Prayer Book. As Bishop of London, Winnington-Ingram granted permission for one such service to be held, which he proposed to attend. The event aroused controversy, however, and was cancelled because it was seen as dividing the Church at a time when it should appear united.[18] In November the same year the vicar of St Saviour's Church in Hoxton held a service to mark the Corpus Christi festival, which included a procession with the sacrament around the outside of the church. Winnington-Ingram was compelled to respond, and stated that as a result of this deliberate breach of Church law, he and other bishops would be unable to visit St Saviour's in the future. On another occasion, the sale of Roman Catholic literature was forbidden at the Church of

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[16] Basil Bourchier, *For All We Have and Are* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1915), p.3. Bourchier (1881-1934) was Vicar of St. Jude's in Hampstead from 1908-1930, and served as an army chaplain in the war.
[17] *Times*, 26 October, 1917, p.9.
[18] *Times*, 26 October, 1917, p.9.

St Mary the Virgin in Sloane Square.[19] Finally, Joan of Arc, once the icon of the militant suffragettes, became a somewhat controversial figure in the spring of 1917. It was proposed that a Joan of Arc Day be held in May that year, to raise money for the Three Arts Women's Employment Fund.[20] 'Joan' would ride through the streets of London in a 'Pageant of Fair Women', made up of society women dressed to represent different countries. An article in the *Times* reported 'Widespread disapproval' at the proposal, and noted

> it is felt that the impersonation of the Maid of Orleans, the national heroine of our French Allies and a beatified Saint of the Roman Catholic Church, by a lady riding through the streets of London, or in public masquerade … would offend many legitimate susceptibilities.[21]

The organisers expressed surprise at the idea that a representation of Joan of Arc should cause offence, and justified their choice on the grounds that 'she, above all the women of history, typifies that spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice which animates millions of the women of to-day'.[22] Although the *Times* did not explain why Joan was an inappropriate subject, it seems likely that, in the context of the religious tensions which became apparent during 1917 in particular, some of the objections came from the fact that she was Catholic. There was also, perhaps, the question of guilt over her martyrdom at the hands of the English, now in alliance with the French, and a sense that she would be an unwelcome reminder of albeit long past hostility between the two countries. In addition, her function as a suffragette icon before the war could have made the pageant uncomfortably reminiscent of the WSPU processions, many of which

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[19] *Church Guardian*, 28 June 1917, p.505.
[20] The Three Arts Women's Employment Fund found work for women who had lost their usual employment through the war, and were not suited to munitions work.
[21] *Times*, 25 April 1917, p.7. Joan of Arc was beatified by the Catholic Church in 1909, and canonised in 1920.
[22] Letter from organiser Clara Butt-Rumford to the Editor, *Times*, 26 April 1917, p.6.

were led by a woman in armour and on horseback. in emulation of Joan. Whatever the

real nature of the objections. it was eventually announced that there would be no

representation of Joan at the Pageant of Fair Women

Rather than strengthening the Church. then. the war revealed its internal

divisions and inability to adapt. The drive to convert the nation through the National

Mission of Repentance and Hope was failing. and the anticipated religious revival did

not occur, as a then contemporary cartoon suggests (see Figure 8). At the Front. too.

Christian faith was in decline. despite the Reverend Basil Bourchier's claim in 1915

that 'In the trenches men are quickly learning to probe to the realities of things.

Through living the war they are finding God.'[23] In fact. the opposite was occurring.

and despite the efforts of the clergy and various Christian organisations.[24] many

soldiers lost their faith. Enlisted Christians had to overcome the opposition to violence

found in Jesus' teaching. and reconciling Christianity and warfare proved difficult.

Some soldiers used conversion as a metaphor for the temporary but necessary rejection

of the principles of brotherly love and forgiveness which active service demanded.

Lieutenant Robert Callaway was a mission priest in South Africa before the war. He

enlisted as a chaplain in 1914 and then became an officer. He described his military

experience as a process of transformation. and felt his regiment's bayonet training

stood for 'the entire conversion of our whole attitude of mind as a nation. For it was

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[23] Bourchier (1915). p. 37.
[24] Seventy-five per cent of British troops were registered as Church of England, and the Church. the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and the Foreign Bible Mission distributed over forty million Bibles. prayer books and hymn books to the troops during 1914 to 1916. Wilkinson (1978). pp. 126. 153.

**Figure 8**
'The Question of the Hour', cartoon appearing in *Punch*,
14 November 1917, p.327

instruction as to how best to *kill*.[25] Another soldier, who had not formerly been a

priest, felt that in going to war the British were obliged to become as belligerent and

'pagan' as their enemy. Writing to his mother in 1917, Captain John Crombie observed

that 'the moral situation is damnable - we can only beat Germany by assuming her

mentality, by recognising the State as the Supreme God whose behests to military

efficiency must be obeyed, whether or no they run counter to Christianity and

morality'.[26]

The journalist C E Montague, who served in the trenches throughout the war,

used conversion as a metaphor for the loss of faith among soldiers, and recalled that 'it

was a kind of trench fashion to meet the demoded oaths of a friend with the dogma

that "There *is* no - God."'[27] His memoir, entitled *Disenchantment* (1922), describes

the conversion to 'Satanism' among combatants, defining Satanism as the rejection of

Christian doctrine by the 'plain working-man', owing to bitter experience under 'a

world order which has called itself divine but shown itself diabolic'. As a result, the

disillusioned Christian turned instead to 'the only other world order supposed to be

extant; the one which the former order called diabolic ... So the plain man emerges a

Satanist.' Montague suggests that 'in several portions of Europe the war made

conversions abound', since national and religious loyalties were tested to the limit and

the post-war period had brought further hardship, especially for the poor.[28]

Despite the rejection of orthodoxy by many soldiers, a form of folk religion

developed which used Christian imagery to express belief in the supernatural. Stories

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[25] Lieutenant Robert Furley Callaway, letter dated 2 September 1916. In Laurence Housman, ed., *War Letters of Fallen Englishmen* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1930), pp.58-59.
[26] Captain John Eugene Crombie, letter dated 2 March 1917. In Housman, ed. (1930), p.80.
[27] C E Montague, *Disenchantment* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922), p.65.
[28] Montague (1922), p.184.

of 'miraculous' events circulated among troops at the Front, such as that of the preservation of the altar in a bombed-out church, or the story of the 'Angels at Mons', discussed above in Chapter Two. Soldiers were fascinated by the statue of the Virgin and Child which as a result of shell fire hung precariously from the basilica of the church at Albert, and attributed this to divine protection.[29] Army chaplains noted this development, and Neville Talbot, Assistant Chaplain-General to the Armed Forces observed 'The soldier has got religion. I am not sure he has got Christianity.'[30] The soldiers were not against religion as such, but felt themselves to be 'outside and not in possession' of the Christian faith.[31] The problem, he concluded, was not religion but religiosity. The clergy had failed to articulate the relevance of Christianity in the modern period, and religion had become separated from daily life. Although the war had changed this somewhat, revealing 'the unconscious Christianity in men' in acts of comradeship and selflessness, unless the Church could somehow maintain this spirit of co-operation after the war, its relevance and influence would continue to decline.[32] Talbot called for 'the Twentieth-Century Reformation', a radical restructuring of the Church in which the clergy would become less aloof from the mass of ordinary people, and possibly even disappear as official religious representatives.

By 1917 the need for Church reform had become clear both at home and at the Front, but the clergy seemed unable to act. The threat represented by Anglo-Catholicism had been suppressed, but this had intensified divisions within the Church and undermined its strength. The war as a project for the conversion of 'pagan'

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[29] See Wilkinson (1978), pp.195-196.
[30] Neville S Talbot, quoted in Wilkinson (1978), p.161.
[31] Neville S Talbot, *Religion Behind the Front and After the War* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1918), pp.20-21.
[32] Talbot (1918), p.67.

Germany was failing, since the German army remained undefeated. In addition, the drive to convert the British to temperance and piety through the National Mission was proving unsuccessful: the rate of illegitimate births increased during the war, and drunkenness aroused sufficient concern for the king to set an example by declaring he would be teetotal for the remainder of the conflict.[33] At the Front, soldiers became superstitious and religious worship seemed meaningless. There remained one area in which conversion might still be applied, but in which the mainstream Church showed little interest.

## 2. 'it is but right that we should try to present Christ to the Jews afresh'

Efforts have been made to 'present Christ to the Jews'[34] since their return to Britain in 1656. Like many periods of political instability, the English Revolution prompted a growth in millennial speculation, and Cromwell was urged to glorify the new Puritan republic and hasten the fulfilment of prophecy by readmitting the Jews and facilitating their return, after conversion, to the Promised Land.[35] Conversion activity decreased after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, but the French Revolution prompted a renewal of interest in prophecy and Protestant proselytising movements were active

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[33] The divorce rate in Britain increased threefold, from 596 in 1910, to 1,629 in 1919. See Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London: The Bodley Head, 1965), p.111. The rate of illegitimate births rose in 1916, and was attributed to economic and social change, and the effect of war on morality (see p.108). On drunkenness, see pp.65, 67-68.

[34] A Lukyn Williams, *The Hebrew-Christian Messiah: or the presentation of the Messiah to the Jews in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1916), p.8.

[35] See Endelman (1990), pp.145-146 and David S Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Re-admission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), chapters 3 and 5.

during the Evangelical Revival of the 1790s, and in the 1820s, in the economic depression after the Napoleonic Wars.

It was during the nineteenth century, however, that the most concerted effort at the mass conversion of the Jews took place. A number of Protestant conversion societies were founded in the early part of the century, the most prominent being the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews. Established in 1809, it focused its efforts solely on Jews in Britain, and included members of Parliament and the nobility among its supporters.[36] Its methods, which exploited the impoverished condition of Jewish immigrants, aroused controversy and debate over the desirability of conversion in general. From 1870 to 1914 a number of new missions were established in the East End, in response to the influx of Jewish refugees from Russia and Poland, many of whom were desperately poor, and willing to sit through a Christian service in return for food and clothing.[37]

Conversion activity continued into the war years, but was not nearly as widespread as it had previously been, being mostly confined to marginal groups or academic theologians. A few cases of proselytising made the papers, however, and in 1915 the Coroner attacked conversionists for their part in the death of Esther Hyams of Bethnal Green, who collapsed and died upon learning that her daughter was training to be a missionary. Giving his verdict, the Coroner remarked that 'it was an unwarrantable impertinence for one person to interfere in the religious affairs of

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[36] See Ragussis (1995), p.15.
[37] The missions were also the only places where immigrants could obtain free health care. See Endelman (1990), pp.167-168.

another', and added. 'If people would only lead their own lives according to the teachings of their own religion, they would find their time fully occupied.'[38]

The conversion of 'unbelievers' is, however, part of Christian doctrine, in preparation for the second advent and the millennium. One conversionist strategy has been to portray Judaism as a primitive proto-Christianity rather than acknowledging that Christianity developed from Judaism. This was the favoured approach of the Prophecy Investigation Society (PIS), a marginal Protestant group which was founded in 1842 and met twice a year.[39] At the outbreak of war the PIS were the only premillennialist group in Britain.[40] The war seemed to strengthen the society's sense of mission, and from 13 December 1914 public monthly meetings were held in London.[41] Membership figures were never high, and even during the crisis of war numbered only around a hundred people.[42] The group discussed 'signs' of the second coming and published a series of papers on the perceived unfolding of the Revelation narrative.[43] In May 1916, A M Hodgkin, a member of the Women's Branch, gave a paper in which she sought to establish the existence of proto-Christian themes in the Old Testament, and asked:

> Is there no suggestion of the Church through the books of the Old Testament? Is there not a foreshadowing of the Church in the help-meet for Adam formed from his riven side? Or in the Gentile brides of one Israelite after another, each

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[38] *Times*, 28 September 1915, p.5
[39] D W Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p.85.
[40] Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the millennium, unlike postmillennialists, who believe that Christians must strive to create the conditions for his return, by spreading the faith.
[41] Bebbington (1989), p.193.
[42] See Bebbington (1989), pp.85, 192.
[43] These papers were published as individual pamphlets, as part of *The Dispensational Series. Papers read at the Women's Branch of the Prophecy Investigation Society* (London: Alfred Holness) and *Various Tracts on British Israelism and modern apocalyptic. Papers read to the Prophecy Investigation Society, 1912-1921* (London: Covenant Publishing Co., 1921).

of them a recognised type of our Lord - Joseph. Moses. Salmon. Boaz.
Solomon?[44]

Here. Christianity is feminised in relation to Judaism. as Eve represents the Christian

Church, made from Judaism's 'riven side'. In this metaphor. Hodgkin seeks to

establish Christianity and Judaism as partners at the beginning of monotheism. Yet

Hodgkin's analogy between Eve and Christianity. if taken to its logical conclusion for a

believer in the Scriptures. actually undermines her argument. since according to

Genesis it was Eve who first ate the forbidden fruit and persuaded Adam to follow

suit, an act which precipitated the Fall. Jews. therefore. would have been unlikely to

find this a persuasive argument for conversion. This. however. was not the purpose of

such texts. Conversion writing is preoccupied with Christian self-congratulation and

self-assertion rather than any concrete plan of action towards Jews. The nineteenth-

century conversionist societies were largely unsuccessful in retaining Jewish converts.[45]

and their real function seems to have been to bolster and reproduce the Christian self-

image. Hodgkin's concern with finding the roots of Christianity in the Old Testament

reveals the uncertainty behind the assertion of Christian authority in her paper. She

then argued that the Feast of Weeks was a metaphor for the resurrection of the saints

prior to the return of Christ. and suggested that the absence of any sin offering in the

instructions for observing the feast represented Christ's sinlessness; thus Christ was the

Christians' Firstfruits.[46] In a similar vein. Ada Habershon. president of the Women's

Branch of the PIS. gave a paper entitled 'The Day of Atonement in its Prophetic

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[44] A M Hodgkin. 'The Firstfruits', a paper read to the Women's Branch of the Prophecy Investigation
Society. May 11th. 1916. *The Dispensational Series*. No. 10 (1916). p.9. The reference to 'Salmon'
was not an error on Hodgkin's part. He was the father of Boaz. who married Ruth. the great-
grandmother of King David. See Ruth 4.20.
[45] It is difficult to establish accurate figures. since the records kept by conversionist societies were
generally somewhat inflated. See Endelman (1990). p.161. and Scult (1978). pp.115-123.
[46] A M Hodgkin. 'The Firstfruits' (1916). p.11

Aspect', in which she read the Passover as a prophecy of the Day of Judgement.[47]

Israel, she argued, could not keep the Passover, because according to Jewish law, any

Jew who had had contact with a dead body was unclean (Numbers 9: 7-12). It

followed, then, that all Jews were 'unclean' as a result of their alleged role in Jesus'

death, and therefore only Christians could 'partake of the feast'.[48] Ultimately, however,

the PIS, and particularly the Women's Branch, seem to have been more concerned

with the denunciation of the Jews than their conversion.[49] Their attention was focused

on contemporary 'signs' of the impending apocalypse, and for many of them, the 'last

days' were simply too close to warrant coherent conversionist proposals. It was left to

academic theologians to explore ways in which the Jews of the modern period might

be brought to Christianity.

When the Reverend A L Williams D.D. declared in 1916 that 'it is but right

that we should try to present Christ to the Jews afresh', he had in mind a detailed plan,

which he presented in a series of lectures that were later published as a book.[50]

Williams' proposal aimed to construct modern Jewish converts in relation to St

Matthew, as Jews practising Jewish customs but professing Christianity. In an attempt

to revive the late nineteenth-century 'Hebrew-Christian' movement he suggested the

formation of a 'Hebrew-Christian Church', imagined as a specific branch of the

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[47] Ada R Habershon, 'The Day of Atonement in its Prophetic Aspect', a paper read to Women's Branch of the Prophecy Investigation Society, 11 May 1916. Published in pamphlet form as No. 11 in The Dispensational Series (London: Alfred Holness, 1916), pp. 7-8.

[48] Habershon, 'The Day of Atonement in its Prophetic Aspect' (1916), p. 7.

[49] E A Bland's paper 'The Church and the Tribulation', read to the Women's Branch of the Prophecy Investigation Society on 18 November 1915, is a typical example of the denunciatory approach. The paper is an incoherent and confusing rant about the necessity of the Jews' acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah and their conversion to Christianity. See E A Bland, 'The Church and the Tribulation', pamphlet No. 8 in The Dispensational Series (London: Alfred Holness, 1915).

[50] A L Williams D.D., *The Hebrew-Christian Messiah: or the presentation of the Messiah to the Jews in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1916), p. 8. Williams was Honorary Canon of Ely Cathedral, and former Tyrwhitt Hebrew Scholar at Cambridge University.

Catholic Church, whose congregation would consist solely of converts who were 'Jews except in religion'.[51] The term 'Hebrew' was preferred to 'Jewish', as 'savouring more of nationality than religion',[52] and the proposed Hebrew-Christian Catholic Church would, it was argued, mean that Jews could convert without the sense of national betrayal which had historically accompanied apostasy, and also enable Christianity to retain its Jewish converts. Members of the Church would celebrate the festivals of the Old Testament, but their Jewish significance would be interwoven with Christian themes; for example, at the Passover Hebrew-Christians would be reminded of the death of Jesus, 'the true Passover Lamb'.[53] Prayers would be in Hebrew, adapted from Jewish prayer books, and Zionism promoted. He also proposed the appointment of a Hebrew-Christian bishop, who would 'act as a shepherd and guide' to the congregation.[54] Williams admitted, however, that in 1916 there was 'very little demand … for such an officer'.[55] These kinds of arguments and interpretations of prophecy were common to Victorian conversion societies, and had survived into the twentieth century only at the margins of religious discourse. Their very limited uptake during the war suggests that conversionism was by this time an old-fashioned idea, and despite the widespread use of religious rhetoric in relation to the conflict, there was no discernible renewal of interest in the religious conversion of the Jews. Like the concept of chivalry discussed in Chapters One and Two, conversionism continued into the

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[51] 'Hebrew-Christianity' segregated converts from other Christians, ostensibly as a reminder to both Jews and Christians of the redemptive role ascribed to the converted Jew in the New Testament. See Endelman (1990), pp.160-162.
[52] Williams (1916), p.205.
[53] Williams (1916), p.208.
[54] Williams (1916), p.206.
[55] Williams (1916), p.206.

twentieth century, but was rapidly undermined by political and social changes, war, and modernity.

A more modern approach, perhaps reflecting the development of psychoanalysis, was formulated in 1917 when James Alexander Robertson D.D., of the United Free Church College, Glasgow, attempted to trace the psychological process of conversion, or the route through which Jesus had developed from practising Jew to professing what would become Christianity. He described his book, *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus*, as an attempt to trace the 'moral and psychological pathways' by which Jesus had gained his sense of vocation.[56] What, Robertson asked, was the process of Jesus' awakening to 'God-consciousness'[57] (and how could it be applied in 1917)? The un-making of Jesus as a Jew had begun with the incident with the money-lenders in the Temple, when he was twelve. This, it was suggested, was followed by a sense of commission at his baptism and finally by 'the apprehension of the cross' during the last days of his life.[58] Robertson argued that Jesus had been a religious reformer rather than a political figure, and that the Jews had completely misunderstood messianism, and had understandably but regrettably developed an expectation of political deliverance:

> Upon the brow of His people there had long flickered the pale light of expectation. But in the mind of the street and the market-place this holy forward-look had suffered the too-frequent fate of spiritual things. It was transmuted into something gross and earthy. And that debasing touch of the spirit of the age was aggravated by the rankling bitterness which is the inevitable result of a corrupt political oppression. The Annointed of God, for whose coming they were taught to look, loomed up in their distorted fancy as a political deliverer.[59]

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[56] J A Robertson, *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus: the Bruce Lectures, 1917* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., September 1922, Fifth edition), p.121.
[57] Robertson (1917), p.23.
[58] Robertson (1917), p.41.
[59] Robertson (1917), p.138.

The distaste for politics apparent in Robertson's 1917 account of the development of Jesus' sense of mission perhaps reflects the rise of revolutionary politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the threat this represented to the already declining authority of the Church. Marxism promised a better world through the removal of the structures that perpetuated inequality: namely monarchy, class, religion, and property relations, whereas Christianity could only promise a better life beyond the grave. Yet the Church was aware that its survival during the war was dependent upon a greater involvement in the political aspects of national life, to which it deliberately addressed itself, mindful of the threat that revolutionary politics represented to its position.[60] In Bolshevism, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter Four, the Church perceived itself as under attack by a politics that was widely regarded as 'Jewish', owing to Marx's Jewish heritage and the apparent prominence of Jews in the ranks of the Bolsheviks.

One Christian writer, Margaret Dorothea Rose Willink, engaged with the threat of Bolshevism directly, and found the 'solution' in a Christian theocracy based on Mosaic Law. By this means, Christianity would become the political creed of post-war Britain and Jews would be forced to convert, according to the rules of their own faith, as laid down in Leviticus. Her apocalyptic fantasy *Utopia According to Moses* (1919) takes the form of a narrative set during the First World War, in which the main character Michael Davidson describes his revelation of God's plans for the post-war period.[61] The story opens some time before August 1914, and is constructed around a

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[60] See the 'Woolwich crusade' of September 1917, discussed in Chapter One, as an example of the deliberate involvement of the Church in wartime politics.

[61] Margaret Dorothea Rose Willink, *Utopia According to Moses: A Study in the Social Teaching of the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1919).

debate on utopianism between Perceval, a communist, and Michael, an amateur theologian. Various utopian proposals are assessed, including More's *Utopia* and Plato's *Republic*, and all are found wanting because they are either divisive or inegalitarian. What is required is a communitarian model that allows a certain amount of personal freedom but imposes moral and ethical standards, and leaves property relations intact. Such a model, argues Michael, can be found in the Old Testament, in the Law as revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Soon afterwards, war breaks out and Michael rejoins his regiment, but returns home some months later after being injured in a shell-blast that he claims catapulted him into a form of religious time-travel, in which he visited a Jewish utopia, somewhere in the pre-Christian era.

> It was after Ezekiel, because it was his temple I saw ... But really it was a time that never was, because the Covenant was being properly kept with all the promised results.[52]

Whilst in 'Zion', Michael uses a Hebraised version of his name, identifying himself as 'Michael ben-David, of the dwellers in the Isles of the Sea'.[53] He finds much to admire, and the Mosaic utopia is repeatedly contrasted with communism. Class divisions, he reports, were avoided through agricultural self-sufficiency, which meant there was very little surplus and consequently no commerce. In addition, the religious prohibition against theft and covetousness led to an 'independence of possessions', which produced 'a temper of dependence on GOD', and this was the secret of the success of 'Zion'.[54] The first utopia had been promised to the Jews, but they had failed to fully observe the conditions of the covenant, and had therefore forfeited God's protection as

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[52] Willink (1919), p.20.
[53] Willink (1919), p.24.
[54] Willink (1919), pp.53, 58.

well as their land and nationhood. Obedience to divine will was vital to the success of any utopian plan. The utopia that did not have God at its centre was destined for failure, which meant that Bolshevism, with its hostility towards religion, presented no real threat. In Michael's view, it was the Jews' reluctance to integrate, and 'become one body with the Gentiles' which had prevented the realisation of the Mosaic utopia.[65] It now fell to Christians to create 'Christ's utopia', through the establishment of a Christian theocracy in post-war Britain, and to ensure that the Jews were absorbed into the gentile body, in accordance with God's will as revealed to Michael during his illness.

Once again, the Old Testament provided a model, in the story of the son of Shelomith (Leviticus 24: 10-16). The story concerns a man of mixed Egyptian and Israelite parentage, who cursed the name of God when visiting his mother in the Israelite camp. For this, it was commanded that he should be stoned. Contrary to popular belief, Michael argues, this is not simply a narrative of punishment for sacrilege, but is 'really a piece of very interesting case-law on the treatment of aliens'.[66] In Britain in 1919, the term 'aliens' would most likely have referred to Jews, as they were the largest immigrant group in the population at that time. According to this interpretation of Levitical law, any 'alien' in the Christian theocracy would be obliged to observe the law of the land, and, like the son of Shelomith, face severe penalties for blasphemy or disrespect towards the deity. The effect of this on Jews in the proposed Christian theocracy would be that they would be obliged to become Christians in practice, if not to actually convert. Willink's elaborate and topical

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[65] Willink (1919), p.69.
[66] Willink (1919), p.74.

conversion proposal, therefore, appropriates Jewish law in support of an argument for a Christian socialist utopia as an alternative to communist utopianism. A religious utopia based on Jewish foundations but professing Christianity would amount to a state embodiment of the conversionist argument that Christianity was Judaism 'refined' or 'perfected'. Such a state, built upon a synthesis of Judaism and Christianity, would mean the eradication of religious or political heterogeneity, and effect the conversion of any Jews who wished to live in it. At the time Willink was writing, however, 'Jewishness' was being constructed in political, 'racial' and national terms, and religious conversion was no longer considered the route to assimilation. In the next section, I examine how some Anglo-Jewish writers attempted not only to render assimilation unthreatening, but also to explore the limits of assimilation in their fictional writing.

## 3. 'The half-and-half-people'

In the late nineteenth century, religious conversion was one route to assimilation, but the status of the converted Jew was ambiguous and could result in a double alienation, from both Jewish and gentile societies. The preferred route for many was intermarriage, despite the tradition of endogamy, but this, too, had its drawbacks. As Todd Endelman has noted, English 'toleration' was 'qualified' and hostile to ethnic and cultural diversity, especially among the upper classes, and assimilation demanded the effacement of Jewish identity, with no reciprocal adjustment on the part of gentiles.[67]

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[67] Endelman (1990), p.209

In her memoir, *Monogram*, the Anglo-Jewish writer G B Stern recalls that although her childhood was 'a sanctuary perfectly free from pogroms', and she had numerous gentile friends, she was constantly reminded of the threat of antisemitic attack by the Dreyfus case (1894-1906).[68] The threat of persecution as a Jew was the 'King Charles' Head' which kept returning to haunt her childhood imagination, and it is a theme found in her early novels, whose Jewish characters are keen to integrate, but are repeatedly confronted by their apparently unassimilable difference. Stern's early novels deal with the difficulty of this for Jewish women in particular, who are portrayed as caught between a simultaneous identification with Jewish tradition and the desire to escape it, and are exoticised and trivialised by well-meaning gentiles. This combination renders futile their attempts at integration, and eventually forces them to obey tradition and make a suitable match with a Jewish man. Stern's first novel *Pantomime* (1914) explores the attraction of 'bohemianism' for the middle-class Jewish woman, and the conflict that arises between the desire for freedom and her religious background.[69] Nan Hartmann is bright and rebellious, and wants to be one of the 'Other People' - artists, writers and musicians - rather than a devoted wife and mother. She goes to drama school and becomes involved with Tony Morrice, a Christian, but the relationship quickly founders as a result of interference by her family (after 6 weeks, Nan's uncle wants to know whether Tony intends to marry his niece). The issue of marriage brings their cultural differences into relief, and the engagement is eventually cancelled. Tony realises of Nan that 'She would never make a Bohemian'

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[68] G B Stern, *Monogram* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1936), p 286. For biographical information on Stern, see Chapter Two, notes 54 and 58.

[69] G B Stern, *Pantomime: A Novel* (London: Nisbet & Co, 1914). All other page references will appear in the text.

(p.283) and Nan admits this too:

> She had not been armoured or equipped for it. Her dim, early ideal of happiness resolved itself into a country-house, and soft shaved lawns, and two children playing in the sunshine, and - someone - coming home to her at six o'clock every evening. Deep down in her heart this picture still held good. (p.291)

Her desire to escape convention is frustrated by the force of 'seventeen years' training and whole generations of instinct' (pp.291-2), and she opts instead for marriage to the wealthy August Goldschmidt. *Pantomime* suggests that intermarriage, at least for Jewish women, is almost impossible because their upbringing militates against the very things that attract them to gentile society, its apparent lack of restrictions and greater personal freedom. This is portrayed as the attraction of the incompatible opposites of tradition and modernity, and, Stern suggests, relationships that try to reconcile these differences will inevitably fail.

This theme is repeated in *Children of No Man's Land* (1919)[70] as, in a metaphor for gentile constructions of Jewish identity, Deb Marcus is portrayed as a blank canvas onto which her gentile friends project their fantasies:

> For Deb's looks were of that mutable type which inspired every fourth-rate art faddist to paint her Holding a Melon; or in a Blue Jacket; or with head flung back against their favourite bit of Chinese drapery; or absorbed in the contents of a dust-bin (symbolic realism); or as a figure on an Egyptian frieze; or as Mary Magdalene; or as a Wood-nymph pursued by Silenus; or as a coster girl dancing to a barrel organ by naptha-lights or merely as "Deborah, an Impression" (p.49).

Anxious not to appear prim, Deb affects sexual knowledge and sophistication when she is with 'the Studio gang', and on one occasion stays overnight with a male friend at a seaside cottage, unchaperoned (p.134). This incident prompts one of her friends,

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[70] G B Stern, *Children of No Man's Land* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1919). Further page references will be made in the text.

Antonia Verity, to attempt to 'save' her from further 'sin' and introduces another

'conversion' theme into the narrative besides Deb's attempts at self-transformation

into a 'bohemian'. Antonia becomes Deb's self-appointed moral missionary, and with

'the passion of the earnest priestess for a convert in danger', tries to prevent any

further 'corruption' of her charge (p.150). In her attempt at Deb's moral conversion,

Antonia enlists Samson Phillips, an Anglo-Jewish army captain who is looking for a

wife. Deb, however, finds him overbearing, 'a fanatic, whose gospel was Simple

Goodness; but who … would have made martyrs where he could not make converts',

and she turns his proposal down flat (pp.156-57). Eventually, however, she realises

that there is no real place for her in gentile society, especially in the anti-alien climate

of the war, and accepts him. Her moment of 'conversion' occurs during the marriage

ceremony, in which she is reconciled to Judaism, as, standing under the wedding

canopy, she felt that 'at last she belonged; that this was her faith, and these her people'

(pp.284-5).

What I have termed the 'conversion theme' in *Pantomime* and *Children of No*

*Man's Land* functions in relation to the novel's portrayal of sexual politics and the

force of Jewish tradition. It is concerned with the young Jewish woman's desire for

freedom, which she associates with 'bohemianism' and gentile society, her efforts at

self-transformation in order to gain this freedom, and the attempts by both gentiles and

Anglo-Jews to control her behaviour in accordance with their own expectations. In

seeking to escape the confines of traditional female roles, both Nan and Deb attempt a

process of self-transformation based on the values of others: Nan tries to be

'bohemian' because this is Tony's fantasy, while Deb affects sexual knowledge because

her friends do so, and out of a felt pressure, as a Jewish woman, to embody the

'oriental' stereotype. In attempting this transformation they are confronted by its impossibility, since 'bohemianism', whether portrayed as romantic poverty or sexual promiscuity, is incompatible not only with their upbringing, but also their desires and values, and ultimately reflects not their own interests but those of the gentile majority. The Anglo-Jewish community responds to the disaffected Jewish woman by locating a suitable and persistent marriage partner and waiting for her (inevitable) return to her origins, having experienced alienation among the gentiles. The eventual endogamous marriage represents the consolidation of a Jewish collective identity that is based not so much on religion or nationality as tradition. The attempt at self-transformation results in a return to origins, as the Jewish women in these novels finally acknowledge a correspondence between the expectations of Anglo-Jewry and their own needs and desires. Both novels suggest, however, that the Jewish woman lacks autonomy in Jewish and gentile societies, and that ultimately, acceptance into either group demands of her a process of transformation in accordance with that group's values, which she may only partly share.

In *Twos and Threes* (1916), Stern explores the dynamic of assimilation through the relationship between two men a neo-Nietzschean 'master', the gentile Stuart Heron, and his Jewish 'disciple', Sebastien Levi, and frames the pressure upon Jews to transcend their origins in philosophical terms.[7] Stuart, a diamond merchant, is concerned with the practical application of his own brand of nihilism, 'the philosophy of the shears', and fantasises about starting at the bottom of society, without inheritance, and working his way upwards. Sebastien is an aspiring poet and heir to the

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[7] Stern, G B. *Twos and Threes* (London: Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1916). Subsequent page references will be made in the text.

Universal Stores in Holborn. His father is an assimilated Jew who has taken care not to embody any 'racial' stereotypes.

> Ned Levi was of that species known as the strictly agnostic Jew. He neither went to Synagogue, nor did he keep the picturesque Jewish holidays. He did not tactlessly allude to himself, in company, as "the Chosen of the Lord." He did not wear enormous flashing diamonds in his shirt-front, nor gesticulate over-violently, nor control, spider-fashion, the entire financial affairs of Great Britain. Likewise, he ate ham with relish ... He was a little unostentatious man, with light red hair and moustache grizzling untidily to grey, a quiet taste in clothes, and nothing to stamp him Israelite save a slight lift at the bridge of the nose, a kindly concern for the fortunes of even the most distant of his cousins, and a keen sense of business acumen which had led him from a small grocery shop in the East End, to the massive and celebrated stores in High Holborn.
> (pp.247-8)

In fact, Ned Levi embodies Stuart's ideal of the man who starts with nothing and becomes a success. Ned married a Christian girl of humble origins, after he had made his fortune, so could not be accused of marrying his way into society. Sebastien has followed his father's example, and is engaged to Letty Johnson, a costermonger, who wants him to change his name to Lovell upon marriage, to which he agrees. Influenced by Stuart's ideas, Sebastien refuses his father's allowance of £1500 a year, a decision that Stuart dismisses as 'theatrical', arguing that he has not fully understood his philosophy, which is to cultivate genuine independence from material and physical ties. On Stuart's advice, Sebastien breaks off his engagement to Letty, applying the 'philosophy of the shears' and ending the relationship at its highest point of pleasure, since, according to Stuart's theory, this can only be followed by deterioration. When Sebastien tells the 'master' that he feels he is becoming more like him, Stuart is dismissive:

> Nonsense; you can't possibly grow more like me, because I'm not there; not permanently. You can grow like your father, or the Albert Memorial, anything fixed and solid, - but you can't grow like the spot where I stood a minute ago before I began to run. (p.343)

The dynamic between Sebastien and Stuart, in which the former tries to meet the latter's shifting criteria, may be read as a metaphor for assimilation into a society in which the conditions for belonging are subject to constant revision. Stuart purports to be instructing Sebastien in his philosophy, yet resists and obstructs the latter's success by insisting that he has not understood. His response to Sebastien's efforts is disdain and further differentiation between himself and his 'disciple'. As Sander Gilman has noted, 'as one approaches the norms set by the reference group, the approbation of the group recedes ... For the ideal state is never to have been the Other, a state that cannot be achieved'.[2] Nevertheless, Sebastien tries, and his enthusiasm arouses discomfort in Stuart, who reacts with the thought that 'This Jewish boy was too responsive, too enthusiastic, too flexible altogether' (p.272). As long as Stuart has control of and can change the criteria, Sebastien can never fully meet them. This dynamic suggests a parallel with assimilation and the expectation that Jews should shed most of their heritage and traditions and conform to a homogeneous construction of 'Englishness', which is itself based on changing criteria. Here, Stern appears to attack the notion that there is a fixed and attainable 'English' identity to which Jews should aspire, by showing how readily the construction of that identity can change. Status and confidence in this novel are portrayed as based on a combination of class, wealth, and an 'Englishness' which is not in any way 'Jewish'. Stuart Heron has all of these, and as one of the 'Insiders of Society' (p.59), enjoys a sense of belonging that Sebastien, despite his wealth and education, does not. There are several non-Jewish characters that lack either money or class advantages, and are therefore insecure, but none of

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[2] Gilman (1986), p.3.

them is as anxious or as willing to change as Sebastien. This extends to the breaking of

his engagement to Letty, which he does at Christmas:

> He did not know any more for what strange reasons he had performed this
> strange act. But since the master knew, that was sufficient; the disciple was
> content to follow blindly. He would go now and lay his shattered world as a
> tribute at Stuart's feet ... where he had already laid his father's disappointment,
> ... his own ambition. (p.375)

Hearing of this, Stuart experiences sudden remorse: 'His metaphysics dropped away

from under his feet, leaving him treading upon a void' (p.379). He decides that his

philosophy is destructive and misguided, and renounces it. Sebastien, however, has

given up everything for an illusion constructed by someone who assumed superiority

and exploited his insecurity. *Twos and Threes* suggests that gentiles have unrealistic

expectations of Jews, wanting them to embody ideals that they do not themselves

seriously pursue. Stuart demands that Sebastien renounce his inheritance although he

has no intention of doing likewise. Each time Sebastien meets the 'master's' criteria

another set of demands is made. The effect of this is that Sebastien rejects his origins

and relinquishes his personal autonomy in an effort to live according to the values and

beliefs of another. Ultimately, Ned Levi is the character who sees the truth of it all:

that behind the neo-Nietzschean rhetoric lies contempt for the self-made man, and by

extension, behind the liberal rhetoric of inclusion lies the desire to maintain a hierarchy

of 'Englishness', in which assimilating Jews can only be, as Stern puts it, 'the half-and-

half people'.[73]

Leonard Woolf's story 'The Three Jews' (1917) depicts assimilation as a

process that is never completed, and explores the construction of a hierarchy among

Jews that is based on the perceived extent to which they have effaced their

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[73] G B Stern (1919), p.85.

'Jewishness'.[74] Antisemitic stereotypes form the criteria by which the Jews in this story

judge one another's assimilatory success, and this internalisation of 'racial'

antisemitism creates a bond of anxiety between them. Sander Gilman has termed this

mechanism 'Jewish self-hatred', and argues that it occurs when the desire for

acceptance forces Jews into an acknowledgement of 'Jewish difference' as defined by

antisemites. This, he suggests, leads to a fragmentation of identity, as Jews create a

new 'other' within Jewry that is often based on the 'Eastern' or 'oriental' stereotype.[75]

Woolf's story would seem to bear this out

The first Jew goes to a café in Kew gardens, and is approached by the second

Jew, who asks to share his table. The narrator identifies his companion as Jewish by his

physiognomy

> I noticed the thickness of his legs above the knee, the arms that hung so loosely
> and limply by his sides    his dark fat face and the sensual mouth, the great
> curve of the upper lip and the hanging lower one. A clever face, dark and
> inscrutable, with its large mysterious eyes and the heavy lids which went into
> deep folds at the corners. (p.7)

His views are confirmed when the man speaks, in 'the slight thickness of the voice, the

over-emphasis, and the little note of assertiveness in it' (p.7). A conversation follows,

in which each Jew tries to determine the extent of the other's acculturation. One of the

criteria is a lack of religious observance. It is quickly established that neither of them

goes to synagogue, although the second Jew attends on Yom Kippur, but only out of

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[74] 'The Three Jews' was published with a story by Virginia Woolf entitled 'The Mark on the Wall', in
Leonard S Woolf and Virginia Woolf, *Two Stories* (Richmond: Hogarth, 1917). All subsequent page
references will be given in the text. Leonard Woolf was born in Kensington, London, in 1880, the
third of nine children. His father was a barrister and an orthodox Jew. Leonard attended synagogue
until just before his eighteenth birthday, but then rejected all formal religion. After attending
Cambridge University he joined the Ceylon Civil Service, serving from 1904-1911. He became
involved in socialism through the Co-operative Movement, and after his marriage to Virginia Stephen
he determined to make his living as a writer. His works include novels, short stories, and non-fiction
advocating socialism.
[75] See Gilman (1986) for a full discussion of this theory.

'pure habit' (p.9). The first Jew then notices his companion's apparent incongruity with his surroundings, his 'large dark head' framed against a backdrop of 'delicate apple-blossom and ... pale blue sky' (p.8). This impression is reinforced when the second Jew suggests that Zionism has replaced Judaism as the basis of collective Jewish identity, and observes that 'we belong to Palestine still', a statement that the first Jew leaves unanswered (p.9). Presently, the conversation moves to the third Jew, a cemetery-keeper who is perceived by the second Jew as more 'Jewish' than himself. He describes him to the first Jew, using the same 'racial' criteria by which the latter had identified him; thus the cemetery-keeper's clothes appear ill-fitting, he has 'cunning grey eyes', and 'a nose, by Jove, Sir, one of the best, ... side-face it was colossal; it stood out like an elephant's trunk with its florid curves and scrolls' (p.11). The cemetery-keeper professes a lack of religious feeling, and tells the second Jew that 'one can't believe everything in the Bible ... now you may think for yourself' (pp.12-13). He describes 'the old spirit, the old faith' as 'vanishing in the universal disbelief', which he associates with the decline of the idea of 'race' among Jews (p.13). Yet his son's estrangement from the 'old spirit' proves too much for the cemetery-keeper, and when he marries their Christian servant-girl, the father disowns him. This is not, he says, because of her faith but because she is his class inferior, although the principle of endogamy is also a factor, in his remark that 'Our women are as good, better than Christian women' (p.18).

Woolf's story suggests that without Judaism or Zionism as the basis of Jewish collective identity, there remains only the concept of 'race' as a means of defining 'Jewishness', as in the second Jew's reflection that 'We're Jews only externally now, in our black hair and our large noses, in the way we stand and the way we walk' (p.14).

None of the Jews in this story has converted to Christianity, but all have rejected Judaism as the basis of Jewish identity, and replaced it with a negative construction of 'race', which they seek to avoid embodying in any way. Since antisemitic stereotyping is so exhaustive, ranging from religious to national, physical, psychological, vocal, gestural and postural constructions, the avoidance of all these requires considerable effort on the part of the assimilating Jew. As portrayed in this story, the process of assimilation demands a transformation whereby the Jew becomes, in a sense, an antisemite, recognising other Jews on the basis of an internalised and then projected 'racial' antisemitism, which, it is suggested, forms the basis of modern Jewish collective identity.

Another Anglo-Jewish writer, Gilbert Frankau, framed assimilation in terms of the fragmented subjectivity of the 'shell-shocked' soldier, in his novel *Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant* (1919), and portrayed the psychological integration of 'the Jew' as part of the process of recovery and integration into civilian society.[76] Frankau developed war neurosis after his experiences at the Somme, and was discharged from his commission in 1917. In his autobiography, *Self-Portrait*,[77] he claims to have psychoanalysed himself whilst writing *Peter Jackson*, and thereby cured himself. In 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' (1908), Freud noted the tendency among contemporary writers to include fragmented representations of themselves in their work:

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[76] Gilbert Frankau, *Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant: A Romance of Married Life* (London: MacDonald & Co., 1919). Subsequent page references will be included in the text. See Chapter Two, note 73 for biographical information on this writer. A number of ex-combatants published novels after the war, and the readership for these was wide. *Peter Jackson* is an unusual example of this genre, however, because it addresses the relation of 'Jewishness' to 'Englishness'.
[77] Gilbert Frankau, *Self-Portrait: a novel of his own life* (London: The Book Club, 1941), p.160.

The psychological novel in general no doubt owes its special nature to the inclination of the modern writer to split up his ego, by self-observation, into many part-egos, and, in consequence, to personify the conflicting currents of his own mental life in several heroes[78]

This seems to have been Frankau's strategy in *Peter Jackson*, and the two central characters, Peter and his cousin Francis, appear to be representations of Frankau himself. Both men are partly Jewish, their fathers having married Sephardic women, who were sisters. Peter, a businessman, is represented as the more 'English' of the two, and Francis, a writer, the more 'Hebraic'. Prior to the outbreak of war, Peter is portrayed as a coherent, integrated subject. As the narrative progresses, his subjectivity becomes fragmented under the stress of war, and separates into multiple 'selves'. The second half of the novel explores the process by which Peter's various 'selves' are re-integrated, through psychotherapy, into a new peacetime identity that safely incorporates 'the Jew'.

The crisis occurs when Peter, like his creator, develops 'shell-shock' and is declared unfit for any form of military service. War neurosis is described as an internal conflict and a crisis of masculinity, 'the battle of the neurasthenic with his own soul ... feeling himself lost to all honour, coward and traitor in sight of his own manhood' (pp.322-323). The symptoms of war neurosis were not always considered genuine, and there was a popular view that the 'neurasthenic' was indeed a coward and a shirker.[79] In *Peter Jackson*, cowardice is associated with non-combatant Jews. The Bramsons, owners of a rival cigar importing business, are represented as profiteers who continue

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[78] Sigmund Freud, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' (1908), *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1959), p.150.
[79] On attitudes to war neurosis see Anthony Babington, *Shell-shock: A History of the Changing Attitudes to War Neurosis* (London: Leo Cooper, 1997).

to trade whilst other men fight and die at the Front. Sam 'Pretty' Bramson, a young

man whose effeminacy is implied in his nickname, panics at the outbreak of war,

fearing conscription, while Peter enlists. When he is discharged from the army on the

grounds of ill health, Peter experiences shame and self-hatred, and in accordance with

the novel's representation of cowardice as a 'Jewish' trait, it is as though his 'Hebraic'

self has temporarily gained ascendance and rendered him a coward.

Peter's subjective fragmentation under the strain of war has taken several

forms. First, there is 'Peter the neurasthenic — a huddled, frightened soul who lived

alone in its black caves of gloom, and still prayed occasionally with whining

ingratiation for death'. This 'soul' is dismissed by his psychoanalyst, as 'Purely

physical', created by the experience of war. The second is the 'new soul', emerging

through analysis. Peter's 'original soul' views both of these as mere products of the

imagination. Then there is 'the soul of "P.J.", sometime a gunner in Kitchener's Army',

and finally 'the soul of Peter Jackson, worker by instinct' (p.349). As Peter adapts to

civilian life, and searches for a new occupation, other 'selves' emerge, demanding to be

accommodated. One of these is Jewish:

> Peasant, soldier, Jew and business man met round the boardroom table of
> Peter's brain. First the land; then the men to work the land. "Don't pay rent.
> Buy outright", said business. "Keep 'em in order", rasped the soldier. "Crops
> and stock", said the peasant ... "And your markets", whispered the Jew; "never
> forget your markets ..." ... All of which counsels the old Etonian crystallised
> into the words "Why not become a gentleman farmer?" (p.372)

As a result of this decision, Peter's multiple 'souls' are re-integrated and his neurotic

symptoms alleviated, and 'the Jew' within, made visible by war neurosis, is assimilated

through a professional connection to the land. By this means, the idea alluded to in

Woolf's story, that 'the Jew' is an urban creature and alien to the English landscape is

overcome, and, in a Disraelian twist, the business acumen associated with Peter's

'Jewish' self becomes an asset.' Other anxieties related to 'Jewishness' are also

resolved: Peter's analyst assures him that unlike 'Pretty' Bramson he is not a coward;

this reassurance means that his sexual potency is restored, and his wife gives birth to a

son. Frankau's preoccupation, then, is not the difficulty or impossibility of assimilation,

but the necessity of it for psychological health, and the role of gentleman farmer effects

the transformation whereby his 'Jewish' difference is contained.

Frankau was British-born, baptised an Anglican, and Eton-educated, and

therefore enjoyed certain advantages of class and status that immigrant Jews did not.

Moshe Oved came from Poland to Britain shortly before the First World War, and set

up a jeweller's shop in London. In 1925 he published his autobiography, *Visions and*

*Jewels*, in which he discusses the effect of exile and the First World War on Judaism

and Jewish identity.[81] In one anecdote he describes how a watch belonging to the

Zionist Nahum Sokolow was brought to him for repairs. The story becomes a

metaphor for the condition of Jews in the diaspora:

> I would recognize a Jewish watch miles off, by the groaning of the spring
> when it is being wound up ... and by its two little 'Mezuzah' hands, one of
> which drags westwards, whilst the other drags still farther eastwards, and
> both of which entangle themselves in the second hand which throws itself
> about on all sides, rubs itself against the dirt of the dial, and cannot crawl out
> for love or money. (p.78)

This image captures the feeling of paralysis caused by conflicting identifications, a

theme which features in Stern's novels and Woolf's story, and is used here to suggest

that Jews in exile are torn between identification with the 'old' and 'new' countries.

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[80] Disraeli's novels portray the Jews as a 'racial' aristocracy and argue for a continuity between 'Hebraic' and English culture that is beneficial to British imperialism. See Michael Ragussis (1995), and Bryan Cheyette (1993, reprinted 1994), chapter 3, on the subsequent uptake of these ideas by gentile writers including John Buchan and Rudyard Kipling.

[81] Moshe Oved, *Visions and Jewels: Autobiographic in Three Parts* (1925, London: Faber & Faber, 1952). Subsequent page references will appear in the text.

Oved set to work repairing the watch, which becomes a metaphor for the process of Anglicisation:

> I myself took that watch to pieces, made a careful diagnosis, and saw that not only the little glass, but its whole outlook, body and life were in danger. So, I threw away the worn-out over-turned screws ... replaced them by the best English screws, cleaned the teeth, and filed down the unnecessary parts. Afterwards, I set the dial on two straight, sound little legs and cleaned and polished every little bit
>
> But to this day it does not go accurately. It either goes too well or not at all. But it does not go accurately. (pp 78-79)

Like Stern and Woolf, Oved suggests that Anglicisation can never be complete, and that 'the Jew' will never 'go accurately' in gentile society. Unlike these writers, however, Oved does not appear to regard this as a problem, and treats it with humour rather than the frustration found in Stern's writing and the tension that Woolf's characters display. In Stern's novels the 'two little "Mezuzah" hands' that drag Jews in opposite directions are the force of Jewish tradition and the desire to acculturate, while the 'second hand' in which they become entangled is the impossibility of reconciling the two conflicting identifications and the resulting alienation. Ultimately, the attempt at self-transformation in accordance with gentile values is abandoned, and Stern's female characters retreat into the Jewish community. In *Peter Jackson* there is no Jewish community to retreat into, and Peter's internal conflict is resolved through a new professional identity in which 'the Jew' is connected to the land, as if to secure his integration by rooting it in the soil. In 'The Three Jews', however, it is the English spring that brings the Jew's incongruity into focus, and enables the first and second Jews to recognise one another as 'outsiders'. Stern's Jews are bonded together by tradition, while Woolf's characters are connected by pejorative notions of 'race' that they anxiously seek to shed. None of these writers engages with religious conversion as a means of integration, however, despite the fact that Stern converted to

Catholicism in 1947, and Frankau was baptised an Anglican and later became a Catholic. Woolf, in contrast, rejected Judaism in young adulthood, and adopted and maintained what his biographer terms a 'rather militant atheism'.[82] The excesses of the late nineteenth-century conversionist societies had damaged the credibility of conversionism, and the former emphasis on religious observance was being replaced by 'racial' and national constructions of Jewish identity. It is on these more complex markers of 'difference' that these writers focus.

Although religious conversion activity declined in the early twentieth century, the xenophobia of the war years increased the pressure upon Jews to assimilate, whilst making it harder for them to do so. Moshe Oved suggests that the effacement of Jewish identity reached such an extent under wartime conditions that by the early 1920s Judaism represented little more than a cuisine, in which

> The original, grandiose conceptions of Judah, from whose seed the nation
> expected that a Messiah would blossom forth, ultimately resulted in a little liver
> and goose-fat, chopped up with onions.[83]

This loss, although mourned, is treated with Oved's characteristic blend of sadness and humour, which is sustained throughout his book. The only occasion on which his writing takes on an angry tone is in relation to gentile embarrassment at the fact that he was Jewish. This occurred when he was invited as guest of honour to a P.E.N. Club dinner in London.[84] The novelist and dramatist John Galsworthy announced his arrival:

> According to custom, he called out the name, branch of art and nationality of
> each guest of honour.
> When it came to my turn he announced: 'Mosheh Oved, a Polish poet.'

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[82] Duncan Wilson, *Leonard Woolf: A Political Biography* (London: Hogarth, 1978), pp.12-13.
[83] Oved (1925, reprinted 1952), p.87.
[84] The P.E.N. Club was an international association of writers founded in 1921 by Mrs Dawson-Scott. The lawyer and writer John Galsworthy (1867-1933), who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932, was President.

> It was a smack in the face the finger-marks of which will remain for a long time
> to come.
> The reason why this happened was that John Galsworthy is an aesthetic
> gentleman, a man who is full of pity for the living and who is a friend of the
> Jews. It seems that he did not want to offend me before such a large audience
> by announcing that Mosheh Oved was a Jew. (p.98)

Oved, an immigrant, does not appear to have struggled with relating 'Jewishness' to

'Englishness' in the way that some of the British-born Jewish writers of the period did.

This was perhaps because he had Zionist sympathies and defined 'Jewishness' at least

partly in national terms, although he decided to stay in Britain, and became a

naturalised British citizen in 1924. His autobiography suggests he was less concerned

with 'passing' than the Anglo-Jewish writers discussed above, and there is a pride and

humour in his writing about 'Jewishness' that is not found in Stern's or Frankau's

work, much of which is characterised by anxiety and frustration with regard to finding

an English-Jewish identity. Oved does not idealise Jews in Disraelian fashion, or seek

to escape Judaism or Zionism, and of antisemitism he takes a wry view, as in his

account of the P.E.N. Club dinner:

> After dinner, I ran across an Anti-Semitic woman whose Anti-Semitic
> arguments were very feeble and banal. I have much more to say against Jews
> than she has; but, for the sake of my people, I did her no harm and let her live!
> (p.98)

## Conclusions

There are a number of layers to this discussion of the theme of 'conversion' or transformation in rhetoric and fiction relating to the war. Most, however, can be linked to a crisis of relation to constructions of 'Englishness' and the Church's attempt to claim the national tradition as Protestant during this period. First, there is the crisis of authority and what I have termed 'conversion anxiety' within the Anglican Church. This was linked to the Anglo-Catholic revival, in which individual clergymen took the initiative in providing the ritual elements felt necessary to contain the experience of war. As a result, earlier conflicts over Protestant orthodoxy were revived, contributing to the general decline in authority that had begun before 1914. Although the Anglo-Catholic revival was never explicitly identified as the threatened conversion of Protestant orthodoxy to a more Catholic form of worship, the wartime suppression of ritualism by the higher clergy does suggest a fear of this. Then there was the attempted 'conversion' of the nation to Christian piety, through the evangelical National Mission of Repentance and Hope, in keeping with the rhetoric of 'holy war' and the construction of the nation as devoutly Protestant. The idea of 'national conversion' was also applied to Germany, portrayed in popular rhetoric as having renounced Christianity for the new creed of militarism, the remedy for which was its symbolic conversion back to Christianity through military defeat. British soldiers, on the other hand, used conversion as a metaphor for their personal transformation through combat, as an image of their brutalisation in war, or to convey a loss of religious faith.

Religious conversionist societes were discredited by the early twentieth century, and the conversion of the Jews was a subject confined to the margins of

Protestantism and to academic theologians. Proposals included Margaret Willinks'

argument for a Christian theocracy in post-war Britain. Robertson's psychological

exploration of the process of conversion, and Williams' call for the revival of Hebrew-

Christianity. But although religious conversion activity decreased, Anglo-Jewish fiction

of this period suggests that the pressure to assimilate increased, whilst the anti-alienism

of the war years made it harder for Jews to do so. Jewish writers were also struggling

with ideas of nationhood during the war, not only with regard to constructions of

Protestant 'Englishness', but also to the publicity given to political Zionism at this

time. The Anglo-Jewish fiction discussed above indicates the difficulty of asserting an

English-Jewish identity and the anxiety and alienation caused by antisemitism. Both

Stern and Woolf write about the desirability and the futility of the attempted self-

transformation of 'the Jew'. Stern portrays assimilation as a struggle to meet

impossible and shifting criteria and as such, a process that can never be complete.

Leonard Woolf's 'The Three Jews' explores the internalisation of antisemitism, and its

role in the process of assimilation. Without a collective religious or national identity,

Jews in this story define themselves in terms of 'race', a discourse dominated by

antisemitic constructions of Jewish physiognomy and psychology, which portray

'Jewishness' as something negative that can never be transcended. Only Frankau

resolves the matter, attempting a Disraelian assertion of the value of 'the Jew' to

Britain by incorporating this aspect of Peter's character into a role that is deeply

connected to the land, as a financially astute gentleman farmer. In this way, 'the Jew' is

safely incorporated into post-war English identity. But the anxiety regarding the nature

of 'Jewishness' in his writing is recognisable, in the portrayal of Jewish characters as

non-combatants, cowards, profiteers, effeminate, impotent, and parasitic.

The notion of unassimilable 'Jewish difference' increased during the war. and

the next chapter discusses the development of this. and considers the theme of political

conversion in the British government's 'Zionist' mission to the Jews. which began in

the summer of 1917. Rather than demanding that Jews should transcend their

'Jewishness', this campaign constructed Jewish identity as national. and put Jews in

Britain under a new pressure: not to struggle with their origins. as the process of

assimilation demanded. but to return to them. in Palestine.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**The Political 'Conversion' of the Jews**

**Introduction**

One of the characteristics of antisemitic discourse is its ability to adapt in response to

changing political and social circumstances, and its efforts to make Jews embody

whatever is perceived as threatening the nominally Christian state and society at any

time. The conspiracy theories that antisemitism generates focus on the fact that the

Jews have been a people in dispersion, and this has given rise to various constructions

of the 'international Jew' as actively hostile to the Christian nation-state. An extreme

example of this was the fear of the 'world Jewish conspiracy' expressed in the forged

*Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, published in Russia in 1905 and in England

in 1920.[1] In the mid-late nineteenth century the sexual and moral threat that

international prostitution was felt to represent to British society was projected onto

Jewish immigrants, giving rise to the idea, discussed in Chapter One, that the 'white

slave traffic' was run by a network of Jewish procurers. In the early twentieth century,

Jews were made to embody the political threat represented by anarchism, socialism,

and especially communism, all of which were popularly perceived as 'Jewish'

ideologies. In response to the emergence of these political movements new conspiracy

theories regarding Jews developed, fuelled in Britain, like the 'white slavery' scare, by

the sharp increase in immigration from the 1880s onwards of Russian and Polish Jews

fleeing tsarist antisemitism. Many of the young people among the refugees were

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[1] The *Protocols* were compiled from various sources by Sergey Nilus, and first appeared in Russia in 1905. They were published in Britain as a series of articles in the *Morning Post*, 12-30 July 1920, and revealed as a forgery by Philip Graves in the *Times* in August 1921.

politically disaffected. and some became involved in radical politics. It was from this small basis in fact, as with all 'Jewish' stereotypes, that the image of the international 'political Jew' developed and became the focus of gentile fears regarding national stability and political change. In Britain this tendency began with anarchism, as both Jewish immigrants and anarchists were concentrated in the East End of London. A popular association between the two developed, assisted by the national press, and it was this association that laid the foundations for fears regarding the spread of 'Jewish Bolshevism' that accompanied the rise of the Bolshevik party in Russia in 1917.

This chapter explores the popular notion that there was an inherent connection between Judaism and revolutionary politics. The first section traces the development of political antisemitism in Britain from the 1880s into the First World War, placing particular emphasis on the confusion between religion and politics that characterises this discourse, in which the fear of the political 'conversion' of the nation by Jews can be detected. This confusion between religion and politics arises partly because of wartime representations of the nation as devoutly Christian, and partly because, in effect, political antisemitism attempted to reconstruct the barriers to Jews' participation in national life that had been removed by emancipation in 1858. The old argument that membership of the Established Church was intrinsic to national consciousness and loyalty was replaced by the view that it was the Jews' political rather than religious affiliations that threatened the state. In section two of this chapter I draw on Michael Ragussis' view of the 'double ideology' of tolerance and conversion with regard to Protestant attitudes towards Jews,[2] and argue that in

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[2] Michael Ragussis. *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995). p.3.

response to the threat of 'Jewish Bolshevism' the British government mobilised

another construction of Jewish political identity, namely Zionism, and used the

Balfour Declaration and the Jewish Legion to attempt a political 'conversion' of the

Jews.[3] By this means the Jews would be transformed from an international to a

national group, from potential Bolsheviks to Jewish nationalists.

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[3] The material in this chapter has been published as an article entitled 'The Politics of the "Last Days": Bolshevism, Zionism, and "the Jews"', in *Jewish Culture and History*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter 1999, pp.96-115.

## 1. 'The Messiah will be a Socialist'

The idea that there is a link between Marxism and Judaism stems from, as Robert

Wistrich has argued, a theological perspective on Marxism, which distorts both the

Marxist view of religion and Jewish messianism.[4] Although a number of Jews were

active in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European radical politics,

utopian socialism was dominated by gentiles, a fact frequently overlooked by those

who wanted to racialise revolutionary political movements.[5] But in Bryan Cheyette's

analysis, constructions of 'the Jew' are frequently dual in nature, and this figure could

also embody the evils of capitalism.[6] Marx himself equated Judaism with capitalism

in his 1843 essay 'On the Jewish Question', and suggested that Jews had 'converted'

Christians to the 'worship' of money:

> The Jew has emancipated himself in a Jewish manner, not only annexing the
> power of money, but also because through him and also apart from him money
> has become a world power and the practical spirit of the Jew has become the
> practical spirit of the Christian people. The Jews have emancipated themselves
> in so far as the Christians have become Jews.[7]

In contrast with Aaron Lieberman, who found socialist principles in Mosaic Law,

Marx saw capital as the secular face of Judaism, and stated that 'an emancipation

from haggling and money, from practical, real Judaism would be the self-

emancipation of our age'.[8] Lieberman, on the other hand, saw the Jews as the

inheritors of a radical social tradition that had its roots in the Pentateuch, and wrote:

> The community has always been the basis of our whole existence ... The
> community was the basis of our legislation, which in unmistakeable words
> forbade the sale of the land, and in the sense of equality and brotherhood

[4] Robert S Wistrich, *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky* (London: Harrap, 1976), p.4.
[5] Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Friedrich Engels, Karl Kautsky, Jean Jaures and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin are all examples of prominent radicals who were not Jewish.
[6] Bryan Cheyette (1993, reprinted 1994), pp.268-269.
[7] Karl Marx, 'On the Jewish Question', 1843, in David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (OUP, 1977; reprinted 1990), p.59.
[8] Marx (1843), in McLellan, ed. (1977, reprinted 1990), p.58.

which required a redistribution of the soil every seven years. Our most ancient
social system is anarchy; our true federation over the entire earth - the
International.[9]

This passage from the Russian anarchist journal *Vpered!* (*Forward*) was quoted in

translation by Rudolf Rocker, one of the gentile leaders of Jewish immigrants in the

East End from 1898 to 1914, in his memoir, *The London Years* (1956). Rocker arrived

in Britain on 1 January 1895 and settled in the East End, where he learned Yiddish

and in October 1898 became editor of the paper *Arbiter Fraint* (*Worker's Friend*).[10]

He saw in the Jews' history of segregation a greater radical potential than that found

in Christian society, since Jews had through exclusion and necessity developed a high

level of co-operation and self-regulation, and with this in mind, he focused his

attention on the Jewish immigrants in the East End.[11]

The notion that there was a connection between Judaism and revolutionary

politics was satirised by Israel Zangwill in *Children of the Ghetto* (1892), through the

character of Melchitsedek Pinchas, who proclaims:

> Our great teacher, Moses, was the first Socialist. The legislation of the Old
> Testament - the land laws, the jubilee regulations, the tender care for the poor,
> the subordination of the rights of property to the interests of the working-men -
> all this is pure Socialism! ... Socialism is Judaism and Judaism is Socialism,
> and Karl Marx and Lassalle, the founders of Socialism, were Jews. ... Yes,
> brothers, the only true Jews in England are the Socialists. Phylacteries,
> praying-shawls - all nonsense. Work for Socialism - that pleases the Almighty.
> The Messiah will be a Socialist.[12]

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[9] Aaron Lieberman (1849-1880), founded the Hebrew Socialist Union in Whitechapel in May 1876.
This passage, from *Vpered!* No 16, 1 September 1875, p.505, is quoted in Rudolf Rocker, *The London Years*, translated by Joseph Leftwich (London: Robert Anscombe & Co., Ltd., 1956), p.116.
[10] Rocker was not the only gentile editor of a Yiddish newspaper. Another gentile, a Russian Marxist named Beck, edited *Die Neue Zeit* from 1904 to 1908. See Rocker (1956), pp.179-80.
[11] In fact, the initial Jewish membership of the anarchist movement was low, partly because the idea of 'free love' was counter to Jewish teaching. See William J Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1975), p.256.
[12] Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto: A Study of a Peculiar People* (1892, reprinted Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1938), p.245.

As this passage suggests, there were Jews who spoke of radical politics in quasi-

religious terms, and to some immigrants Rocker represented a secular 'rabbi'. Sam

Dreen worked closely with Rocker in the East End before the First World War, and in

an interview in 1969, recalled that

> He united us, filled us with revolutionary ardour, inspired us with his clear
> thinking and wide knowledge, his love and understanding of art and literature
> and the values of culture.
> Rocker was our rabbi![13]

Another man, a baker named Kosoff, made a similar observation: 'He was my Rabbi!

If it wouldn't be for the Club I might never have read a book.'[14] If some of the Jewish

immigrants saw Rocker as their political 'rabbi', it must be noted that he did not

'preach' anarchism as such (although he gave lectures on history and politics), but

instead initiated real improvements for immigrants, through education, unionisation,

and the provision of practical resources for the community. His efforts, however, were

partly shaped by the desire to transform Jewish immigrants in accordance with his

own political vision, and by a sense of their inherent capacity to make that

transformation. It is this idea of the transformative potential of Jews that connects him

to the Christian conversionists who operated in the East End during the nineteenth

century. Like the conversionist societies, the anarchist clubs offered much-needed

practical resources to Jewish immigrants, but these came with ideological strings

attached. Just as some Christian proselytisers emphasised the similarities between

Judaism and Christianity in their conversion rhetoric, Rocker was attracted by the

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[13] Interview with former anarchist Sam Dreen. Milwaukee, October 18, 1969. In Fishman (1975),
p.254.
[14] Interview with former anarchist W Kosoff. September 21, 1973. In Fishman (1975), p.267, note 17.
Kosoff was referring to the anarchist club at Jubilee Street, Stepney, which opened in February 1906,
and was occasionally frequented by the prominent anarchists Kropotkin and Malatesta.

perceived similarity between the principles of Judaism and those of anarchism, as expressed by Lieberman. Rocker, however, was no 'millennial' anarchist, but saw anarchism as a stage in the progression of human society, as he noted in his memoir:

> My innermost conviction was that Anarchism was not to be conceived as a definite closed system, nor as a future millennium, but only as a particular trend in the historic development towards freedom in all fields of human thought and action, so that no strict and unalterable lines could therefore be set down for it.[15]

Accordingly, Rocker was less concerned with the 'conversion' of immigrant Jews to anarchism than with making immediate improvements to their quality of life. He focused his efforts on providing educational and recreational facilities in the East End, and helped to found the anarchist club in Jubilee Street, which opened on February 3, 1906. In December 1910 the journalist Philip Gibbs visited the club to assess the anarchist threat, and made the following observation:

> These alien anarchists were as tame as rabbits. I am convinced that they had not a revolver among them. But out of that anarchist club in the East End come ideas.[16]

The 'ideas' Gibbs referred to seem to have come from the national press rather than the 'alien anarchists', and by 1910 the *Times* was denouncing 'aliens' as violent troublemakers. A number of incidents had fuelled this, one of which was the 'Tottenham outrages', when on 23 January 1909, two Jewish men, Jacob Lepidus and Paul Hefeld, stole the payroll for Schnurmann's rubber factory in Tottenham. The police opened fire, and a constable was killed, three others wounded, and fifteen bystanders injured. Lepidus was killed and Hefeld received a head wound. The *Times* reported that it had been 'thoroughly established' that the thieves were 'members of

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[15] Rocker (1956), p.145.
[16] Philip Gibbs, quoted by Joseph Leftwich in his introduction to Rocker (1956), p.23.

the Russian revolutionary party, whose headquarters are known to be in London', and

were thought to be 'engaged in conveying revolutionary literature' from Russia to the

west.[17] There seems to have been some confusion regarding the men's political

allegiances, however. In one report they were identified as members of the Lettish

Socialistic Revolutionary Party, and later, by 'A member of the Russian revolutionary

movement' as 'probably belonging to a Russian society known as Bolsheviky ... the

most extreme section of the Democratic party'. Lepidus was also described as 'a

member of a notorious Russian revolutionary family'.[18] Ultimately, it was not the

particulars of the revolutionary movements to which Jews belonged that were

important, but the association itself, and it was this on which the *Times* traded in its

appeals to popular antisemitism.[19]

Another incident that linked Jews with anarchism in the popular imagination

was the 'Houndsditch murders' of 17 December 1910, in which three policemen died

during the robbery of a jeweller's shop. Explosives and ammunition were found at an

address in Gold Street, Stepney, where the thieves had been staying, along with papers

in Russian and Yiddish, which led the police to conclude that the men concerned were

members of 'a dangerous group of Anarchists'.[20] An article in the *Times* linked the

violence to immigration, noting that 'the secretiveness and aloofness of the alien

population' assisted anarchists, who could quickly blend in with the 'swarms of

[17] 'Alien Robbers Run Amok', *Times*, 25 January 1909, p.9.
[18] 'Anarchist Society at Tottenham', *Times*, 26 January 1909, p.7.
[19] See, for example, a 1911 article discussing immigration, which opened with a reference to immigrants (the vast majority of whom were Jews) as 'the waste products - the undesirable members of society', which the nations must eliminate or absorb. The writer also referred to 'alien' involvement in the 'white slave traffic'. 'The Expulsion of Aliens: An Intricate Problem', *Times*, 11 January 1911, p.10.
[20] *Times*, 29 December 1910. p.6.

foreigners' in East London.[21] By January 1911, Chief Rabbi Dr Adler felt obliged to issue a statement to the effect that anarchism and Judaism were not alike, and to insist that it had been proved 'beyond doubt' that the Houndsditch murderers were Jews 'neither by race nor by faith'.[22] In fact, one of the men involved was a Jew, named Gardstein, who was killed during the robbery. Whether or not Gardstein was an anarchist, however, is unclear, although he had connections with the Italian anarchist Enrico Malatesta, who was arrested after the incident but later released.[23]

Despite flimsy evidence, the association between Jewish immigrants and anarchists persisted, as the coverage of the 'Siege of Sidney Street' shows. On 3 January 1911, police, disguised as 'Jewish pedlars' and a detachment of Scots Guards, surrounded a house in which two men who fitted the description of those involved in the Houndsditch incident were living. A siege ensued and after nearly seven hours of shooting the building caught fire and the men died. Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary, visited the scene, ensuring that the press gave the case a high profile, and the matter provoked calls for the amendment of the 1905 Aliens Act and for the police to be armed. Once again the *Times* appealed to popular antisemitism, noting of the onlookers that 'one could not fail to be struck with the fact that in nearly every case they were of the Semitic type', and reinforcing the political connection by referring to the two dead men as 'anarchists' throughout.[24] This assumption was perhaps partly based on the fact that Sidney Street ran immediately parallel to Jubilee Street,[25] where the anarchist club was located, and the article included a map showing this, but as

[21] 'Anarchists in London: High Explosives and Crime', *Times*, 29 December 1909, p.8.
[22] Dr Adler, quoted in the *Times*, 9 January 1911, p.8.
[23] Fishman (1975), p.288.
[24] *Times*, 4 January 1911, p.8.
[25] Sidney Street and Jubilee Street are located in Stepney, off the Mile End Road.

investigations proceeded it became less clear that the dead men had been

revolutionaries. Police found steel tubes in the house, which they initially identified as

'bomb-cases', but these were later proved to be leather cutting tools for use in button-

making.[26] The inquest identified the men as 'Fritz Svaars' and 'Josef'. The causes of

death were described as suffocation and shooting, and a verdict of justifiable homicide

recorded.[27]

None of the men involved in these incidents was a proven member of the

anarchist movement, and on only one occasion did Jewish members of the Jubilee

Club plot violent activity, which Rocker intervened to prevent. This occurred in

November 1909, when he discovered that the club had been infiltrated by *Okhrana*

agents, who had persuaded some young Russians to bomb the Lord Mayor's Show.[28]

As the *Times*' coverage of these incidents shows, however, accuracy was not

important in creating and maintaining a popular association between Jewish

immigrants and radical political movements. Stories of 'alien' troublemakers appeared

in the national press until 1914, when the anarchist movement in Britain was

destroyed by the outbreak of the First World War. Rocker and other anarchist leaders

were interned as 'enemy aliens', and the *Arbiter Fraint* was closed down by the

British government in 1915.

As the war progressed, the image of the 'alien anarchist' gave way to that of

the 'pro-German Jew', still an international figure but now with pronounced German

sympathies, who attempted to use a network of Jewish financial power against the

Allies. At the Foreign Office, fears were focused on British and American Jewish

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[26] *Times*, 10 January 1911, p.8.
[27] *Times*, 19 January 1911, p.6.
[28] Fishman (1975), p.269. The *Okhrana* were the tsarist secret police.

bankers, whose German connections and political influence were exaggerated, but whose financial support was vital to the war effort. By 1915 the Allies were seeking a war loan from, amongst others, the American Jewish banker Jacob Schiff, but were hampered in this by neutral Jewry's opposition to tsarist antisemitism.[29] As Russia's ally, Britain attempted via Lucien Wolf to secure the reform of Russia's anti-Jewish laws, but with little success.[30] It was subsequent political events that improved the position of Russian Jews. On 23 February (8 March) 1917 a revolution broke out in St. Petersburg, in which some members of the military joined forces with the revolutionaries. This was followed by the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in March and the formation of a provisional government, led initially by Prince Lvov, and later, in July, by Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky. By April 1917 Russian Jews were emancipated, and the required American Jewish financial support was forthcoming.[31] But the provisional government was short-lived and in August General Kornilov led anti-liberal forces in an attempted *coup*. This, too, was defeated, and another revolution occurred on 24-25 October (6-7 November), in which the Bolshevik party seized control.

Britain now feared not only the withdrawal of its ally from the war but also the spread of revolution, and sought ways to prevent this. With the abdication of the tsar, the overthrow of the liberal Kerensky government, and the attack on the Russian

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[29] See Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914-1919* (Oxford: OUP, 1992), pp.56-59. The American Jewish banker Jacob Schiff was of German origins. In 1915 he agreed to give Britain and France a loan, but refused assistance to Russia until the position of Russian Jewry was ameliorated.

[30] Levene (1992), pp.65-74.

[31] Levene (1992), p.132. 'Russian Jewry', as a result of Russian expansion and the partition of Poland in the late eighteenth century, in fact included Jews of Lithuanian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Bessarabian, Moldavian and Polish origins. These were grouped in the Pale of Settlement, which during the First World War became part of the war zone. See Sharman Kadish (1992), p.2.

Orthodox Church, Bolshevism could easily be construed as the latest international

Jewish attack on the Christian nation-state. Exaggerated reports of Russian Jews'

Bolshevik sympathies were supplied by Robert Wilton, Petrograd correspondent to the

*Times* and supported by the paper's editor Henry Wickham Steed. Political anxiety in

Britain began to focus on the 'revolutionary Jew', agitating for the overthrow of the

monarchy and parliamentary democracy. One possible way to deter Russian Jewry

from supporting Bolshevism, in the eyes of the British government, was to pledge

British support for Zionism. In the spring of 1917 Sir Mark Sykes of the Foreign

Office had entered into discussions with Zionist leaders, having been persuaded by

Chaim Weizmann that an appeal to Zionist feeling would secure the support of neutral

Jews for the Allies and deter Russian Jews from revolutionary politics.[32] Weizmann

argued that antisemitism was linked to assimilation and would be eradicated through

the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Lucien Wolf, who with Israel Zangwill

had been involved in the Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO) in 1905, now felt that

Zionist activity could arouse xenophobia, provoke expulsions in Eastern Europe, and

undermine the civil rights of assimilated Jewry.[33] Wolf favoured continuing to

negotiate for legal reform in Russia, but as Mark Levene has observed, Weizmann's

perspective was more expedient, allowing the British to make a gesture of support for

Jewry whilst avoiding confrontation with its ally over the persecution of Russian

Jews.[34] It also offered the important illusion that government-endorsed 'Zionism'

would deter Russian and East End Jewry from supporting the revolution.

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[32] Levene (1992), p.133.
[33] Levene (1992), p.112. The ITO sought a Jewish homeland within the British empire. The annexation of Palestine, however, meant the expansion of British imperial territory.
[34] Levene (1992), p.129.

Jews in both Russia and Britain held diverse views regarding revolutionary politics, but the complexity of their political identifications went largely unreported in the British national press. In Russia, orthodox Marxists regarded antisemitism as a product of capitalist society, and argued that efforts to preserve Jewish culture under socialism would simply maintain the 'ghetto' identity and invite antisemitic attack. The Jewish *Bund*, founded in 1897, was an anti-Zionist socialist organisation that disputed this, and sought to preserve a degree of Jewish cultural autonomy within the Russian socialist movement.[35] There were more Jews in the moderate Menshevik party than among the Bolsheviks, but it was the image of the 'Bolshevik Jew' that caught the popular imagination in Britain.[36] As the Bolsheviks gained support in Russia, fears were aroused in Britain, not least by the Northcliffe press,[37] that revolution would spread through the Jewish immigrants in the East End, already regarded as political troublemakers as a result of the publicity given to the earlier involvement of some Jews in anarchism.

How much truth was there in the construction of the 'revolutionary Jew' which emerged in wartime Britain? Prominent Jews in the development of European revolutionary politics included Moses Hess (1812-1875), Karl Marx (1818-1883), Ferdinand Lasalle (1825-1864), Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), and Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919). The most notorious Russian revolutionary Jew was Leon Trotsky (born Leo Bronstein, 1879-1940), a figure who prompted some to view all Jews as likely

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[35] The formation of the anti-Zionist Jewish Bund coincided with the development of political Zionism. Herzl's influential *Judenstaat* was published in 1896, and in 1897 the first Zionist Congress was held in Basle.
[36] See Kadish (1992), p.110.
[37] Lord Northcliffe was the owner of the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*.

communist sympathisers. In Britain, the most prominent Jewish revolutionary was Maxim Litvinov (1876-1951), an immigrant from Russia and a member of the British Socialist Party. Litvinov was deported in September 1918, and succeeded by Theodore Rothstein. When Rothstein was prevented from returning to Britain from Moscow in 1920, members of his family continued the Anglo-Soviet links. Jews were also involved in the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the Social Democratic Federation. Right-wing opinion associated the rise of the International Labour Party (ILP) with the Bolshevik coup, and Emmanuel Shinwell (1888-1986), who in 1922 became the first Jewish Labour MP, was dubbed the ILP's 'Jewish Bolshevik' for his role in the 'Red Clydeside' unrest in 1919.[38]

Most of the Jewish radicals in wartime Britain were immigrants, and as a result, concern over the 'revolutionary Jew' focused on the immigrant population. With recent memories of life under the tsars, some Jewish immigrants did become active in the socialist and communist movements, partly owing to a suspicion of state authority developed under the tsars, and partly because they had little parliamentary representation. There were no Jewish MPs representing East End constituencies in 1917, although Joseph King, Liberal MP for North Somerset, defended the Jews against the proposed Conscription Bill, and as a result earned himself the nickname 'King of the Jews',[39] which suggests a combination of religious and political themes in fears regarding Jewish immigrants. Jewish political groups in First World War Britain included the Marxist Jewish Social Democratic Party (the *Bund*, which became affiliated to the British Socialist Party after 1917), *Poalei Zion* (the Labour

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[38] Kadish (1992), pp.230-236.
[39] Joseph Banister, *Our Judeo-Irish Labour Party* (London, 1923), quoted in Kadish (1992), p.48.

Zionists), and the Committee of Delegations of Russian Socialist Groups.[40] Other

groups were formed with the aim of representing the collective interests and

defending the rights of Jewish immigrants. Of these, the Foreign Jews' Protection

Committee against Compulsion and Deportation (FJPC), founded in June 1916, was

the most radical. After the Bolshevik coup, some of the most committed Jewish

radicals returned to support the new Russia, and their departure meant that Jewish

radicalism in the East End was far from the threatening presence described in the

national press.

On the whole, the Jewish press in Britain was critical of communism during

and after the war, aware of the danger for Jews of overtly supporting revolutionary

politics at a time when 'aliens' were regarded with suspicion. Reporting on wartime

events for a Jewish readership proved a delicate task, as discussion of issues affecting

Jews in the Diaspora fuelled accusations of 'internationalism', and could lead to

conflict with the censor. Like the Anglo-Jewish press, the Yiddish papers wrote

optimistically of the liberal 'Kerensky revolution', but regarded Bolshevism with

mistrust, owing to its hostility towards both Zionism and religion.[41] Despite the

caution of the Jewish press in its coverage of revolutionary politics, however, the

image of the 'Bolshevik Jew' persisted.

An alternative construction of Jewish political identity, and one which had the

official support of the British government, was of 'the Jew' as Zionist, the antithesis

of Bolshevik internationalism. This held a number of advantages for the British. A

'Zionist' approach to the political 'Jewish question' would facilitate the conscription

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[40] Kadish (1992), p.202.
[41] Kadish (1992), p.189.

of Russian Jewish immigrants - who had been understandably reluctant to fight in alliance with the tsar - and would allow Britain to expand its imperial territory through the proposed annexation of Palestine (General Allenby's troops were amassed at Sinai for this purpose by April 1917). Plans for the formation of specifically Jewish battalions in the British army were announced in June 1917, and aroused much debate. Jews in Britain were suspicious of the government's motives, having historical reason to be mistrustful of gentile 'solutions' to the 'Jewish question', the most recent example being the religious conversionist societies of the nineteenth century. What appeared to be happening in 1917 was that Jews were being subjected to another conversion drive, this time political, as the British government began to proselytise on behalf of Jewish nationalism.

The dialectical relationship between religion and politics in the Christian state was noted by Marx in 1843, when he wrote:

> The so-called Christian state ... has a political attitude to religion and a religious attitude to politics.[42]

In other words, under certain conditions the politics of the Christian state may become evangelical and its religious discourses political, presenting particular difficulties for Jews within the population. In the Christian state, Jews represented a perceived obstacle to fantasies of religious, cultural and national homogeneity, all of which became more important under wartime conditions. The obstacle they appeared to present in 1917 was as a people whose difference was not contained within its own national borders, but dispersed around the world, representing a means for the spread of revolutionary politics, then widely perceived as 'Jewish'. Fears regarding this were

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[42] Marx (1843), in McLellan, ed. (1990), p.48.

linked to the Jewish messianic tradition, with its promise of social and political

reform, and in Britain this gave rise to the idea that Jews would be attracted to the

'false Messiah' of Bolshevism, and support revolution. The government's response, in

what was becoming an increasingly simplistic discourse regarding Jewish collective

political identity, was to promote Zionism as the 'good' Jewish political identity, and

to set about 'converting' Britain's Jewish population to nationalism, by means, I will

argue, of the Jewish Legion and the Balfour Declaration. As a result of this, Jews in

Britain became caught in an ideological struggle between Bolshevism and Zionism

that, for those whose sympathies were not wholly communist or nationalist, made any

other political self-definition very difficult.

## 2. 'The Voice of God'

It was a Jewish soldier, Acting Corporal Issy Smith, who won the first Victoria Cross

of the Great War, in August 1915.[43] Yet in spite of this, the years 1914 to 1918 were

a period in which the loyalty and patriotism of Jews living in England was the subject

of debate. In response to the climate of mistrust, the *Jewish Chronicle* published lists

of Jewish volunteers for the army,[44] but regardless of the high rate of enlistment

among Jews in Britain, their patriotism remained under suspicion. When conscription

was introduced in the spring of 1916, some 25-30,000 Russian-born Jews of military

age were strictly speaking ineligible, since they were not British subjects. The War

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[43] David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.118.
[44] *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 August 1914; 16 October 1914; 11 September 1915; 17 December 1915, and 26 November 1915.

Office decided in May 1916 to allow these men to enlist, but they were understandably reluctant to fight in alliance with the tsarist regime, having left Russia as a result of persecution. Those who refused to enlist were threatened with deportation, and in an attempt to resolve the problem, it was suggested that an all-Jewish regiment be formed. Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880-1940), a writer, orator and linguist originally from Odessa, and an ardent Zionist, had been campaigning for this since 1915, but with little success. It was not until the spectre of the 'Jewish Bolshevik' emerged, combined with the need to conscript immigrants, that the idea was taken up by the War Office. The proposed Jewish Legion would be deployed in Palestine, forming part of the British government's 'Zionist' policy, in conjunction with the talks between the Foreign Office and the Zionist leaders that eventually produced the Balfour Declaration. Unenlisted Jewish immigrants were faced with a choice of returning to Russia at short notice, or being conscripted into the Legion, and the families of those who elected to return to Russia would remain in Britain, unsupported by the state.

As Mark Levene has noted, once the British government had announced its plans for a separate Jewish regiment, 'there was a marked sympathy for Zionism among those journalists who had been most persistent in their accusations of corporate Jewish sabotage, disloyalty, and treason'.[45] Religious themes were introduced into the debate over the Legion, and the *Times* speculated that the proposed Jewish unit would bring about the restoration of Israel as described in the Bible. An article published in August 1917 opened with the following statement:

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[45] Levene (1992), p.120.

There is an ancient Jewish prophecy which says that the Jews will be led back to their own land by a man of another race.[46]

The fulfilment of prophecy by this means called for a Moses figure, a commanding officer for the Jewish soldiers, and an Irish Protestant, Lieutenant-Colonel John Henry Patterson, was selected for this role. Patterson was a professional soldier and big game hunter who had served in Africa before the war. During this time he had written two books describing his experiences, *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo* (1907) and *In the Grip of the Nyika* (1909), titles which suggest the author as imperial adventurer, braving the dangers of the remote dominions of the British empire. Forming a Jewish regiment and taking it to Palestine represented a mix of imperial trailblazing, military campaign history, and biblical prophecy fulfilled, as his memoirs show.

Patterson had been cast as 'Moses' once before, as commander of the Zion Mule Corps at Gallipoli during the Dardanelles campaign (1915-1916). The Corps was a transport unit composed of Jews who had fled Palestine when war broke out, and volunteered for the British army. The unit served at Gallipoli from 26 April 1915 to 9 January 1916, when the British retreated. It was disbanded in March 1916, but its brief existence was sufficient to prompt biblical comparisons. Patterson's Gallipoli memoir describes how, in an address to the newly-formed Jewish unit, the Grand Rabbi of Alexandria explicitly linked him to the leader of the ancient Israelites:

> The Grand Rabbi then delivered a stirring address to the new soldiers, in which he compared them to their forefathers who had been led out of Egypt by Moses, and at the end he turned to me and presented me to them as their modern leader.[47]

Patterson himself made no claims to be a modern Moses, preferring to cast the Zionist

[46] *Times*, 8 August 1917, p.3.
[47] Lt-Col J H Patterson, *With the Zionists in Gallipoli* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1916), p.35.

leader Chaim Weizmann in this role. Instead, his memoirs suggest an identification

with Jewish military leaders, men like Judas Maccabeus, who led the Jews against

Rome in 166 BCE, and Simon Bar Kokhba, who led a three year revolt against

Hadrian in 132 CE. Indeed, prior to the First World War, Patterson's only knowledge

of Jews had been biblical:

> When, as a boy, I eagerly devoured the records of the glorious deeds of Jewish
> military captains such as Joshua, Joab, Gideon and Judas Maccabeus, I little
> dreamt that one day I, myself, would, in a small way, be a captain of a host of
> the Children of Israel![48]

As prospective commander of the proposed Jewish regiment, however, Patterson

effectively became the British government's Zionist missionary to the Jews,

attempting to persuade the leaders of Anglo-Jewry and the English Zionist Federation

that their interests were foremost in its plans. In his account of the Palestine campaign,

published in 1922, he described one of his unsuccessful 'conversion' attempts:

> I tried to do what in me lay with certain of the leaders of Zionism, and spent
> some time endeavouring to enthuse a devoted and spiritual Jew who was
> deeply interested in the Restoration; indeed, I thought I had won him over to
> the cause of the legion, for at times during our conversation his face lit up at
> the possibilities unfolded to him, but, alas, after I left him, I fear he fell away
> from grace![49]

Under the British government's 'Zionist' proposal, rather than being converted to

Christianity, as in the millennial narrative, the Jews were to be 'normalised' through

entry into nationhood. As members of a separate Jewish regiment, their position

would not be dissimilar to that of the 'Hebrew Christians' in nineteenth-century

proposals for the religious conversion of the Jews. The 'Hebrew Christians', of which

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[48] Lt-Col J H Patterson, *With the Judaeans in the Palestine Campaign* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1922) pp.33-34.
[49] Patterson (1922), pp.27-28.

there were few, were converts who remained segregated within the Church, as a reminder to both Christians and Jews of their significance in the fulfilment of the millennial narrative of the conversion of the Jews prior to the second coming. Patterson's role in this government-instigated political transformation of the Jewish people was to recruit and train Jewish soldiers and lead them into Palestine. This represented the fulfilment of an imperial rather than a millennial narrative, in which 'Jewish brains, Jewish capital, and Jewish workers' would establish a colony in Palestine that would 'loyally carry out the policy of the Imperial Government' and also help protect British interests in Egypt.[50]

The Jewish community was divided over the issue of what many saw as the military segregation of Jews through the proposed Legion, and it was feared that a 'ghetto regiment' would be the result. The *Jewish Chronicle* noted that there were many other 'friendly aliens' in Britain at the outbreak of the war, besides immigrants from Russia. Jews everywhere were fighting for their countries of adoption, not for a 'Jewish nationalist' cause, and unless the War Office had a strategic need for a specifically Jewish regiment, the Legion would serve no other purpose than that of segregation.[51] The Grand Order of the Israel Friendly Society, meeting in London in August 1917, regarded the Jewish regiment as a 'calamity' for Jews in Britain, whose patriotism was beyond question, the Order itself having contributed £22,000 to war loans, and lost 15 men on the battlefield.[52] The English Zionist Federation believed that the formation of a Jewish Legion would prompt the Turks to attack Jews in Palestine. and the Conjoint Foreign Committee, headed by Lucien Wolf, argued that

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[50] Patterson (1922). pp.247, 276.
[51] *Jewish Chronicle*. 7 September 1917. p. 5.
[52] *Times*. 7 August 1917. p.5.

Jewish collective identity was religious rather than political, and disputed the

existence of a Jewish nationality.[53]

Other voices were raised in criticism of the plan, and the *Daily News*

published an article by the Liberal peer G W E Russell, which argued that however

well-intentioned the proposal for a Jewish regiment might be, it was impractical and

unnecessary. Russell pointed out that British Catholics and Methodists were not being

invited to join separate regiments, and insisted that neither should British Jews.

Modern Jewry, he argued, was not a political but a religious community, and to

illustrate his point, gave an account of a conversation with a Jewish friend on the

subject of war and patriotism:

> A Jewish friend of mine said the other day to a pacifist who tried to appeal to
> him on racial grounds: "*I would shoot a Jewish Prussian as readily as a
> Christian Prussian, if I found him fighting under the German flag.*"[54]

Despite the controversy and criticism aroused by the proposal, the War Office

announced its decision to form a Jewish regiment on 8 August 1917, the day before

the final deadline for those returning to Russia. Immigrants serving in the Jewish

regiment would be automatically naturalised after their initial three months' training,

at no personal expense. A committee was formed to implement the decision, chaired

by Lord Rothschild, with M J Landa as Honorary Secretary. There were also plans for

the creation of a Jewish Medical Corps and a regimental band, and it was proposed

that a separate training camp be set up approximately 40 miles outside London, with

*kosher* kitchen facilities.

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[53] For a full discussion of the divisions among Jewry over Zionism, see Levene (1992) and Stuart A
Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895-1920* (New
Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982).
[54] G W E Russell, article in the *Daily News*, 17 September 1917, published as a pamphlet in 1917.

Throughout September 1917, Lord Derby met with several deputations from British Jewry to discuss the title and insignia of the regiments for Jews, and the conditions of service. In response to concerns over the use of the term 'Jewish' in identifying the soldiers, Lord Derby stated that there would be no special treatment; they would be given numerals and would wear the general service badge.[55] Furthermore, it was acknowledged that Jewish troops must fight where they were needed.[56] The regiment came into being on 24 August 1917, and the *Times* noted with approval that the War Office had received 'Hundreds' of applications for transfer from Jews serving in other battalions in the British army.[57] According to Patterson, however, few Jewish officers wished to transfer, although non-commissioned officers were more enthusiastic. As a result recruiting was slow and it took four months to form one battalion.[58] Eventually three regiments were formed, the 38th, 39th and 40th Royal Fusiliers. They became known as 'the Judaeans' and wore the *menorah* as part of their regimental insignia.

During the debate over the conscription of 'aliens' and the formation of the Jewish Legion, Cabinet Ministers had been meeting with the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann to discuss policy for creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The result of this was the Balfour Declaration,[59] which was formally issued on 2nd November 1917, too late for its anticipated prevention of the Bolshevik party's rise to power by appealing to the national rather than the (exaggerated) revolutionary sympathies of

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[55] *Times*, 1 September 1917, p.3.
[56] *Times*, 13 September 1917, p.3.
[57] *Times*, 14 September 1917, p.7.
[58] Patterson (1922), p.25.
[59] Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) was Conservative Prime Minister from July 1902 to December 1905. In 1917 he was Foreign Secretary in Lloyd George's coalition government.

Russian Jewry. The Declaration went through five drafts before the final version was

approved on 31 October 1917.[60] The first, Zionist draft, of July 1917, read:

> 1.     His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should
> be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people.
> 2.     His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the
> achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods and
> means with the Zionist Organisation.

The draft that followed this in August 1917, written by Arthur Balfour, reproduced the

first crucial point almost verbatim, and stated the government's readiness to 'consider

any suggestions on the subject which the Zionist Organisation may desire to lay before

them'.[61] After this, however, the document went through three further drafts, in which

the statement regarding the Jews' claim to Palestine as a national homeland became

increasingly diluted and the government's position more ambiguous. The next draft,

made by the Conservative Lord Alfred Milner (1854-1925), who joined Lloyd

George's War Cabinet in 1916, gave the government's view that 'every opportunity

should be afforded for the establishment of *a* home for the Jewish people *in*

Palestine'.[62] With his Cabinet colleague the Conservative Leopold Amery (1873-

1955), Milner produced another draft on 4 October 1917, which changed the

government's position again, from accepting the Jews' claim to Palestine to viewing it

'with favour', and spoke of 'a national home for the Jewish *race*'.[63] Even as it

appeared to identify the Jews as a distinct national group (the term 'race' at the time

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[60] Ironically, Lucien Wolf's 1916 'formula' for the appeasement of neutral Jewish opinion with regard
to Russian antisemitism formed the basis of the Declaration. Wolf's formula proposed that if Palestine
should come under French or British control, the civil and legal rights of Jews resident there should be
guaranteed and immigration facilitated. See Levene (1992), p.92.

[61] All five drafts of the Balfour Declaration are reproduced as an Appendix in Leonard Stein, *The
Balfour Declaration* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., Ltd., 1961, reprinted Jerusalem: The
Magnes Press, the Hebrew University and London: Jewish Chronicle Publications, 1983), p.664.

[62] Stein (1983), my emphasis.

[63] Stein (1983), my emphasis.

was frequently used in this regard),[64] the language of this third draft retreated from the earlier statement that Palestine should become their homeland. The Milner-Amery draft did, however, acknowledge some of the wider issues, including the concerns both of Palestine's Arab population and Anglo-Jewry, noting that the Declaration should not 'prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine', nor should it affect the 'rights and political status enjoyed [by Jews] in any other country'.

Like the Jewish Legion, the Balfour Declaration created divisions among Jews in Britain, many of whom resented the expectation that they should automatically become Zionists. As Leonard Stein describes it,

> There was ... a kind of pro-semitism which to some Jews looked like the opposite – the pro-semitism which put all the emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Jews and seemed almost to imply that emancipation had done them a wrong by blurring their identity as a nation.[65]

The Declaration was politically expedient, however, for both the War Cabinet and the Zionist leaders. The 'Zionism' of the British government was a response to a variety of problems with which it was faced in 1917. These included fears of the spread of 'Jewish Bolshevism'; the need to conscript non-naturalised Jewish immigrants in the East End; the potential loss of Russia as an ally, and the desire for imperial expansion in the Middle East. To the Zionists, it offered the official support of a western government for Jewish settlement in Palestine, and the possible resolution of the 'Jewish question'. Both Lloyd George and Arthur Balfour realised that the creation of a buffer state in Palestine, administered by Jews but ultimately subject to British

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[64] See G R Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain 1900-1914* (Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing, 1976), p.39.
[65] Stein (1983), p.163.

authority, would not only help regenerate the empire but also safeguard Britain's interests in Egypt, which had become a British Protectorate in December 1914. But besides its political expediency, the Declaration also appealed to the religious sentiments of British Cabinet ministers. Weizmann remarked upon this as early as January 1915, in a report submitted to the Local Government Board, in which he referred to a meeting with Herbert Samuel in December the previous year:

> He [Samuel] ... thinks that perhaps the Temple may be rebuilt, as a symbol of Jewish unity - of course in a modernised form. After listening to him, I remarked that I was pleasantly surprised to hear such words from him; that if I were a religious Jew I should have thought the Messianic times were near ... He added that these ideas are in the mind of his colleagues in the Cabinet.[66]

Colonel R Meinertzhagen, Chief Political Officer to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) in Palestine, also noted religious sentiment among British politicians with regard to Zionism. According to Meinertzhagen, Lloyd George's support for the Declaration and the Legion was 'influenced entirely by sentiment and by his belief in the Old Testament'. Of Balfour, Meinertzhagen states that his 'real motive was to remedy the unsatisfactory state of the Jews in the world'.[67] As Leonard Stein has observed, 'Balfour was not moved by any mystical ideas about the return of the Chosen People to the Holy Land'. He did, however, express the view that Christians owed much to the Jews, and on several occasions stated that the Christian nations should make reparations to the Jewish people for their treatment of them.[68] Yet as Conservative Prime Minister in 1905 he had been largely responsible for the Aliens

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[66] Chaim Weizmann, Report to the Local Government Board, January 1915, quoted in Stein (1983), pp.138-9.
[67] Colonel R Meinertzhagen, diary entry dated 23 July 1921, *Middle East Diary 1917 to 1956* (London: The Cressnet Press, 1959), p.103.
[68] Stein (1983), pp.149, 156, 158.

Act, which appeared to target Jews fleeing the pogroms in Russia. A similar

ambivalence is identifiable in the 'Zionist' Declaration of 1917. Although portrayed

as a gesture of support for the Jews, it was also a reaction to the fear of collective

'Jewish power', and the desire to restrict or control it. As Mark Levene has observed,

> ... the origins of the Balfour Declaration are to be located less in the wartime
> policies and strategies of Britain in the Middle East and more in the murky
> waters of modern anti-Semitism. At the bottom of the pool was the fear that a
> collective, potentially conspiratorial Jewry knew something which the rest of
> the world did not know, and could manipulate it accordingly for its own
> ends.[69]

In fact, the British were manipulating Zionism as part of a propaganda battle with

Germany, also interested in appealing to Russian and North American Jewry through

the creation of a Jewish protectorate on Turkish territory.[70] In the context of 'holy

war', the return of the Jews to Palestine took on immediate religious significance, as

the *Times'* coverage of the debate over the Jewish Legion demonstrates. As one of the

commanders of the Jewish Legion, Patterson described his view of the impact of

Balfour's statement upon British Jewry:

> By pious Jews it was regarded as little short of the Voice of God, bringing
> their long-cherished aspirations within sight of fulfilment.[71]

Indeed, Chaim Raphael recalls the excitement that the Palestine campaign generated

in his local synagogue:

> General Allenby's campaign to win back the Holy Land from the pagans was a
> situation they were completely at home with. It had happened before with
> Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and then again with Joshua and King David. I knew
> the place-names myself from the weekly Bible readings, and listened eagerly.
> Sons of our congregation were actually in the British Army *with* Allenby,

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[69] Mark Levene. 'The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity', in *The English Historical Review*. Vol. CVII, 1992. p.70.
[70] Levene. 'The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity', in *The English Historical Review*. Vol. CVII, 1992, p.70. p.55.
[71] Patterson (1922), p.17.

> fighting like the old children of Israel. It was almost as if the Messiah was on his way.[72]

Patterson's account of the Palestine campaign was consistent with this view, framing the formation of the Jewish Legion and its deployment in Palestine as a modern re-enactment of the biblical Exodus story, a British-led military ingathering of the Jews and their return to the Promised Land.

The Jewish troops left Southampton and sailed for Egypt on 5 February 1918. A Sabbath service was held on board ship, in which Patterson suggested to his men that as long as they had the Ark of the Covenant, 'neither submarine nor storm would trouble us'. They arrived safely in Alexandria on 28 February, although the ship, the *Leasoe Castle*, was torpedoed and sunk on her next voyage.[73] Alongside the biblical allegory, there is also a suggestion of 'Zionist eugenics' in Patterson's account of this modern 'return to Canaan', which links the Patterson's use of the Exodus narrative to then contemporary preoccupations with the 'racial' strength of nations.[74] Proximity to Palestine is portrayed as having marked beneficial effects on the health of the previously sickly Jewish troops:

> ... within a few weeks of our arrival in Egypt, no one would have recognized in these bronzed and well set up men, who walked about with a conscious look

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[72] Chaim Raphael (Chaim Pruss), *A Coat of Many Colours: Memoirs of a Jewish Experience* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979), p.23.

[73] Patterson (1922), p.50.

[74] Broadly speaking, eugenists saw a correlation between the general health of the nation and Britain's status as an imperial power, and argued that environmental changes alone were not enough to achieve optimum 'national efficiency', and that a biological strategy was needed. The Eugenics Education Society (EES) was founded in London in 1907-1908. It launched its journal, the *Eugenics Review* in 1910, and prior to 1914 sponsored numerous lectures to teachers and physicians. Membership of the EES included prominent medical professionals, although the *British Medical Journal* was critical of the movement, and it was sometimes attacked in the national press. Eugenics appealed to a number of clergymen, including William Ralph Inge, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral from 1911-1934, and had some influence in political circles (Arthur Balfour was Honorary Vice-President of the EES in 1913, and the Tory William Joynson-Hicks was a member, as was Neville Chamberlain). Some Jews were involved in the EES; for example, Dr Sidney Herbert, and a Jewish Committee was formed in 1913 to investigate what Jewish culture, with its tradition of endogamy, could contribute to eugenics. See Searle (1976), pp.9-33.

of pride in themselves and their battalion, the pale, pinched, miserable looking conscripts who joined up at Plymouth.[75]

Patterson's narrative quickly returns to the biblical context, however, noting that on leaving Egypt on 5 June 1918, the men entered Palestine to the sound of trumpets and prayers. As the modern Israelites crossed the Sinai Desert in trucks, the flames belching from the engine funnels reminded Patterson of the Old Testament and 'the wanderings of the forefathers of these men in this very Desert, who in their night journeys were always guided by a pillar of fire'.[76] In Patterson's account, then, it is not the British so much as the Jewish soldiers who are in a privileged relation to God, a view that contrasts strongly with the clerical and civilian assertion that it was Christians who enjoyed divine favour during the war. In the context of Palestine, it was once again the Jews who were the 'chosen of God' and received his support. Patterson's sense that the Jewish Legion enjoyed divine protection was confirmed when a 'sign' appeared on the road to Jericho:

> a huge black column of fine dust, whose top was lost in the Heavens, arose in front of us and gyrated slowly and gracefully as our vanguard, leading us onwards to our bivouac on the banks of a cool and pleasant brook, where it vanished. I felt that this was a good omen for our success in the Jordan Valley, for it was a case of the Children of Israel being led once more by a pillar of cloud.[77]

But perhaps the passage that most clearly illustrates Patterson's view of the Palestine campaign as predestined is the following, in which he interprets the date of the Turkish defeat (20 September 1918) in numerological terms:

> Everybody knows that the Jewish era differs from the Christian era, but perhaps not so many are aware that the Jewish year 5679 corresponds to the year 1918 of our era. A peculiarity of the Hebrew language is that every

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[75] Patterson (1922), p.53.
[76] Patterson (1922), p.69.
[77] Patterson (1922), p.98.

> numeral has a special meaning other than that connected with time or figures. In the dim and distant past, when seers, sages, and scribes were devoutly engaged in evolving such things, was it even then pre-ordained that this crowning victory - this victory which will surely hasten the restoration of Israel - should take place in the year 5679? However that may be, it is certainly extraordinary that the figures 5, 6, 7, 9, being interpreted, should mean Ha-atereth – "Crown of Victory".[78]

Whether or not his gematria and Hebrew are correct, this passage reveals Patterson's attraction to the notion that a divinely-ordained synchronisation of British and Jewish destinies was occurring during the war, rather than a convergence of political interests with regard to Palestine. This notion of the linked destinies of Britons and Jews connects with British Israelism, of which there is an element in Patterson's Gallipoli memoir. Without overtly subscribing to the claims of British Israelism, he expressed an interest in this viewpoint, observing that

> by many it is held that the British people are none other than some of the lost tribes; moreover we have taken so much of Jewish national life for our own, mainly owing to our strong Biblical leanings, that the Jews can never feel while with us that they are among entire strangers.[79]

Patterson's attraction to this idea seems to have been based more on affinity with the Jews than rivalry, however, since British Israelism aims to supplant the Jews as the 'chosen people of God', and was more frequently found in marginal religious discourse. But in the context of 'holy war' such ideas found their way into the mainstream, especially with regard to the Palestine campaign and the prospect of Christian control of the Holy Places. The beauty of the Palestine campaign, the Jewish Legion and the Balfour Declaration - from the viewpoint of the British government - was that they appealed to both imperial and religious sentiments, which had become intertwined through the popular rhetoric of 'holy war' and the construction of

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[78] Patterson (1922) p.149.
[79] Patterson (1916), p.32.

Germany as an apostate nation. The Jews became caught in a propaganda battle between Britain and Germany over Zionism as a means of securing neutral Jewish support, and one of the results was that millennial themes became mapped onto political designs in a war between rival imperial powers. In this context, Chaim Weizmann manipulated the situation to Zionist advantage, while the British government and press appealed to prophecy to justify their actions.

**Conclusions**

During the First World War, the figure of the 'alien anarchist' developed into that of the 'Bolshevik Jew', as a result of revolution in Russia and the exaggerated support of Jews for Bolshevism. In response, the British government mobilised another construction of Jewish collective political identity, that of the 'Zionist Jew', and attempted to use the Jewish Legion and the Balfour Declaration as a means of controlling and containing the perceived 'Jewish' political threat. Zionists seized the opportunity and negotiated as far as possible a specific and beneficial role for the Jews in the war between imperial powers, while members of the League of British Jews campaigned against the Legion, fearing that as a 'ghetto' regiment it would be vulnerable to persecution. From the British government's point of view, the Jewish units represented a means of accessing unused and much needed resources of manpower, which would also serve Britain's imperial interests in the Middle East.

The political motives behind the formation of the Jewish Legion and its involvement in the Palestine campaign were widely discussed in religious terms, as the *Times* spoke of the restoration of Israel, and members of the Cabinet viewed the campaign at least partly from a millennialist perspective. On Lloyd George's part, there was a desire for the fulfilment of biblical prophecy, and in Balfour's case, the wish to atone in some way for the historical suffering of the Jews at the hands of Christians. For the most part, however, the decision appears to have been a matter of political and military expediency, couched in the rhetoric of prophecy.

It was perhaps inevitable that a largely Christian nation, at war, and contemplating the conscription of Jews for service in Palestine, should invoke the

Bible and prophecy with regard to its political decisions. The response to the threat

that 'Jewish Bolshevism' posed to Britain as a nominally Christian nation bore some

of the hallmarks of a conversion drive, and may arguably be regarded as such. In the

climate of xenophobia generated by the war, Jews were cast as 'aliens' and pressured

to support government-endorsed Zionism, and Jewish refugees in the East End were

offered a choice between returning to Russia at short notice without their families, or

serving in the Jewish Legion. The Legion was thus established partly through coercive

means, by exploiting both antisemitism and Zionism, whilst the 'bait' for enlistment

was the promise of naturalisation papers for immigrants at no personal expense.

Through the 'Zionist' policy of the British government, the Jews were to be

transformed into a national group with a homeland - in keeping with then

contemporary constructions of nationhood - in a project which although it eventually

brought self-government and a homeland for the Jewish people, initially served

British political and imperial designs. But the wording of the Balfour Declaration was

ambiguous, referring to the possibility of a Jewish homeland in Palestine rather than

Palestine as the sole national territory of the Jewish people. This lack of clarity in the

terms of the Declaration, and the military opposition to its aims (to be discussed in

Chapter Five), resulted in Palestine being 'twice-promised' by the British, to both

Jews and Arabs, and the effects of this are still visible today.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## The Imagery of Crucifixion in Relation to the War

### Introduction

In 1917, Max Plowman, a second lieutenant with the 10th West Yorkshire regiment, published a critical account of the war entitled *A Subaltern on the Somme in 1916*, under the pseudonym 'Mark Seven'.[1] He was particularly disturbed by Field Punishment Number One, in which the offending soldier was tied, with arms outstretched, to a stationary object and left without food or water for several hours at sunrise and sunset, symbolising a full day on the cross.[2] The front cover of his book shows a silhouette of a soldier tied to a gun wheel in crucifixion pose, his head drooping as if near to death. Plowman described an incident in which a soldier was given this punishment for falling out on a march after claiming to have glass in his feet, and observed that 'Quite possibly the boy is a liar; but wouldn't the army do well to avoid punishments which remind men of the Crucifixion?'[3]

Whilst the military authorities framed 'crucifixion' as punishment, clerical representations of the soldier as a 'Christ' figure focused on his noble self-sacrifice for the greater good. The men who died in the first two years of the war were volunteers - conscription was not introduced until 1916. When addressing volunteers bound for the Front, clergymen appealed to the new recruits to emulate Christ, in his willingness to sacrifice himself for others and his bravery when facing death. Some members of the clergy viewed the sacrifice of men in terms of atonement for 'national sins': Germany had sinned, but so, too, had Britain, and as a result the judgement of

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[1] 'Mark Seven', *A Subaltern on the Somme in 1916* (London & Toronto: J M Dent & Sons Ltd., 1917).
[2] Field Punishment Number One was dropped by the British army in 1923.
[3] 'Mark Seven' (1917). p.30.

God had been brought upon both nations. In this usage, the soldier's suffering was idealised and glorified through comparison with that of Christ, his 'crucifixion' gaining religious significance rather than the criminal associations of the military context.

Another function of the crucifixion trope was to demonstrate the brutality of the Germans, as in the atrocity story of the 'Crucified Canadian' (1915), in which it was alleged that German soldiers engaged in the ritual murder of Allied officers. In what was widely portrayed as a 'holy war', the 'Crucified Canadian' story provided 'evidence' that the enemy was hostile to Christianity. It is this association between crucifixion and ritual murder committed by the 'enemies' of Christianity that reveals the ancient blood libel and the figure of 'the Jew' as sub-themes that were present by implication in religious representations of the war.

The blood libel derives from the Jews' alleged role in the crucifixion of Christ, as described in the New Testament. Over the centuries this has given rise to the belief that their hatred of Christianity is such that they feel compelled to re-enact the crucifixion by engaging in the ritual murder of Christians. Allegations of this kind have been made since the medieval period, and originated, according to Gavin Langmuir, in an incident at Norwich in 1144, when the body of a Christian boy was found at Easter, and Jews were blamed for his death.[4] There were also stories of Jews attacking the Eucharist, fantasies, as Langmuir has argued, that were a response to ideological doubt, their function being to assert the 'truth' of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the idea that the Eucharist constituted rather than symbolised the

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[4] See Gavin I Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* (London & New York: I B Taurus & Co. Ltd., 1990), pp.298-300 for a discussion of the medieval origins of the blood libel.

body of Christ.[5] Such stories expressed not only religious doubt, but also an irrational

fear of attack by a religious 'other', which under certain conditions erupted in

violence by Christians towards Jews. This fear of attack did not die out in the Middle

Ages, but continued into the modern period: in 1903 a Russian Jew named Mendel

Beilis was put on trial on charges of the ritual murder of a Christian. He was

acquitted, but the allegations sparked the Kishinev pogrom.[6]

In Britain, pre-war fears of a 'Jewish' attack generally took secular expression,

but the religious origins of this anxiety remained discernible. In the campaigns against

'white slavery', for example, the fear of attack became sexualised, and focused on the

perceived corruption and enslavement of British Christian womanhood by Jewish

procurers. There were also medical versions of the fear of attack by Jews, often

expressed in ways that echoed older, religious beliefs. As Sander Gilman has

observed, the medieval Christian view of the Jew as devil, identifiable by the 'cloven

hoof', is found, updated and secularised, in discussions of the inherent difference of

the 'Jewish foot', which was believed to affect the gait and supposedly render Jews

identifiable by their movements.[7] Gilman also notes that beneath the medical rhetoric

and the trope of the diseased Jew lay a secular version of the blood libel, whereby

> The Jew's role in literally destroying the life of Christians, whether through
> the ritual use of Christian blood or the mass poisoning of wells in order to
> cause the Black Death becomes the Jew's biological role as the transmitter of
> diseases.[8]

One of the diseases commonly associated with Jews in Europe at the start of the

twentieth century was syphilis, despite the fact that where studies were carried out,

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[5] Langmuir (1990), pp.249-51.
[6] The Kishinev pogrom occurred in 1903, and brought widespread condemnation of tsarist
antisemitism. Kishinev, in Bessarabia, was the one place in the tsarist empire in which Jews could own
land.
[7] Gilman (1991), p.39.
[8] Gilman (1991), p.19.

Jews showed a lower rate of infection than did gentiles.[9] The spread of tuberculosis was another source of anxiety, and in July 1914, the *Times* reported that Dr D L Thomas, medical officer for Stepney, had recorded a high and increasing rate of tuberculosis among Jews.[10] According to Thomas' figures Jews were more likely to contract tuberculosis than gentiles but less likely to die of it; therefore their role was as carriers of the disease. Most of the chronic cases in Stepney, he added, were Jews: 'They cough and expectorate quantities of sputum laden with tubercle bacilli, and are the centre of infection for many years'. Implicit in Thomas' medical language is the fear of attack through disease: being apparently more able to withstand tuberculosis than gentiles, Jews would spread contagion but survive, and thus become dominant.

During the First World War the irrational fear of a 'Jewish' attack on the Christian body continued, but although they remained secular in focus, being directed towards political and military enemies, these fears became more Christian in their mode of expression. The crucifixion trope was integral to this expression of embattlement, as this chapter aims to show. Section one examines clerical representations of the soldier as a 'Christ' figure, and the imagery of crucifixion in military punishment. This is followed by an example of the ritual murder charge in the context of war and a discussion of its ideological function during a period of crisis. Section two focuses on the development of the figure of 'Judas' in relation to these wartime uses of the crucifixion narrative, and in reactions to the rise of Bolshevism in Russia. Section three discusses the Palestine campaign of 1917 to 1920, and the memoirs of the men who served in the Jewish Legion. This section returns to the two images of the soldier as 'Christ' - the idealised figure of self-

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[9] Gilman (1991), pp.96-98.
[10] *Times*, 30 July 1914, p.5.

sacrifice and the criminal enduring punishment by a military power - which reached

an ironic convergence in events in Palestine in 1920.

# 1. Christian soldiers

On 9 August 1914, Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury, informed a congregation of newly-recruited servicemen that 'The soldier who sheds his blood on the battlefield in a righteous cause, and with a righteous purpose, is doing the very thing that Christ did, and he may be assured of Christ's approval and blessing'.[11] Such rhetoric, besides claiming divine approval for the war, also implied that the 'crucifixion' of the soldier - his death in battle - had a redemptive function with regard to the nation. Direct comparisons of the kind made by Wace were commonly used to glorify the almost certain death of the combatant in a war which produced casualties on an unprecedented scale. One function of the comparison between the soldier and Christ was that it allowed the political causes of the war to be elided, with the soldier becoming the champion of Christianity rather than the expendable instrument of an imperial power. This view was chiefly adopted by members of the higher clergy. In his book *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus* (1917), the academic theologian James Robertson DD suggested that it was not politics but 'sin' that had caused the war, and the death of the soldier was a case of

> life given for life … when the flower of a country's manhood, fresh young lives in the bloom of youth, innocent in large measure of the crime, go down to death upon the battle-plain, bearing the penalty of the black sin-mass - the creation of the older generation, - which bursts volcano-like, and devastates the world with war.[12]

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[11] Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury, *The Christian Sanction of War*. Address at the Service of Intercession for the King's Naval and Military Forces, Canterbury Cathedral, August 9, 1914 (London: J C Thynne, 1914), p.14.

[12] Robertson (1917, reprinted 1921), p.207. Robertson's lectures and book were aimed at fellow clergymen, but the book went through five editions from 1917 to 1922, which suggests it had a wider appeal.

Even those clergymen who expressed regret at the conflict between two Christian powers used the imagery of crucifixion to illustrate their views. In a paper entitled 'Christianity and War' William Temple M.A. declared

> Members of the body of Christ are tearing one another, and His body is bleeding as it once bled on Calvary, but this time the wounds are dealt by His friends. It is as though Peter were driving home the nails, and John were piercing the side.[13]

Temple used the crucifixion as a metaphor for the sacrifice of Christianity itself in the conflict between imperial powers, but the image of Christ on the cross was also used to represent both the heroism and suffering of the nation at war. The Bishop of London referred to the war as 'the Nailed Hand against the Mailed Fist' when appealing to the patriotic instincts of his congregations, and drew explicit comparisons between the nation going to war and Christ's contemplation of the cross, urging his listeners to show the same brave spirit.[14] Women, too, were encouraged to view the loss of their loved ones in terms of the crucifixion narrative. Elma Paget, wife of the Bishop of Stepney, described the war as a collective 'Calvary', in which women were

> ... called upon to give. It is perhaps at this moment that we realize fully all that is meant by the 'pain and peril of child-birth', as we take our place with Mary on the hill of sorrow.[15]

In a similar vein, an anonymous poem, published in a collection of popular war songs and poetry entitled *Songs of the Last Crusade* (1917), encouraged women to think of

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[13]William Temple, MA, *Christianity and War*, Papers for War-Time Series, No.1 (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1914), p.3. Temple (1881-1944) was the son of Archbishop Frederick Temple, and a prominent Anglican clergyman. He was Rector of St. James' from 1914-1918, and Editor of the periodical *Challenge* from 1915-1918. He later became Canon of Westminster (1919-1921), Bishop of Manchester (1921-1929), Archbishop of York (1929-1942) and finally Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-1944). See Wilkinson (1978), p.343.

[14] A F Winnington-Ingram, 'In Time of War', sermon published in *Kaiser or Christ?: The War and its Issues*, (London: James Clarke & Co., 1914), pp.3-9.

[15] Elma K Paget, 'The Woman's Part', Papers for War-Time Series, No.3. (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1914), p.4.

their dead in terms of heroic sacrifice, their reward in heaven being greater than any

that was possible on earth, in the lines

> Comfort ye, women by the sepulchre,
> Our dead live greatly - what were this world's loss
> If He that gave His youth upon the Cross
> Had lived his long, long life ... a carpenter?[16]

The notion that in dying for his country the soldier was emulating Christ was

more common among civilians than soldiers, many of whom found that their faith was

undermined by the experience of war, and became cynical regarding the rhetoric of

crucifixion and resurrection used by non-combatants. George Coppard, an

infantryman in the Queen's Royal West Surrey regiment and later a gunner in the

Machine Gun Corps, recalled that in the context of war the Christian festivals lost

their meaning:

> The next day was Good Friday. Being an old choir boy of Brighton and
> Croydon parish churches, my thoughts turned to the Christian meaning of that
> day, and of the several three-hour services I had attended in the past on Good
> Fridays. All that was over and seemed meaningless.[17]

The soldier-poet Wilfred Owen, who before the war had considered training for the

priesthood, made cynical and parodic use of religious imagery in his letters from the

Front. The rhetoric of 'pulpit professionals' which portrayed the war as a Christian

venture served only to highlight the actual teachings of Christ, which were

incompatible with violence, and in order to justify the war, omissions from Christian

doctrine were necessary. Pure Christianity, he argued, 'will not fit in with pure

patriotism'; therefore Christians had 'deliberately *cut* some of the main teaching of

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[16] Anon, 'A Song of Comfort', 1917, in Ella McFadyen (1917).
[17] George Coppard (1969), p.73. Coppard joined the Machine Gun Corps in February 1916 when his regiment broke up.

their code'.[18] A letter to his mother, written on Easter Day 1918 included a parody of

a familiar evangelical passage:

> God so hated the world that He gave several millions of English-begotten
> sons, that whosoever believeth in them should not perish, but have a
> comfortable life.[19]

Here, the death of the soldier in war becomes a travesty of Christian teaching, and

represents betrayal by those at home. Like the clergy he criticised, Owen used

Christian imagery, but in a different manner, to point to the war as a departure from

Christian principles. This theme is also found in Owen's war poetry, which takes a

dissenting stance with regard to the glorification of the war through romantic and

religious themes. One of his most savage attacks occurs in the poem 'Parable of the

Old Men and the Young', which uses Old Testament rather than crucifixial imagery to

suggest that by continuing to send men to the Front, the British government was

actively defying the will of God. The following is an extract:

> ... Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
> And builded parapets and trenches there,
> And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
> When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
> Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
> Neither do anything to him. Behold,
> A ram caught in a thicket by its horns;
> Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
> But the old man would not so, but slew his son, -
> And half the seed of Europe, one by one.[20]

Owen uses the Abraham and Isaac story to suggest that in moral terms, humanity has

de-evolved rather than evolved over the centuries, to the extent that men will now

sacrifice not only their own sons, but those of others. Abraham obeyed his God and

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[18] Wilfred Owen, letter to his mother of uncertain date, but probably 16 May 1917. In Harold Owen
and Joan Bell, eds., *Wilfred Owen: Collected Letters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.460-
462.
[19] Owen and Bell, eds., (1967), p.462.
[20] Wilfred Owen, 'The Parable of the Old Men and the Young', in Edmund Blunden, ed., *The Poems of
Wilfred Owen* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1933), p.57.

halted his preparations for sacrifice, unlike the modern imperial powers, which

perpetuated human sacrifice on a mass scale. The imagery suggests that the

proponents of 'Christian warfare' have lost contact with the divine, and cannot hear

the angel pointing out an alternative sacrifice, that of pride. Since pride is what

governs them, they will not sacrifice it, and instead betray not only their God but also

their sons, by sending them to the slaughter.

Another poem, 'At a Calvary Near the Ancre', continues the theme of the

betrayal of the soldier, in this case attacking the clergy, who are cast as the 'Devil' to

the soldier's 'Christ'. They are also linked to the disciples who denied Christ prior to

the crucifixion, a device that emphasises the aspect of betrayal. Unlike the disciples,

however, their actions are prompted not by fear, but nationalism and a

misunderstanding of the principles of Christianity. In portraying the war as 'holy',

they are denying both Christ and Christian teaching, and preaching a doctrine of

nationalist hatred:

> ... Near Golgotha strolls many a priest,
> And in their faces there is pride
> That they were flesh-marked by the Beast
> By whom the gentle Christ's denied.
>
> The scribes on all the people shove
> And bawl allegiance to the state,
> But they who love the greater love
> Lay down their life; they do not hate.[21]

The reference to the 'scribes', those not directly involved in the war who nevertheless

'bawl allegiance to the state', invokes military drill and the voice of the sergeant-

major, the effect of which is to highlight the incompatibility of Christianity and

belligerent nationalism. The soldier is indeed Christ-like, in his willingness to die if

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[21] Wilfred Owen, 'At a Calvary Near the Ancre', in Blunden, ed. (1933), p.108.

necessary, while beneath the Christian rhetoric of the non-combatants is the desire for blood. In the context of the analogy between the crucifixion narrative and the war, they become the crowd calling for the death of Jesus. The priests, exempted from combat, 'stroll' in a place of death that is both sacred and mundane, such is the scale of the loss of life in this modern conflict. The last verse juxtaposes civilian warmongering and hatred of the enemy with 'the greater love' that prompts the soldier to enlist, and alludes to the gulf between soldiers and civilians, particularly the clergy, in terms of attitudes to the war, and to Christianity itself.

Siegfried Sassoon, who knew Wilfred Owen, and wrote an introduction to a collection of his work published in 1920, also used Christian imagery in his war poetry.[22] Sassoon was of Sephardic Jewish ancestry but was estranged from his father's side of the family, partly as a result of the latter's marriage to Theresa Thornycroft, a gentile, in 1883. Siegfried was baptised into the Anglican Church at an early age, but as he grew older, began to question his faith.[23] Some of his early poems express enthusiasm for the war,[24] but this quickly gave way to a more cynical and satirical tone, in which Christian imagery is used to underscore the pointlessness of

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[22] Wilfred Edward Salter Owen, *Poems*, with an introduction by Siegfried Sassoon (London: Chatto & Windus, 1920).

[23] See Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon. The Making of a War Poet: A Biography (1886-1918)* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1999), p.194. Wilson notes that in his early and middle years, Sassoon identified more with the Thornycroft side of the family, although he began to romanticise the Sassoons after meeting his paternal grandmother at the age of eight and after the death of his father (pp.12, 13). As Wilson suggests, the poem 'Ancestors', written between 1908 and 1915, exemplifies Sassoon's exoticisation of his Persian ancestry, with its references to 'jewelled, merchant Ancestors', who 'barter monstrous wealth with speech subdued'. Siegfried Sassoon, 'Ancestors', in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber, 1947), pp.46-47.

[24] Examples of Sassoon's early poems which express the glory and excitement of war include 'France' and 'To Victory'.

the conflict.[25] In 'They' he attacks the Bishop of London's rhetoric of redemption through war, and the notion that the soldiers were engaged in 'the last attack / On Anti-Christ'.[26] 'Via Crucis' (1916) contrasts the religious significance of the death of Christ with that of the soldier, making the point that unlike the latter, 'Jesus had a purpose for His pain.'[27] Another poem, 'The Redeemer', portrays a soldier, one of a party laying planks in the trenches, in crucifixial pose, 'leaning forward from His burdening task, / Both arms supporting it'. This 'Christ' is not a divine figure, but distinctly mortal, and wears 'No thorny crown, only a woollen cap'. Yet like Christ, he is prepared to sacrifice himself for others, and is 'not uncontent to die / that Lancaster on Lune may stand secure'.[28] The final lines of the poem juxtapose these images of heroic suffering with blasphemy, however, as 'Christ' drops the planks, and curses: 'And someone flung his burden in the muck, / Mumbling: "O Christ Almighty, now I'm stuck!"'. The use of blasphemy continues in 'Stand-to: Good Friday Morning', as the soldier seeks to escape his sacrificial destiny and 'prays' for a 'Blighty' to deliver him from the war: 'O Jesus, send me a wound to-day, / And I'll believe in Your bread and wine, / And get my bloody old sins washed white!'[29] In 'Enemies', Sassoon links the death of the soldier with the crucifixion through the desire for revenge that is provoked by both. In response to the death of his fellow-

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[25] Sassoon's war poetry does not make use of Old Testament themes, although one might perhaps have anticipated their use given his developing interest in his Jewish ancestry. Equally, however, the absence of Old Testament imagery might suggest ambivalence in this respect. He was posted to Palestine in the spring of 1918, and initially felt alienated from the members of the Jewish Legion, but gradually began to identify with the country. His diary for that period includes the observation *'c'est la guerre* - in an Old Testament environment', plus a list of *'Birds seen in Judaea …'.* He quickly returned to the Western Front, however, arriving at Marseilles on 7 May 1918. See Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *Siegfried Sassoon Diaries 1915-1918* (London: Faber, 1983), pp.216, 223, 233, 245.
[26] Siegfried Sassoon, 'They', in *Collected Poems* (1947), p.23.
[27] 'Via Crucis' appears in Sassoon's diary, dated 1916. See Rupert Hart-Davis, ed., *Siegfried Sassoon Diaries 1915-1918* (London: Faber, 1983), p.102.
[28] Sassoon, 'The Redeemer', in *Collected Poems* (1947), pp.16-17.
[29] Sassoon, 'Stand-to: Good Friday Morning', in *Collected Poems* (1947), p.24.

combatant, the speaker has killed several Germans, who explain to his friend that this

was done for his sake. The first dead soldier is thus portrayed as a 'Christ' who is

puzzled by the murders committed in his name:

> He stood alone in some queer sunless place
> Where Armageddon ends. Perhaps he longed
> For days he might have lived; but his young face
> Gazed forth untroubled: and suddenly there thronged
> Round him the hulking Germans that I shot
> When for his death my brooding rage was hot.
>
> He stared at them, half-wondering; and then
> They told him how I'd killed them for his sake -
> Those patient, stupid, sullen ghosts of men;
> And still there seemed no answer he could make.
> At last he turned and smiled. One took his hand
> Because his face could make them understand.[30]

Here, the soldier is Christ-like because like Christ, the significance of his sacrifice has

been misunderstood, and others have been killed in his name. The soldier and Christ

are therefore linked though the vengeful response of the living to their deaths. Thus

the poem implies a parallel between the soldier who kills the Germans in reaction to

the death of his fellow-combatant, and the Christian whose zeal is driven by a desire

to avenge the crucifixion (a response which, during the crusades, was enacted upon

Jews in Europe).[31] The dead soldiers, both British and German, are also Christ-like in

that they exemplify the principles of love and forgiveness, but this is lost on the

living.

Both Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, then, used crucifixial and other

religious imagery to parody the use of Christian themes as moral justification for the

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[30] Sassoon, 'Enemies', in *Collected Poems* (1947), p.26.
[31] See Karen Armstrong (1988), pp.52-53. As Armstrong notes, the official Church doctrine during the crusades was that the Jews had forfeited their 'chosen' status as a result of their alleged role in the crucifixion of Christ, but that they were to be spared. Forced conversion was officially discouraged, but popular crusaders, disowned by the Church, overlooked this, and reacted to the orthodoxy that the Jews were a 'deicide people', and therefore deserving of punishment.

war and to suggest that religious representations of the conflict were not only

inappropriate, but hypocritical. Owen uses biblical imagery to show how far the

Christian state and its religious and military authorities have departed from Christian

teaching in their enthusiasm for the war. His soldiers, however, retain a heroic aspect

in their 'greater love' and their readiness to die for their country, while Sassoon's

'Christian' soldiers endure mundane and pointless suffering, and it is their brutalised

humanity rather than their 'divinity' that is emphasised. Both writers use religious

imagery to express alienation from Christian doctrine and contempt for religious

authorities. Although they share the clergy's comparison of the soldier with Christ,

their use of this trope is subversive, and the soldier-Christ becomes the critic and

accuser of the Church and state.

But army life produced another form of religious parody, through the apparent

use of the crucifixion theme in military discipline, in which the connection between

the soldier and Christ was their shared punishment and humiliation. As noted in the

introduction to this chapter, Max Plowman was critical of the crucifixial aspects of

Field Punishment Number One. Whether Plowman's objections were to the harshness

of the punishment or a matter of religious sensibility is unclear, but to a religiously

devout soldier the punishment would very likely have appeared blasphemous and

inappropriate. Plowman used crucifixion as a universal theme, extending the image of

the soldier's Christ-like suffering to include German prisoners of war, who were kept

in a cage which was 'like a poultry-run, only laced in disordered strands with wire

that is "barbed" after the pattern of the crown of thorns'.[32] The barbed wire around the

prisoners became the modern equivalent of the crown of thorns, 'worn' collectively

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[32] 'Mark Seven' (1917). p.27.

by the German soldiers in their compound. Pilate-like, Plowman felt sympathy for the

men, and wanted to go inside the compound to apologise and explain to them 'that the

beastly necessities of the times have driven us to means we abhor', but could not.[33]

Instead, he published his memoir in 1917, as a form of critical testament to the war, in

which the soldier as 'Christ' became a universal figure that crossed national and

imperial boundaries, and in which crucifixial imagery became a marker of the human

capacity for cruelty.

## 2. The development of the figure of 'Judas'

If the British soldier was Christ-like, whether as an image of heroic suffering or

humiliation, then a Judas figure was required for allegorical coherence. Sir Owen

Seaman, editor of *Punch*, allocated this role to the Kaiser, in the poem 'The Wayside

Calvary',[34] which was published on the first anniversary of the war. The first verse

draws a comparison between the war and the crucifixion, in terms of the loss

associated with both:

> Now with the full year Memory holds her tryst,
> Heavy with such a tale of bitter loss
> As never Earth has suffered since the Christ
> Hung for us on the Cross.

The rest of the poem deals with the theme of the Kaiser's alleged rejection of

Christianity in favour of ruthless imperial expansion, and portrays the German

emperor as the very antithesis of Christ, 'Who died that men might live', whereas he

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[33] 'Mark Seven' (1917), p.28.
[34] Roadside calvaries were a familiar part of the topography of war zones in France. As Paul Fussell notes, they were often located at crossroads, and in one case, in a valley on the Somme. See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, reprinted 1977), p.118.

'live[s] that men may die'. Finally, these themes coalesce in the figure of Judas, as the

Kaiser is accused of betraying Christ in the final verse:

> Ah, turn your eyes away; He reads your heart;
> Pass on and, having done your work abhorred,
> Join hands with JUDAS in his place apart,
> You who betrayed your Lord.[35]

The atrocity story of the 'Crucified Canadian', which circulated in Britain in May

1915, developed the idea of the German 'Judas' further. The story was covered by the

*Times*' Paris Correspondent, who noted:

> Last week a large number of Canadian soldiers ... arrived at the base hospital
> at Versailles. They all told a story of how one of their officers had been
> crucified by the Germans. He had been pinned to a wall by bayonets thrust
> through his hands and feet, another bayonet had been driven through his
> throat, and, finally, he was riddled with bullets. The wounded Canadians said
> that the Dublin Fusiliers had seen this done with their own eyes, and they had
> heard the officers of the Dublin Fusiliers talking about it.[36]

Subsequent versions of the story were even more graphic,[37] and the matter was

discussed in the Commons, where the Unionist MP Mr Houston (Liverpool, West

Toxteth) asked Mr Tennant, Under-Secretary of State for War, whether he was aware

that 'the Germans had removed the figure of Christ from the large village crucifix and

fastened the sergeant, while alive, to the cross; and whether he is aware that the

crucifixion of our soldiers is becoming a practice of the Germans'.[38] Mr Tennant

replied that the War Office knew of no such behaviour, but that he would investigate

the matter. This story, like the other wartime atrocity stories, aimed to show the

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[35] Sir Owen Seaman, 'The Wayside Calvary', in *Punch*, 4 August 1915, p.102.

[36] 'Torture of a Canadian Officer', *Times*, 10 May 1915, p.7.

[37] See the *Times*, 15 May 1915. The North France correspondent wrote that the victim was a sergeant and that 'Bayonets were thrust through the palms of his hands and feet, pinning him to the fence. He had been repeatedly stabbed with bayonets, and there were many punctured wounds in his body. ... There is room for the supposition that the man was dead before he was pinned to the fence and that the enemy in his insensate rage and hate of the English, wreaked his vengeance on the lifeless body of his foe.' The writer also claimed that 'written depositions testifying to the fact of the discovery of the body are in possession of British Headquarters Staff'.

[38] See *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, Vol. LXXI, 14 April to 19 May 1915, columns 1623-1625, 2330.

depths of depravity to which the Germans had sunk, but unlike the other stories, it portrays the Germans not only as non-Christian, but as actively hostile to Christianity, and places them in a role historically allocated to Jews. In this respect it can be viewed as a military version of the blood libel: the charge of the ritual murder of Christians previously levelled at Jews, but in this case displaced onto Germans. As noted earlier in this chapter, Gavin Langmuir has argued that the medieval stories of Jews attacking the Eucharist were prompted by Christian doubt regarding the doctrine of transubstantiation. Their function was to demonstrate the veracity of that doctrine, by showing the threat that the Eucharist represented to non-believers, such that they attacked it as the body of Christ. Thus the 'truth' of Christian doctrine is demonstrated to the doubter through the threat which it is portrayed as representing to Jews.[39] The story of the 'Crucified Canadian' seems to function in a similar way. 1915 was a year that brought zeppelin raids, the use of poison gas by the German army, the Bryce report on atrocities, and the sinking of the *Lusitania*.[40] In this context, the myth of the 'Crucified Canadian' can perhaps be read as expressing a crisis of faith in the notion of 'holy war'. This is met with a fantasy of how threatening the Germans find the Allied soldier, such that they feel compelled to commit a ritualised murder which echoes the crucifixion. This story would provide the civilian, if not the soldier, with reassurance that Germany recognised the spiritual and moral power of the Allies, and that self-sacrifice was not futile. It also served to arouse a spirit of revenge, not only for the alleged crucifixion of the Allied soldier, but for that of Christ himself, and

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[39] Langmuir (1990), p.250.

[40] The 'Crucified Canadian' atrocity story coincided with reportage of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, which was carrying around 250 Canadian passengers (*Times*, 8 May 1915, p.9); the publication of the Bryce Report (*Times*, 13 May 1915, p.6), and anti-German rioting in Liverpool (*Times*, 10 May 1915, p.10) and London (*Times*, 12 May 1915, p.10).

enabled propagandists to marshal aspects of religious antisemitism in support of the war, by conflating 'German' and 'Judas' in the image of the enemy as 'deicidal'.[41]

In 1917 the use of the crucifixion narrative as a metaphor for the events of the war took another turn, and began to focus on the threat of betrayal from within. The *Daily Graphic* quoted Mr Ben Tillet MP (Labour, North Salford) as saying that Britain was 'being crucified between the Prussian and the food profiteer', the latter being considered 'far more deadly than the German and his guns'.[42] The real threat, then, came not from Germany, but from within Britain itself; an idea that was to become increasingly important as the crucifixion theme developed in relation to wartime politics, and the element of betrayal in the story came to the fore. War profiteers came from a variety of social groups,[43] but in the pages of *Punch*, the profiteer was frequently represented as 'Jewish', particularly in cartoons. In accordance with then contemporary 'racial' stereotypes, he was an overweight figure with a long nose, wealthy but mean, richly dressed and smoking a cigar. Sometimes the caption underscored the 'racial' imagery, by giving the profiteer the lisping 'Jewish' voice, with its inability to pronounce 'w' or 's' (see Figure 9).[44]

Another means of attack from within came from the 'Jewish revolutionary' (a figure discussed in Chapter Four), who represented the route by which Bolsheviks would take over Britain, as they had taken power in Russia in November 1917. Whereas previously Jews had been solicited as allies in the British 'crusade' against

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[41] The story of the 'Crucified Canadian' was finally denied by General March in Washington in 1925. See Arthur Ponsonby, MP, *Falsehood in War-Time: containing an assortment of lies circulated throughout the nations during the Great War* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1928), p.93.

[42] 'Pacifists and Profiteers', *Daily Graphic*, 12 November 1917, p.8.

[43] See Jean-Louis Robert, 'The Image of the Profiteer', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.120.

[44] On the notion of the 'Jewish voice', see chapter one of Gilman's *The Jew's Body* (1991), pp.10-37.

Profiteer. "VELL, 'ERE 'TH ANOTHER PENNY FOR LOOKIN' THO MITHERABLE!"

**Figure 9**

**Cartoon depicting the 'Jewish profiteer', in *Punch*,** 26 December 1917, p.427.

Prussian militarism (and simultaneously portrayed as the pro-German financier and spy), they now began to be cast in the guise of 'Judas', the political betrayer of the Christian nation. Increasingly, the conflict between capitalism and communism was portrayed as a struggle between the forces of 'good' and 'evil', a battle in which gaining the allegiance of the Jews was crucial. Articles in the British press portrayed Bolshevism as a 'Jewish' politics, and warned that Britain would follow Russia into chaos unless this threat was controlled. Victor Marsden, Russian correspondent for the *Morning Post*, stated that Russia was controlled by Jews who were themselves controlled by Germany, thereby arousing fears that Russia would negotiate a separate peace and Britain would lose an ally.[45] This was precisely what happened, as in December 1917 the Bolshevik government began peace talks with Germany, and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed on 3 March 1918.

The theme of an alliance between Jews, Bolsheviks and Germans gained momentum and was taken up by other journalists. An article in the *Times*, one of a series entitled 'Russia To-day', noted that although the repressive policies of the *Okhrana* (the tsarist secret police) had impoverished large numbers of Jews, they had not succeeded in preventing a few from 'invading the professions, capturing finance and trade, and monopolizing the Press'.[46] Robert Wilton, one of the Russian correspondents for the *Times*, produced regular articles in which he blamed the country's political instability on the Jewish population. He also published two books on this theme. The first of these, *Russia's Agony* (1918), gives a portrait of the vengeful 'pseudo Jew', who had rejected Judaism and sought an alternative in

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[45] The apex of Marsden's career as an antisemitic propagandist occurred in late 1920, when he translated the forged *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* for publication by the Britons' Society.
[46] *Times*, September 20, 1917, p.7.

revolutionary politics.[47] Wilton suggested that in league with Germany, 'pseudo Jews' had gradually gained control of Russia, through the universities, banks and the press, a situation which, he implied, could occur in Britain. In 1920 he published *The Last Days of the Romanovs*, in which he set out to tell 'the true story of the martyrdom of Nicholas II, ex-Tsar of Russia, and of his wife and family'.[48] This reiterates the charge that Jews in Russia were under German control, but adds a new dimension, drawing a parallel between the death of the Tsar at the hands of 'Bolshevik Jews' and the crucifixion. Religious imagery is used to portray the imperial family as Christian martyrs, and chapter eight, which describes 'the last stage of their earthly pilgrimage', is entitled 'Via Crucis'.[49] Describing the scene at the prison, Wilton draws an analogy between Tsar Nicholas II and Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, and suggests that such was the piety and self-possession of the doomed monarch, that one of his guards underwent an experience of 'conversion':

> He had begun with hatred in his heart. ... He watched the crowned enemy of mankind, the 'drinker of the people's blood,' as he walked about the garden, and listened to him exchanging simple, homely words with the other warders. His notions began to waver. This was not a bad man: he was so human, so kindly, just a man like other men, and even better.[50]

The Tsar and his family were killed at Ekaterinberg in July 1918. Wilton extended his crucifixial analogy, and stated that the Bolsheviks had erected a monument in Moscow dedicated to Judas Iscariot.[51] By relating the crucifixion to the death of a monarch and the seizure of power by 'Jews', Wilton updated the central Christian narrative of betrayal and crucifixion, and brought it into political discourse, creating what I have termed the figure of the 'Bolshevik Judas'. The *Morning Post* expanded

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[47] Robert Wilton, *Russia's Agony*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1918), p.60.
[48] Robert Wilton, *The Last Days of the Romanovs* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1920), p.13.
[49] Wilton (1920), p.76.
[50] Wilton (1920), p.80.
[51] Wilton (1920), p.148.

on this theme, introducing the idea of the 'thirty pieces of silver' paid to Judas as blood-money, and reported that according to sources at the *Berne Tagblatt*, Russian revolutionaries had deposited large sums of money in Swiss bank accounts.[52]

But if the revolution was orchestrated by 'Jewish Bolsheviks', it was, according to Wilton, financed by 'Jewish capitalists'. In this respect, his account of events in Russia and their cause neatly demonstrates Bryan Cheyette's analysis of the dual, often contradictory nature of images of 'the Jew', a figure that 'can be constructed to represent both sides of a political or social or ideological divide'.[53] Wilton claimed that the revolution was masterminded and controlled by 'Bolshevik Jews', yet asserted that the Soviet regime was funded by 'X', a German Jewish banker based in Petrograd.[54] Thus 'the Jew' could be both Bolshevik and capitalist, and the implication was that what united the two was their shared hatred of Christianity. In this respect, both could be cast as the enemy of the Christian nation.

The extent of Wilton's influence among the general British population is unclear, but the *Times* was widely read,[55] and as an agent for British military intelligence in Russia, Wilton's bulletins had some impact at the Foreign Office.[56] His writing provoked criticism, however, as Sharman Kadish has pointed out, not only from Jews and Russians in Britain,[57] but also from members of the British government's intelligence and propaganda department at Wellington House.[58] John

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[52] *Morning Post*, 26 July 1918, p.6.
[53] Cheyette (1993, reprinted 1994), p.9.
[54] Wilton (1920), p.131.
[55] Circulation of the paper at the outbreak of war jumped from an average of 145,000 to 278,000, as readers avidly followed the events of the war. See Oliver Woods and James Bishop, *The Story of The Times: Bicentenary Edition 1785-1985* (London: Michael Joseph, 1983, reprinted 1985), p.212.
[56] See Levene (1992), p.133.
[57] Kadish (1992), p.24.
[58] See Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American, and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987) for details of the formation of the wartime propaganda unit at Wellington House and the writers involved.

Buchan, the popular novelist who was in charge of propaganda production during the second half of the war, wrote to Geoffrey Robinson at the *Times* to express the view that Wilton should exercise more caution in his reports.[59]

To summarise, in the Christian rhetoric that was widely used in relation to the war, it was the image of the Allied soldier as 'Christ' that dominated. But where there is a 'Christ', for narrative and metaphorical coherence, there must also be a 'Judas', the betrayer and the target for revenge. Sir Owen Seaman proposed the Kaiser for this role, suggesting in his poem 'The Wayside Calvary' that in allegedly rejecting Christianity in favour of imperial expansion, the German emperor had committed an act of betrayal comparable to that of Judas. The Labour MP Ben Tillett used the imagery of crucifixion in relation to the food profiteer and his effect on the nation. More broadly, both the Germans and the profiteer were 'Judaised', in the sense that the former were portrayed as hostile to Christianity (in the rhetoric of German 'apostasy' and the story of the 'Crucified Canadian'), and the latter represented as unscrupulous and materialistic, their desire for wealth stronger than their patriotism. But it was not until the Russian revolution and the death of the Tsar that the figure of 'Judas' gained substance and stature, as the 'Bolshevik Jew', the betrayer of the Allies through the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and the political enemy of the Christian nation. The figure of the 'Bolshevik Judas' represented the threat of betrayal and attack from within, and this fear was present in reactions in Britain to the revolution that took place in Russia in October/ November 1917, in which the Bolsheviks took power. As discussed in Chapter Four, the Foreign Office and the British government reacted to

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[59] See Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society 1876-1939* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), p.275, n 12. The letter from John Buchan to Geoffrey Robinson, dated 1 May 1917, is held in the *Times'* archives.

the rise of Bolshevism in Russia by promoting 'Zionism' as the political alternative for Jews, through the Balfour Declaration and the deployment of the Jewish Legion in Palestine. These developments were given prophetic significance by the *Times*, certain politicians, and some members of Anglo-Jewry, through allusions to the Exodus narrative. But despite the support of the British government for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and the brief emergence of the Exodus analogy in popular rhetoric with regard to the Jewish troops in Palestine, it was Christian interests that prevailed in that country. Under British occupation, the Jews who had returned to Palestine as soldiers in the British army were discriminated against, and in one case criminalised, in an uncanny parallel with events in Roman-occupied Palestine in the first century CE.

## 3. Views on Palestine

Many of the men who joined the Jewish Legion upon its formation in the summer of 1917 did so under duress. The War Office gave Russian Jewish immigrants very little time in which to decide whether to leave their families in Britain and go to Russia to fight, or be conscripted into the Jewish battalions. Despite claims made in the *Times* regarding the enthusiasm with which Jewish soldiers responded to the Legion,[60] recruiting was slow.[61] One soldier who was keen to join the Legion, however, was the artist and writer Isaac Rosenberg. In what follows I examine the use of religious imagery in his writing and the way that this developed during the war, and consider

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[60] See the *Times*, 14 September 1917, p.7.
[61] Patterson (1922), p.25.

this in the context of his (unsuccessful) application to transfer to the 'Judaeans', as the

Jewish battalions were unofficially known. I then discuss the memoirs of some of the

men who did join the 'Judaeans', and examine their views on Zionism and the

significance of the Jewish battalions in Palestine.

Isaac Rosenberg served with the 12th Suffolk regiment in France.[62] In his

letters home he compared the hardships of trench life with the crucifixion, and

described his own suffering as exceeding that of Christ. In 1918 he wrote to his patron

Edward Marsh, saying 'what is happening to me now is more tragic than the "passion

play". Christ never endured what I endure. It is breaking me completely'.[63] In this

respect, his writing is consistent with other soldiers' use of the crucifixion trope as an

index of personal suffering. But Rosenberg's work combined both Old and New

Testament themes, a strategy which, according to his biographer Joseph Cohen, was

designed to enable him both to draw on and transcend his Jewish background, and to

present himself as an English poet with Jewish heritage, rather than a solely 'Jewish'

writer.[64] The following extract from a poem entitled 'Creation', written in 1913,

illustrates this approach:

> Moses must die to live in Christ,
> The seed be buried to live to green.
> Perfection must begin from worst.
> Christ perceives a larger reachless love,
> More full, and grows to reach thereof.
> The green plant yearns for its yellow fruit.
> Perfection always is a root,
> And joy a motion that doth feed
> Itself on light of its own speed,
> And round its radiant circle runs,
> Creating and devouring suns.[65]

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[62] For biographical information on Isaac Rosenberg see Chapter Two, note 68.
[63] Letter from Isaac Rosenberg to Edward Marsh, March 1918, quoted in Cohen (1975), p.3.
[64] Cohen (1975), p.29.
[65] Isaac Rosenberg, 'Creation', in Ian Parsons, ed., *The Collected Works of Isaac Rosenberg* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979) pp.50-51.

Here, Rosenberg is drawing attention to the transitory nature of the dominance of any set of ideas, and suggesting that they evolve through a constant cycle, each giving way to the next.[66] He uses the figures of Moses and Christ to illustrate the development and interrelation of sets of beliefs and the creative processes by which they are established and supersede one another. Moses dies that Christ may reach higher still, yet aspects of Judaism are found in Christian teaching, therefore the 'root' is acknowledged and Moses lives on. The poem suggests that this development of one faith out of another will continue, with the 'plant' striving to reach the 'flower', and the dominance of Christianity giving way in turn to another set of values and beliefs. The antisemitism he encountered at the Front, however, prompted Rosenberg to alter his approach, and his writing began to focus more on the figure of Moses, as in his poem 'The Jew' (1916), discussed in Chapter Three.[67] His play *Moses*, also written in 1916, dramatises the events leading up to the incident briefly referred to in Exodus, in which Moses kills an Egyptian whom he discovers beating a Hebrew slave (Exodus 2:11-13). Rosenberg draws on this part of the story to create a rebellious, anti-messianic and individualist figure. In the opening scene of the play Egypt is in the midst of a famine, and the young Moses is supervising the building of the sixteenth pyramid, when Pharaoh sends an edict which orders him to draw the slaves' back molars, to prevent them from eating and thus conserve food. Moses seizes this

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[66] Israel Zangwill engaged with this idea in 1912, in a play entitled *The Next Religion*, which suggested that as Christianity had become dominant, so it would in turn be replaced by a new religion of 'science'. The Lord Chamberlain banned the play from public performance in Britain. Israel Zangwill, *The Next Religion. A Play in Three Acts*, 2nd edition, (1912, London: Heinemann, reprinted 1925).
[67] In October 1915, Rosenberg, who joined the Bantam battalion of the 12th Suffolk regiment, wrote to the author Sydney Schiff, saying 'my being a Jew makes it bad amongst these wretches'. See Ian Parsons, ed. (1979), p.219. Shortly afterwards he wrote to Edward Marsh, saying that his senior officer 'has me marked - he has taken a dislike to me I don't know why'. Letter from Isaac Rosenberg to Edward Marsh, October - November 1915, in Parsons, ed. (1979), p.225

opportunity to test both Pharaoh's feelings for him and his own power, and decides to

ignore the edict:

> ... I have a way, a touchstone!
> A small misdemeanour, touch of rebelliousness;
> To prick the vein of father, monitor, foe,
> Will tell which of these his kingship is.
> If I shut my eyes to the edict,
> And leave the pincers to rust,
> And the slaves' teeth as God made them. ...
> Pharaoh will speak, and I'll seize that word to act.
> Should the word be a foe's, I can use it well,
> As a poison to soak into Egypt's bowels,
> A wraith from old Nile will cry
> 'For his mercy they break his back'
> And I shall have a great following for this ...
> (lines 70-76, 77-83)

The slaves, for their part, are uncertain whether Moses is a messianic figure, and the

play includes a debate over messianism that takes place between the Old and Young

Hebrew slaves.[68] These two characters may be read as representing what Jody

Elizabeth Myers has identified as the two main views of religious messianism

historically held by Jews. The Old Hebrew represents 'passive messianism', the belief

that the Jews' exile will end through supernatural intervention rather than human

agency, while the Young Hebrew advocates a more pragmatic and 'active

messianism', whereby 'signs' of the impending messianic age were to be acted upon,

and efforts made to speed its arrival.[69] The Young Hebrew argues that Moses is a

messianic figure:

> Is not Miriam his sister, Jochabed his mother?
> In the womb he looked round and saw
> From furthermost stretches our wrong. ...

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[68] In this respect, the play is chronologically inaccurate, as the messianic expectation did not develop until much later, during the exile in Babylon. A faithful historical representation, however, does not appear to be what Rosenberg intended.

[69] See Jody Elizabeth Myers, 'The Messianic Idea and Zionist Ideologies', in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era: Metaphor and Meaning*, Studies in Contemporary Jewry: An Annual VII (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp.3-13.

He fears our fear and tampers mildly
For our assent to let him save us.  (lines 255-257, 267-268)

This is met with scepticism by the Old Hebrew, who reminds his companion that there have been other supposed deliverers, all of them false:

I have seen splendid young fools cheat themselves
Into a prophet's frenzy; I have seen
So many crazed shadows puffed away,
And conscious cheats with such an ache for fame
They'd make bonfires of themselves to be
Mouthed in the squares, broad in the public eye.
And whose backs break, whose lives are mauled, after
It all falls flat?  (lines 294-301)

Moses' 'will-to-power' is personal, however, and the Hebrew slaves are not so much 'his' people as the instruments of his own rebellion against Pharaoh. In this respect, he is arguably more of a Nietzschean than a messianic or Zionist figure, concerned with his own liberation rather than that of the slaves.[70] *Moses* is, amongst other things, a narrative of individual revolt against an oppressive régime that is not worthy of respect. With regard to Rosenberg's war experience, the play's corrupt Egyptian culture is perhaps comparable with the harsh conditions and injustice of military life, in which severe penalties were imposed for disciplinary offences. If Christ was an index of the suffering of the soldier, then in Rosenberg's play, Moses becomes a figure of resistance. The context of *Moses* is not the collective flight of the Jews from Egypt, but the rebellion and liberation of Moses the individual, and possibly relates to

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[70] Rosenberg's dramatisation of the emergence of Moses' desire for power suggests he was influenced by some of Nietzsche's ideas, and according to Joseph Cohen, he had read some of his work. See Cohen (1975), p.84. His possible use of Nietzsche is relevant because of the latter's criticism of Christian morés, and also because of the popular, civilian representation of Nietzsche, along with Treitskche and Bernhardi, as part of the 'unholy trinity', the 'prophets' of an 'apostate' Germany, discussed in Chapter One. Nietzsche's writing on the Jews is notoriously complicated and has generated much debate, but see Jacob Golomb, ed., *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997) for a full discussion of the complexity of Nietzsche's attitudes towards the Jews, ancient and modern.

Rosenberg's own frustrated attempts to transfer from his regiment. In August 1916 he made enquiries about joining the Camouflage Corps, led by the artist Solomon J Solomon,[71] and in the spring of 1918 wrote to the Ministry of Munitions regarding a transfer on health grounds. He also applied for a transfer to the Jewish Legion around this time.[72]

Despite Rosenberg's interest in the Legion, however, *Moses* is not a Zionist drama. Only in his later poems was the desire for escape connected to the idea of a Jewish homeland, as in his last work, 'Through These Pale Cold Days', written in 1918:

> Through these pale cold days
> What dark faces burn
> Out of three thousand years,
> And their wild eyes yearn,
>
> While underneath their brows
> Like waifs their spirits grope
> For the pools of Hebron again -
> For Lebanon's summer slope.
>
> They leave these blond still days
> In dust behind their tread
> They see with living eyes
> How long they have been dead.

This poem and two others, 'The Burning of the Temple' and 'The Destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian Hordes' (both written in 1918) express anger and sadness at the loss of a homeland and a longing to return to it. 'The Destruction of Jerusalem' is an image of the invasion of the city by an 'alien' power, and apparently refers to the Babylonian capture. Since this poem was written in 1918 by a young

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[71] Rosenberg, letter to Edward Marsh, August 1916, in Parsons, ed., *Collected Works* (1979), pp.242-243.
[72] Rosenberg, letter to Edward Marsh, postmarked March 7, 1918, in Parsons, ed., *Collected Works* (1979), p.271.

Jewish soldier who had tried unsuccessfully to transfer to the Jewish Legion,
however, it is tempting to read it in connection with the British capture of Jerusalem,
led by Field-Marshal Allenby in December 1917. Rosenberg's application for transfer
was never processed, and he was killed in action in November 1918.

Rosenberg's desire to join the Legion seems to have been at least partly
prompted by the need to escape from the harsh conditions of trench life and the
antisemitism he encountered among ranks and officers. There was also hostility
towards Jewish troops in Palestine, however, as the memoirs of the men who served
with the Legion show. In a war against German imperialism, the British government
had appealed to political Zionism in order to mobilise Jews for its own imperialist
designs in the Middle East. As a result, the Jewish Legion was the only group within
the British forces in the Great War that pursued its own nationalist agenda, with
government support. But the Balfour Declaration represented a threat to the authority
of the British administration in Palestine and the reaction to this was discrimination,
which came from the very pinnacle of the military hierarchy. Patterson described this
in biblical terms, casting Field-Marshal Allenby as 'Pharaoh' in a conflict over
continuing recruitment for the Jewish Legion in March 1918:

> Alas! it seemed that another Pharaoh had arisen who knew not Joseph; and
> once again we would be expected to make bricks without straw, and become
> hewers of wood and drawers of water. Instead of this new unit being helped
> and encouraged, we were ... made to feel that we were merely Ishmaelites,
> with every hand uplifted against us.[73]

While Patterson focused on the ingathering of the Jews and the restoration of Israel
(as discussed in Chapter Four), the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) made
repeated attempts to disperse the Legion, which, by 1918 numbered over five

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[73] Patterson (1922), p.57.

thousand men. The first was a proposal to break up the battalions into labour units.

Twelve of Patterson's men expressed support for this idea, a number he thought

appropriate, 'as it was one for each tribe', but ultimately only two transferred.[74] On

another occasion, plans were secretly made to attach the Jewish unit to two West

Indian battalions, with a Commander already appointed, thus removing Patterson

from the scene. Whilst his men were on active service, Patterson found it difficult to

obtain replacement clothing for them, 'although it was freely handed out to other

units'. Appeals were useless, and 'the policy adopted by the local Staff was to keep us

as "wandering Jews," pitched from one Brigade to another, in a continuous round of

General Post'.[75] Indeed, in three months, the Jewish units were attached to no less

than twelve different sections of the British Army.[76] The camp sites allocated to them

were usually inferior to those assigned to other troops, as, for example, on the

regiment's arrival at Ram Allah on 9 August 1918:

> It was midnight when we got to our camp, where we found that someone had
> carefully chosen a site for us which was literally one mass of stones.[77]

The men spent over seven weeks in the Jordan Valley during August and September

1918, the hottest time of the year, whereas other units had been stationed there for a

maximum of one week. At one time, the battalion, although more than 2000 strong,

was without a medical officer for over a year. Patterson fought back, however, and his

most effective weapon was to threaten resignation. This he did repeatedly, and since

no other officer would command a regiment which was internally divided over

Zionism and faced hostility from Staff officers in Cairo, this strategy brought results.

Perhaps the most dramatic victory was what he describes as 'The Fall of Goliath',

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[74] Patterson (1922), p.65.
[75] Patterson (1922), p.84.
[76] Patterson (1922), p.123.
[77] Patterson (1922), p.92.

which occurred on 16 July 1919, when 'Goliath', or 'General Z', insulted Jewish

soldiers, assaulting one of them during Patterson's absence. The men made an official

complaint and insisted that the General apologise publicly to the entire battalion,

which he did, but the petty discrimination continued. Eventually, Patterson informed

Allenby and 'General Z' was removed from command. More frequently, however, the

men found that their best defence was to substitute their Fusiliers badges for others

when they were outside the camp limits, thus evading unwanted attention.

Lieutenant Vladimir Jabotinsky, who had instigated the Legion and served

with Patterson's regiment, published his memoir of Palestine in Hebrew in 1945.

Unlike Patterson, rather than using biblical metaphors, he preferred to draw

comparisons between the Palestine campaign and Garibaldi's drive for Italian

unification, a goal that was eventually achieved in 1870. Perhaps the most interesting

aspect of Jabotinsky's memoir is not his choice of historical parallels, however, but

the way in which he engages with notions of national and 'racial' psychologies. The

characteristics Jabotinsky associated with 'Jewishness' were psychological rather than

'racial', which meant that both Jews and gentiles could exhibit behaviour that

conformed to unflattering Jewish stereotypes. He argued that both groups were

capable of developing a 'Ghetto' mentality, as in this assessment of the psychology of

the English 'ruling caste', by which he meant the British military administration:

> that caste is a world of its own, distinct from the rest of English humanity,
> deaf and proud of its deafness, unimaginative and proud of it. Do you want an
> exact parallel to their outlook? Take the old Ghetto. Other days, other
> customs, but the same fanaticism of "We are chosen," the very same disregard
> for the world outside, "Pooh!" to everything new.[78]

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[78] Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Story of the Jewish Legion*, trans. Samuel Katz (New York: Bernard Ackerman, Inc., 1945), p.169.

The 'average Englishman', Jabotinsky argued, was opposed to 'any big, far-reaching project, and also to sentimentalism'.[79] The Balfour Declaration and the Jewish Legion smacked of both, and provoked resistance. A preferable project was the promotion of the 'Greater Arabia', or 'Arabophilia' as Jabotinsky called it. This was in his view a British fantasy of Oriental primitivism, in which the Zionist Jew appeared as an unwelcome modernising force threatening to corrupt the Arabic 'Eden' of the Middle East. Whilst the British government's 'Zionism' may have gathered popular support amongst Britain's civilian population, to many in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force the Jew was not a romantic figure, but one who threatened change and disruption. As Jabotinsky put it,

> They had seen Jews, both rich ... and poor, in Whitechapel; quite sufficient for them to realize that the idea of the National Home had nothing to do with "picturesque" Chasidim with curls (which they could certainly have "swallowed," for they are not Jew-haters) but with modern Jews, wearing trousers on their legs and hats on their heads, and with European ideas under those hats. An end to all the *couleur locale*![80]

The Middle East was to remain a museum to British fantasies of Oriental primitivism, or the desire for 'the perpetuation of the caravan and the harem', and the Balfour Declaration threatened this.[81]

Another possible threat to the Zionist project in Jabotinsky's view was the 'altogether curious psychology' of the 'tailors', the Russian immigrants recruited from Britain. These men performed their duties conscientiously, but without enthusiasm, and, it seemed, lacked the pioneer spirit essential to Zionism. A 'gathering of exiles',[82] they were, in Jabotinsky's view

> Inspired by nothing, loving nothing except their homes, their wives and their children somewhere in Whitechapel or Leeds, indifferent to Zionism,

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[79] Jabotinsky (1945), p.168.
[80] Jabotinsky (1945), p.171.
[81] Jabotinsky (1945), p.174.
[82] Jabotinsky (1945), p.151.

> indifferent to Palestine ... I saw nothing of any collective life among them.
> They had no common interests, held no meetings, displayed no tendencies to
> any kind of unification.[83]

It was not only the 'tailors' who lacked Zionist enthusiasm. The Anglo-Jewish lawyer

Horace B Samuel entered Palestine in 1918 'as a Zionist' and an officer in the 38th

Royal Fusiliers, the battalion under Patterson's command, but gradually became

disillusioned with the nationalist project.[84] During the British occupation he served as

a military magistrate and then set up a private legal practice. In 1928 he left Palestine

for Britain. His account offers a cynical view of the various performances of identity

given by the key players in the Jewish Legion. Published in 1930, after 'a discreet

interval', his memoir assesses Zionist achievement in what he described as 'the

British-cum-Arab-cum-Zionist-cum-Missionary-cum-League-of-Nations Palestine'.[85]

Samuel claimed impartiality, to the extent that he once represented the London

Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews in a dispute with the widow

of a Hebrew Christian. Having demonstrated his professional detachment, Samuel

gave the following summary of what Palestine meant to its various inhabitants during

and after the war:

> To the supporters of missionaries it is a place where all the Jews should be
> converted into Christians. To the Zionist it is the scene of the building up of
> the National Home. To the British Imperialist it is the scene of the last
> crusade, another base for protecting the canal, and an important stage in the
> new air-way to India. To the believers in the League of Nations it is one of the
> most important of the Mandated Territories. To the Arabs and their backers it
> is a place where the native inhabitants of the country have been handed over
> *en masse* to be placed under the heel of hordes of alien immigrants (*sic!*).[86]

In contrast with Patterson's memoir, which presented an image of Jewish solidarity in

the face of discrimination, Samuel identified a confusion of motives among the men

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[83] Jabotinsky (1945), p.159.
[84] Horace B Samuel, *Unholy Memories of the Holy Land* (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), p.1.
[85] Samuel (1930), p.7.
[86] Samuel (1930), p.6.

who joined the Jewish battalions, whereby a hierarchy of Anglo-Jewish officers commanded a mass of soldiers hailing from Russia, Egypt, Palestine, and parts of Eastern Europe. In addition, Samuel observed a 'racial' hierarchy within the Jewish military community in Palestine, in which both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews regarded Levantine Jews as inferior to themselves, and 'As for the Yemenite Jew, ... he was rated a nigger pure and simple, and bullied accordingly'.[87] Besides these internal divisions, Samuel felt that the Jewish soldiers were manipulated not only by the British military administration, but also by their commanding officers and the Zionist leaders. Jabotinsky is portrayed as a posturing figure, 'the most picturesque and melodramatic nationalist that ever performed upon the Zionist stage';[88] a fanatical propagandist who urged the soldiers on with the words 'We are not merely a regiment - we are a political performing company!'[89] Jabotinsky, according to Samuel, saw himself as 'some Jewish D'Annunzio', a comparison which implies an autocratic element in his character.[90] Weizmann is given similarly unflattering treatment, and 'with his Mephistophelian face and subtle sinister charm', is portrayed as manipulative. Samuel describes one of his visits to the Jewish troops:

> I well remember how he addressed them. Lolling at a table, with his hands deep in his trouser pockets, he just spoke to them easily and racily and familiarly, in their own and his own native Yiddish ... The audience responded to a man. ... As he walked across the camp, the men, like rats after the Pied Piper, just followed, to the long drawn out wistfulness of the *Hatikvah*.[91]

Samuel satirised the performances of identity, political and religious, which seemed obligatory for Jews serving in Palestine during the Great War, and revealed

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[87] Samuel (1930), pp.19-20.
[88] Samuel (1930), p.8.
[89] Samuel (1930), p.13.
[90] Samuel (1930), p.9. Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863-1938) was an Italian nationalist and writer, who fought in the Great War and in 1919 occupied Fiume and set himself up as a dictator, remaining there until 1921.
[91] Samuel (1930), pp.13, 15-16.

their comic elements. He resisted the display of ardent political Zionism expected by

Jabotinsky, and mocked the theatrical piety of Reverend Falk, chaplain to the Jewish

Legion. Falk produced the Jewish national flag 'on every possible occasion', and

ostentatiously observed the dietary laws of Judaism.[92] Many of his charges did not,

and despite Patterson's efforts to ensure the men had *kosher* food, Samuel recalls

'Jewish lines littered with bacon tins'.[93] Jewish nationalism was in Samuel's view

atavistic, and he described the Zionists as 'modern reactionaries'.[94] Whereas in 1922

Patterson had imagined the future Palestine as a modern utopia, built on the hydro-

electric potential of the Jordan River, in 1930 Samuel viewed the 'conversion' of

Jewry into nationhood as a primitivising process in its initial stages, which in practice

meant that intellectuals worked as agricultural labourers. Patterson had focused on the

religious and military history of Palestine, and avoided discussing its political future,

but Samuel argued that the two themes were impossible to separate in a country

whose politics had always been shaped by competing religious claims. Politics *was*

religion in Palestine, and this was especially clear in the use of the Synagogue and the

Hebrew language in enforcing conformity to the construction of Jewish national

identity.[95]

The ideological and coercive aspects of establishing cultural homogeneity

among Jews in Palestine would perhaps have been excusable if the result had been a

homeland for world Jewry, but Samuel argued that the division between Eastern and

Western Jews remained intact. Most Jewish immigrants to Palestine came from

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[92] Samuel (1930), p.15.

[93] Samuel (1930), p.19.

[94] Samuel (1930), p.254.

[95] Samuel (1930), p.268. A tax was levied upon all members of the Jewish community, which was used to maintain a salaried Rabbinate. This was in Samuel's view analogous to the trade unions' political levy, in the sense that although it was not strictly compulsory, any secession would have to be made public, thereby discouraging open dissent in favour of an appearance of solidarity.

Central or Eastern European countries, 'where there is little assimilation either in practice or in theory'.[96] For Western Jewry, Palestine was a 'charity' to which they donated, and a commodity, for religious tourists and for novelists in particular, who could 'pay a flying visit to Palestine, like Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn, and embody the results in a book'.[97] National identity, he argued, was an unnecessary luxury, which in the case of Palestine involved the sacrifice of cultural and material necessities. Western Jews were best advised to support Palestine financially, and to continue to enjoy the pleasures of civilisation in Europe, giving the idealists the chance to develop Jewish national culture into 'something mid-way between failure and maximum success'.[98]

Private Roman Freulich, by contrast, felt that Jewish national life had begun during the Palestine campaign, in the tents of the Jewish Legion. Freulich joined the 40th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers after hearing an English soldier speak about the Jewish Legion in New York City in early 1918. He left for Palestine with the first group of American volunteers on 28 February that year.[99] His account of the campaign was published in 1964, and draws on Patterson's memoir. Freulich, however, casts neither Weizmann nor Patterson as 'Moses', but Ben Zvi, future second President of the state of Israel, who is described as having parted the waters of a *wadi* with a pile of rocks so that the soldiers could cross without getting their feet wet.[100] Apart from this one allusion to the Old Testament, Freulich avoids Patterson's explicitly biblical reading of the campaign. Instead, his introduction focuses on the

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[96] Samuel (1930), p.257.
[97] Samuel (1930), p.260.
[98] Samuel (1930), p.276.
[99] Roman Freulich, *Soldiers in Judea: Stories and Vignettes of the Jewish Legion* (New York: Herzl Press, 1964), p.31.
[100] Freulich (1964), p.63.

history of rebellion associated with Palestine: the Maccabean revolt against Seleucid

rule and the recapture of Jerusalem in 164 BCE, and the revolt against the Romans led

by Simon Bar Kokhba in 132 CE. This was the history that had been partly repeated,

with Jewish troops fighting against (Turkish) imperial power in Palestine in the Great

War, and partly rewritten, with the recaptured territory being held and the eventual

formation of the state of Israel in 1948.

After the Great War Freulich returned to the USA and worked as a

photographer, and his book offers a number of prose 'snapshots' of events in

Palestine, which are presented to the reader without 'captions' or any explanation of

the way in which they are considered symbolic. Among the most striking of these is

an image of the sculptor Jacob Epstein, a private in the 38th battalion, modelling a

human figure out of sand:

> It was late in the afternoon, when Private Jacob Epstein, the sculptor, began
> pouring a bucket of water onto a heap of sand. Then he kneaded the mixture,
> and in silent eagerness commenced to work. Before darkness fell, the sand
> sculpture was finished - the figure of a man writhing in silent agony.[101]

Freulich does not ascribe any explicit meaning to this moment, but the image lends

itself to a number of interpretations. Epstein's writhing figure may represent Jewish

national life in embryo, or symbolise the birth of Jewish national art, or the historical

suffering of the Jews. It may also, perhaps, be a *golem* image, drawing on the legend

of the Rabbi Judah Loew (1512-1609) of sixteenth-century Prague, who fashioned a

humanoid creature out of clay and brought it to life, for the purpose of protecting the

Jewish community.[102] Prior to the existence of a Jewish Legion, the *golem* was the

legendary means by which the Jews defended themselves against persecution. The

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[101] Freulich (1964), p.65.

[102] See Frederick Thieberger. *The Great Rabbi Loew of Prague: his life and work and the legend of the Golem: with extracts from his writings and a collection of the old legends* (London: East and West Library, 1955).

sand sculpture, then, may be viewed as a double metaphor, not only representing the *golem* of legend, but also the Jewish Legion, which arguably performed the same function, that of defending the interests of the Jewish community in Palestine. According to legend, once the danger was past, or if the rabbi appeared to be losing control of his creation, the *golem* was destroyed. This was done through the removal of an amulet, which served to identify the *golem* and contained the secret name of God that gave it life.[103] Ironically, unlike the *golem*, the Jewish soldiers were empowered by the removal of their 'amulets' or Fusilisers badges, an act which allowed them the freedom of movement enjoyed by other soldiers outside of camp limits, as they were no longer identifiable as Jewish soldiers. Since the Jewish soldiers were equipped to defend themselves, and did so, the function of Epstein's '*golem*' was symbolic only, and accordingly it had disintegrated by the end of the day.

The chief function of the legendary *golem* was to defend the Jewish community against attack, and the Jewish Legion, perhaps its modern 'equivalent', was subject to persistent discrimination by the British military administration and repeated attempts to bring about its dispersal. Within the battalions themselves, Patterson claimed that 'race' was never an issue, but Freulich identified antisemitism not only among Staff, but also among the gentile officers and non-commissioned officers in the Legion itself.[104] In addition, there were problems between Jewish and

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[103] It is of interest at this point to recall Patterson's view of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration to pious Jews, as the 'Voice of God' [Patterson (1922), p.17]. To extend the analogy of the Legion as '*golem*', then, whilst the Balfour Declaration did not create the Legion, it certainly validated its existence.

[104] Freulich (1964), p.143.

West Indian soldiers, owing to gambling losses by the latter.[105]

Freulich's account of the Palestine campaign, written after the formation of the state of Israel, is a nostalgic look at what its author views as the birth of the nation during the First World War. The diary of Private Paul Epstein, a Russian immigrant who was conscripted into the Jewish Legion in 1918, gives a very different view of military life in Palestine.[106] Epstein found conditions at the base camp at Rafa unsatisfactory: the food was of poor quality, and for entertainment there was only 'a very small recreation marquee for about 1000 men', containing 'books about Zionism and literature of that name', which, he wrote, 'makes me feel fed up whenever I enter that show' (diary entry, 8 February 1919). The monotony was relieved only by the occasional concert, football match, or *shool* service. Epstein was religiously devout, and disappointed by the lack of piety among the Jewish troops and what he regarded as the over-emphasis on Zionism within the Legion. Attendance at the voluntary services was low, and he noted that 'Particularly sad to me is the indifference, almost antagonism, with which the Jewish religion is regarded! It seems unthinkable - Zionism without the Jewish faith, but such it is' (2 September 1919). Finally, the rate of demobilisation among the Jewish troops was very slow, and many were still in

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[105] Freulich (1964), p.167. There was one black man who served in the Jewish Legion, Bata Kindai Amgoza ibn Lo Bagola, or Lo Bagola as he was known. He claimed to be of the tribe of Ephraim, and entertained the men with stories of Africa which appeared to be largely based on white imperialist stereotypes, stories of, in Freulich's words, 'the Africa of tom-toms, strident chantings, barbaric matings, superstitions and brutality' (p.199). In his memoir, Lo Bagola complained of 'racial' discrimination from Jews under his command at Kantara in Egypt [Lobagola, *An African Savage's Own Story* (London: Alfred A Knopf, 1930), p.360]. Whilst no autobiography or memoir can be regarded as a completely reliable source, Lo Bagola's is particularly unreliable: he was not born in Africa but Baltimore in 1887 under the name of Joseph Howard Lee, and his claimed Jewish ancestry is by no means certain. His book appears to be an attempt to capitalise on white racist fantasies. On Lo Bagola's origins, see David Killingray, 'LoBagola and the making of "An African Savage's Own Story"', in Bernth Lindfors, ed., *Africans On Stage* (Indiana University Press, 1998). Killingray's 'discovery' is cited in Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain, 1901-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

[106] The diary of Private Paul Epstein, 1918-1919, may be found in the rare books section of the Parkes Library, University of Southampton, Hampshire, U.K., under the shelfmark MS 1124 AJ15.8. All further references will be given in the text.

Palestine long after the war had ended. Epstein noted that on one occasion Jabotinsky attempted to persuade soldiers awaiting demobilisation to stay on for another six months, but received 'only 10 volunteers' (6 April 1919).

Jabotinsky's appeal to the men was partly in response to growing anti-Jewish feeling among the Arab population in Palestine, assisted by the open preference of some high-ranking British officers for the Arabs' claim to the land.[107] In the events leading up to April 1920, the British occupying forces in Palestine, like their Roman predecessors, sought to suppress rebellion and discontent in order to preserve their authority. But the Jews in Palestine had the support of the British government, in the (albeit ambiguous) Balfour Declaration - to which the military administration in Palestine was largely hostile - and the Arabs had been assured that their claim to the land would be respected and upheld. Both Jews and Arabs felt somewhat betrayed by the British, but it is the form that Lieutenant Jabotinsky's betrayal and punishment took that is of interest here. In August 1919 Jabotinsky wrote a letter to Field-Marshal Allenby, in which he protested against military antisemitism and requested a personal interview. Whilst awaiting a response, Jabotinsky was visited by a Jewish Staff-Major from General Headquarters who claimed to have been sent by Allenby, and submitted a falsified report. As a result, Jabotinsky was compulsorily demobilised on 29 August 1919, but remained in Palestine, forming a *Haganah*, a Jewish self-defence corps in response to increasing hostility from both Arabs and the British administration. The situation reached a horrific climax in the 1920 Jerusalem pogrom. In that year, the Passover coincided with the Muslim festival of *Nebi Musa*. A large number of Arab pilgrims came to the city, and with the encouragement of some British Staff officers,

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[107] Meinertzhagen identifies Lieutenant-Colonel H B Waters-Taylor and Brigadier-General Ronald Storrs as particular culprits. See Meinertzhagen (1959), pp.82, 86.

incited violence against the Jews.[108] Three days of looting, murder, and rape by Arabs followed, in which the gates of the city were blocked, preventing anyone from leaving or entering. Kept outside the gates, Jabotinsky and his men were helpless to intervene. The self-defence corps was declared illegal and Jabotinsky, as its leader, was charged with 'banditism' and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment by the British military authorities. As part of his humiliation before beginning his sentence, Jabotinsky was marched through the streets of Jerusalem and Kantara, flanked by two Arab rapists, who were also given fifteen years. Whether Staff officers were conscious of the parallels between Jabotinsky's humiliating parade through Jerusalem and Jesus' journey to Calvary in the company of two thieves is unclear.[109] There was, however, a precedent for punishment with Christ-like overtones in Field Punishment Number One, described earlier in this chapter. Obviously, Jabotinsky's punishment was not an exact parody of the crucifixion, but it did appear to dramatise elements of the crucifixion story - the leader of a group of Jews being viewed with suspicion by Palestine's military rulers, and his betrayal and public humiliation on trumped-up charges alongside common criminals. Eventually, after protest from, amongst others, Lieutenant-Colonel Patterson and Justice Louis Brandeis of the US Supreme Court, the War Office intervened to annul Jabotinsky's sentence, and he went on to form a Jewish Brigade during the Second World War.

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[108] Meinertzhagen (1959), pp.81-83
[109] See Luke 23:32.

**Conclusions**

In civilian, and especially clerical usage, the crucifixion trope related to the soldier as a figure of heroic self-sacrifice, although occasionally it was also applied to the nation at war. Such imagery was used to glorify the war itself, and to portray it as a moral and religious struggle rather than a political conflict. In a 'holy war', crucifixial imagery served to differentiate between the British and the Germans, asserting the 'Christian' identity of the one nation and the 'paganism' of the other, and idealising the sacrifice of men in the interests of a new order. The image of the soldier as 'Christ' took on a different meaning in military life, however. 'Crucifixion' was the means by which the military authorities expressed their power over the soldier, by separating him from the rest of the group through the humiliating Field Punishment Number One. Combatants made cynical use of Christian themes in their letters and other writings to attack the notion of 'holy war' and the rhetoric of salvation used by some clergymen. Religious imagery was used to express alienation from Christian doctrine as a result of war experience, and to portray the soldier's suffering as mundane rather than expiatory.

For coherence and completion the crucifixion narrative relies upon a 'Judas' figure, and the war provided a series of candidates for this role. One of these was the Kaiser, portrayed by Sir Owen Seaman, editor of *Punch*, as betraying Christ through his alleged renunciation of Christianity. Another was the German soldier, whose hatred and fear of the Allied soldier was 'demonstrated' by the story of the ritual murder of the 'Crucified Canadian'. But it was the Russian revolution that produced the most enduring and compelling figure of the non-Christian betrayer, and one that was not just 'Judaised' by association with 'pagan' Germany, but overtly constructed

as 'Jewish', in keeping with the antisemitism embedded in the New Testament account of the crucifixion. Wilton's direct comparison of the Tsar with Jesus and the Bolsheviks with Judas is one of the most striking examples of this. After the Russian revolution of October 1917 the image of the 'Bolshevik Jew' allowed the notion of the Jews' hostility towards Christians to be translated into political terms. This gave the fear of attack by 'Jews' an immediacy and currency that directly influenced government policy and gave rise to the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish Legion.

The Declaration and the Jewish battalions met with hostility from the Staff at the General Headquarters in Cairo, as the memoirs discussed above show. The men who served in the Jewish Legion used a mixture of imagery to describe their experiences and impressions of Palestine, much of it deriving from the Old Testament and from Jewish history. Patterson drew comparisons between the Staff officers and the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, with regard to their treatment of the Jews. Freulich referred to the history of Jewish resistance to occupation by the Greeks and the Romans, and expressed pride in having been present at what he saw in retrospect as the birth of the Jewish state. But among all the historical parallels that were being drawn with regard to Palestine, perhaps the Roman occupation was the part of that country's history that was most graphically evoked under British control in April 1920. Uncannily, in its opposition to Jewish claims to Palestine, the British occupying administration seemed almost to emulate its Roman predecessors, in terms of the punishment it awarded to Lieutenant Jabotinsky. Without wishing to overstate the matter, I have suggested that by accident or design, Jabotinsky's betrayal and imprisonment as the leader of a band of Jewish dissidents, and his march through Jerusalem accompanied by two common criminals, appeared to dramatise elements of the crucifixion story, and bore a parodic resemblance to the punishment of Jesus by

the Romans. In a war which was saturated with the imagery of crucifixion in relation to the soldier, it was perhaps military discipline that evoked the crucifixion most forcefully, in Field Punishment Number One, and Jabotinsky's punishment. These were images of the soldier as 'Christ' that the civilian did not see. The crucifixion theme in military discipline revealed something that civilian use of such imagery sought to obscure and displace, namely, where the responsibility for the sacrifice of the soldier (and, by extension, the death of Jesus) lay, which was ultimately with the ruling powers. In this respect, military use of the crucifixion trope could only add to the process of the decline of Christian faith that had begun before the war.

It is ironic that even as the Church was losing authority in national life, the tropes and central narratives of Christianity should develop a powerful secular significance and emerge in a wide range of popular interpretations of the war. This chapter has examined the function of the crucifixion story with regard to representations of British national identity during the conflict. Chapter Six explores the use of another Christian grand narrative in relation to the war and the immediate post-war years, that of the apocalypse as described in the Book of Revelation, and examines the roles ascribed to the British and the Jews in modern interpretations of this theme.

# CHAPTER SIX

## The Apocalyptic Imagination During and After the War

### Introduction

In a letter to a friend, dated 14 November 1914, the Scottish poet Charles Sorley[1]

gave his opinion of Israel Zangwill:

> I admire him enormously and like him about as much. He reminds me often of
> the author of *Revelation* in his outbursts of revolting sensuousness (he too is
> fully capable of imagining heaven as inhabited by four beasts and four and
> twenty elders) varied occasionally by really beautiful passages, but he is far
> more humorous and witty than St. John the Divine. *Dreamers of the Ghetto* is
> his best. I love Jews – of a type.[2]

Sorley used the Revelation narrative - a dramatic vision of the end of the world in

which the forces of 'good' and 'evil' struggle for supremacy - as an example of a

tendency towards 'excess' that he perceived in Jews, and to suggest that 'outbursts of

revolting sensuousness' were a 'Jewish' trait. In doing so, he subscribed to a then

contemporary view among gentiles that Jews were creatures of dual nature, capable of

extremes of both 'good' and 'bad', however imagined, and it is partly from this

perception that the fear and fascination associated with 'the Jew' is derived. Sorley

cast Zangwill as a 'good' Jew, the quality of whose writing was only occasionally

marred by the 'racial' tendency to imaginative 'excess', as exemplified in

Revelation.[3] In fact, the wartime 'outbursts of revolting sensuousness' and

imaginative excess that Sorley associated with 'Jewish' writing came mostly from

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[1] Charles Sorley was born in Scotland in 1895. His father was W R Sorley, Professor of moral
philosophy at Aberdeen, and his grandfather was a minister in the Scottish Church. He joined the 7th
battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in December 1914 as a second lieutenant and was killed on 13
October 1915. A collection of his work entitled *Marlborough and Other Poems* was published in 1916.
[2] Charles Sorley, letter dated 14 November 1914, in W R Sorley, ed., *The Letters of Charles Sorley*
(Cambridge University Press, 1919), p.238.
[3] Sorley was assuming that the Gospel and letters of St John and Revelation were produced by the same
Jewish-Christian writer, but this cannot be confirmed. See Introduction to the Gospel and Letters of St
John, and Introduction to the Book of Revelation, *The Jerusalem Bible*, popular edition, gen. ed.,
Alexander Jones (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968).

gentiles, in the rhetoric of apocalypse that was widely used in relation to the war and the changes it brought about. Apocalyptic imagery, drawn directly from Revelation, was central to the widespread portrayal of the war as a cataclysmic struggle, and was also used with regard to the political developments of the post-war years. Even more than the trope of 'crucifixion', 'apocalypse' captured the public imagination, as a metaphor for the war as a theatre in which the might of the rival imperial powers could be played out, after which a new order could begin. The language of 'apocalypse' provided a means of describing the scale of the war and its impact, and to express excitement and apprehension at the changes that would follow it. Members of the clergy focused on the themes of judgement and the triumph of Christianity; politicians used the rhetoric of apocalypse to describe the capacity of the war to 'purge' national life and unite the British in making a fresh start, and soldiers drew on Revelation to convey the devastation of their surroundings, but without the redemptive optimism of the civilian perspective.

Christian apocalyptic allocates a particular role to the Jews in the 'last days', and differentiates sharply between 'good' and 'bad' Jews; the former being converts (or potential converts) to Christianity and the latter the servants of Antichrist, who will perish in the prophesied cataclysm. The concept of 'Antichrist' is integral to the Christian apocalyptic tradition, and takes two main forms. First, there is the definition given in the letters of St John, that of Antichrist as one who denies the divinity of Christ:

> The man who denies that Jesus is the Christ - he is the liar, he is Antichrist.
> (1 John 2:22)

This is repeated in St John's second letter, in which Antichrist pertains to a deceiver, or a false doctrine:

> There are many deceivers about in the world, refusing to admit that Jesus
> Christ has come in the flesh. They are the Deceiver; they are the Antichrist.
> (2 John: 7)

Then there is the personification of Antichrist found in early Christian writings, as an individual under the control of Satan, whose appearance would immediately precede the second coming. The origins of this figure are found in the Johannine and Sibylline prophecies, which foretold the overthrow of a demonic king by a Jewish military and religious leader.[4] These texts, written by Jews for use as conversion tools, were produced around the same time as Daniel (between 167 and 164 BCE), and like Daniel, may be viewed as a response to the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes, under which Jews were persecuted. Christian narratives of redemption drew on the evil monarch featured in these texts, but gradually this powerful figure became portrayed as 'Jewish'. This was partly owing to religious rivalry, as Church and Synagogue competed for converts before the Roman empire was Christianised in 400 CE, and partly a reaction to the Jews' perceived 'failure' to recognise Jesus as the Messiah. As a result, some of the early Christian theologians linked the figure of Antichrist with the Jewish messianic expectation, and warned that when he appeared, the Jews would follow him into battle against Christianity (according to Iranaeus, Antichrist would be a Jew of the tribe of Dan). The association between Jews and Antichrist was further developed in medieval drama, in the miracle and mystery plays that depicted their destruction at the start of the millennium. The politics of the Reformation in Europe gave rise to another collective image of evil incarnate, in Lutheran representations of the papacy.[5] This construction of Antichrist is found in marginal religious discourse

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[4] For a discussion of the origins of the figure of Antichrist, see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957), p.18.

[5] Although as Norman Cohn has pointed out, the view that the Pope was Antichrist developed much earlier than the Reformation period, and circulated during the thirteenth century. See Cohn (1957) pp.65-66.

of the early twentieth century, but on the whole, such imagery has more commonly

been applied to the Jewish people.

Secular engagement with the Revelation narrative during and after the war

functioned in a similar way to Christian apocalyptic, as this chapter will demonstrate.

The rhetoric of 'apocalypse' as it was used in relation to political developments

during and after the war - the Bolshevik revolution, the rise of the labour movement,

changes in the class structure and widespread unemployment and unrest - tended to

reproduce the polarisation of Jewish 'types' found in millennial thinking. In anti-

Bolshevik propaganda in particular, Jews were cast as either the potential allies or the

ruthless enemies of the Christian state. In the three sections that follow -

'Armageddon', 'Antichrist' and 'Millennium' - this chapter explores the popular view

of the war as a battle between 'good' and 'evil', and examines the representation of

these forces - along with the hopes and fears for the post-war period - and the

perceived role of the Jews in the political and social reconstruction of Britain.

# 1. 'Armageddon'

During the First World War the imagery of apocalypse became common to both marginal and mainstream religious discourse, as millennialists and leading clergymen alike spoke of the war as 'Armageddon', a battle between 'good' and 'evil' that would usher in a new order. 'Armageddon' seemed an appropriate metaphor for the scale of the conflict between the rival powers and the degree of destruction and slaughter it provoked, and was also useful in demonising the enemy. The difference between clerical and millennialist engagement with the Revelation narrative, however, was that the latter took Revelation literally, and regarded the events of the war as 'signs' of the fulfilment of prophecy, while the clergy made selective and rhetorical use of the language of apocalypse, and the 'millennium' they anticipated took the form of a stronger Church and a more devoutly Christian post-war society.

Even before the outbreak of the First World War there was speculation among millennialists that the 'last days' were near, and groups such as the Prophecy Investigation Society (PIS) met regularly to discuss 'signs' of the second coming of Christ.[6] The Society was a marginal Protestant group that formed part of the Dispensationalist movement, which had begun in Britain in the 1830s under the leadership of John Nelson Darby of the Plymouth Brethren. Although by the 1860s Dispensationalism had become a popular movement in the USA, in Britain it remained a peripheral influence.[7] Dispensationalists view history as divided into several eras, and regard the dispersion of the Jews as an interruption in the chronology given in Daniel 9: 24-25, of the 'seventy weeks' which will elapse before the

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[6] See also Chapter Four for information on this group and its activities.
[7] For a discussion of Dispensationalism in the USA, and William Blackstone's Zionist campaign of 1916, see Yaakov Ariel, 'A Neglected Chapter in the History of Christian Zionism in America: William E. Blackstone and the Petition of 1916', in Jonathan Frankel, ed., (1991), pp.68-85.

rebuilding of Jerusalem and the anointing of the Messiah. According to

Dispensationalism, as long as the Jews are dispersed, this chronology cannot be

resumed and redemption cannot occur, but once the Jews have returned to the Holy

Land 'in unbelief', the Seventh Dispensation, the 'time of the end', will begin. To

some members of the Society, the events of 1912 indicated that this time was close at

hand. In a collection of papers first published in 1913, members of the Women's

Branch identified irrigation work in Mesopotamia (Iraq) as a 'sign' of the prophesied

building up of Babylon prior to its destruction.[8] Since 1905, the British engineer Sir

William Willcocks had been in the Middle East conducting surveys for a number of

irrigation projects, including the one in Mesopotamia, then a province of the Ottoman

empire. Returning to London in 1912, he published an account of his findings, and on

10 June that year gave a lecture on the subject to the Royal Geographical Society. The

title he chose was 'The Garden of Eden and its Restoration'. Willcocks identified the

Garden of Eden as an early Jewish settlement on the upper Euphrates, which the

inhabitants had been forced to leave when their irrigation channels collapsed. In

describing this scene he attempted to provide an archaeological gloss on the biblical

narrative of the Fall, as the tar deposits, or 'bitumen springs' which appeared in the

suddenly arid landscape seemed to the departing Jews 'like flaming swords in the

hands of the offended Seraphim'.[9] Despite his rationalist attempt to explain the Eden

myth, Willcocks was a religious man, and his writing reflects both his faith and his

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[8] See E A Bland, 'Babylon, Past and Future' (1913), and A R Habershon, 'The Image of Daniel II., and
the period it covers' (1913). Both papers were published in pamphlet form, as part of *The
Dispensational Series* (London: Alfred Holness, 1913). The PIS also regarded wartime developments
as 'signs' of the apocalypse, and indeed, some events lent themselves readily to such interpretation. In
1915 a 'plague' of locusts descended upon Palestine, an account of which is given in Alexander
Aaronsohn's book *With the Turks in Palestine*, published in 1917. (Alexander Aaronsohn, his brother
Aaron and sister Sarah were Palestinian Jews who became spies for the British in Turkish-occupied
Palestine.) Members of the PIS would doubtless have regarded the 'plague' of locusts as 'evidence' of
the fulfilment of scriptural prophecy.
[9] For a report on Sir William Willcocks' lecture, see the *Times*, 11 June 1912, p.5.

profession; besides accounts of his engineering work in the Middle East, he also published translations of the Gospels in colloquial Egyptian.[10] By framing his account of early irrigation in Mesopotamia in the context of a recovered 'Eden', Willcocks was indirectly invoking the themes of apocalypse and millennium; dramatic and highly resonant images whose appeal was more than marginal. Millennialists would undoubtedly have been attracted by the apparently biblical significance of the Mesopotamia project, but as Willcocks' choice of title shows, the possible retrieval of a lost earthly 'paradise', if couched in scientific terms, would also have appealed to members of the Royal Geographical Society.

Another development that aroused millennial interest was Zionism. After the first congress of the World Zionist Organisation, held at Basle in 1897, Jews began to return to Palestine and form small co-operative settlements. One of a number of books discussing the significance of Zionist settlement was Frank Jannaway's *Palestine and the Jews; the Zionist Movement an Evidence that the Messiah will soon appear in Jerusalem to rule the whole World therefrom*, published in early 1914, just before the outbreak of war.[11] Jannaway argued that the Jewish settlements in Palestine indicated that the second coming was imminent.[12] Although he did not call for the conversion of the Jews, he did refer to Jesus as the Messiah, and in an anecdote which suggests conversionist desires, recalled being directed to 'Christian Street' whilst souvenir hunting in Jerusalem, and finding it dominated by Jewish shops. For the Jewish colonies, however, he had nothing but praise, which is perhaps why his book was

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[10] See, for example, Sir William Willcocks, *al-Arba' basha 'ir. The Four Gospels* (Cairo, 1924, 1925), and *Aqwal wa-a'mal Sayyidina al-masih. Sayings and Acts of Jesus Christ. Selections from the Gospels in the spoken dialect of Egypt* (Cairo, 1922).

[11] Frank George Jannaway was a prolific writer on religious subjects, and judging by the titles of his books, linked to the Christadelphian movement.

[12] Frank G Jannaway, *Palestine and the Jews; the Zionist Movement an Evidence that the Messiah will soon appear in Jerusalem to rule the whole World therefrom* (Birmingham: C C Walker, 1914), p.43.

politely received by Jewish readers, despite the fact that it described the colonists'

success as

> an absolute fulfilment of those prophecies concerning the Jew and his land just
> prior to the return to earth of his Messiah, and which time is so frequently
> spoken of by the prophets of Israel as 'The Time of the End'.[13]

But just as the Jews were returning to their land, so the forces of Antichrist were

gathering strength, as prophesied. Jannaway identified Russia and Germany as 'Gog'

and 'Magog' respectively, since both countries had recently bought land near the

Mount of Olives, and had installed consulates and troops.[14] This, along with Zionist

settlement, and the stockpiling of arms by the nations, meant that from the

millennialist perspective, the world was preparing for Armageddon.[15] The

interpretation of the coming war as the apocalypse prophesied in Revelation was

initially confined to the fringes of Protestantism, but after the outbreak of war, the

rhetoric of apocalypse began to enter into mainstream religious and political

discourse.

Theological interest in the apocrypha during the First World War was not

simply confined to marginal religious groups. The Society for the Promotion of

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[13] Jannaway (1914), p.70. Pasted onto the flyleaf of the book is a small promotional card, which quotes favourable responses to the book from, amongst others, the editor of *The Zionist*, Dr E W G Masterman of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and Professor Boris Schatz of the Belazel Institute, Jerusalem. Presumably these responses were elicted not by Jannaway's millennial ideas, but the detailed list he gave of all the Jewish settlements he visited (pp.28-42).

[14] Jannaway (1914), pp.77-79. In Revelation, Gog and Magog are identified as the servants of Satan, and the leaders of two armies against God's people. See Revelation 20:7-9. In the Old Testament Magog is mentioned in Genesis 10:2 and 1 Chronicles 1:5 as the second son of Japheth and a descendant of Noah. In Ezekiel 39:6 Gog is the leader of a country called Magog, which threatens Israel, and will be punished. It is on Ezekiel that Revelation draws for its sinister portrayal of these figures.

[15] Literature of this kind was widely published during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prominent and frequently cited examples from this period include the following books by Dr. Gratton Guinness, DD: *Light for the Last Days* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), reprinted in 1888 and 1917, and *The Approaching End of the Age* (Frome & London, 1878), reprinted in 1879, 1880, 1882 and 1918. Although there seems to have been some demand for such writing, it was also ridiculed. See, for example, F J B Hooper, *An Extinguisher for the Guinness 'Light for the Last Days:' and a Stopper for 'The Approaching End of the Age'* (London: Roger & Drowley, 1888).

Christian Knowledge (SPCK) published a series of what might be termed 'pocket apocrypha', in small, mass-produced editions of the Jewish apocalyptic texts. The stated aim was to provide 'short, cheap, and handy text-books' of interest to the general reader as well as to theology students, and the books were described as 'important for the study of Christian origins'.[16] The majority of the books in this series were published during 1917 and 1918, which seems to suggest that theological interest in apocalyptic writing increased during the war, possibly in response to the conflict itself and the prevailing rhetorical climate.

Members of the Anglican clergy, both high and low, used the theme of 'Armageddon' to refer to the spiritual significance of the war, as a conflict between 'good' and 'evil' and a defence of Christianity against 'paganism', but their use of apocalyptic language was selective. There was, for example, little rhetorical engagement with the second coming, which follows 'Armageddon' in the Revelation narrative, although there was some reference to 'judgement' and 'millennium', in calls for the repentance of national 'sins' and the hope that a more devoutly Christian nation would emerge from the war. The Bishop of London's rhetoric typifies this approach. In sermons preached during the winter of 1914 to 1915, Winnington-Ingram referred to the war as 'this Armageddon'[17] describing it as a 'Day of God', a supreme test of Christianity which was 'in many respects an anticipation of the Judgement Day'.[18] His rhetorical use of the 'Last Great Day' and 'Judgement'

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[16] G H Box and W O E Oesterley, eds., Translations of Early Documents Series, Series I: Palestinian-Jewish Texts (Pre-Rabbinic), and Series II: Hellenistic-Jewish Texts (London: SPCK). Titles included *I* and *II Esdras* (1912, 1917); *Isaiah* (1917); *The Letter of Aristeas* (1917); *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (1917); *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (1918); *The Apocalypse of Baruch* and *The Assumption of Moses* (1918); the Third and Fourth Books of the *Maccabees* (1918); *Joseph and Asenath* (1918); *The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament* (1920), and *The Apocalypse of Enoch* (1925).

[17] A F Winnington-Ingram, *Sermons for Times No. 4: Sermons on the Holy War* (1914), p.3, quoted in Wilkinson (1978), p.188.

[18] A F Winnington-Ingram, *The Church in Time of War: Sermons and Addresses, 1914-15* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1915), v.

referred not to events at the end of the world, as in Revelation, but to periodic tests of

Christian faith and endurance, the effects of which were cataclysmic, as he informed

his congregation:

> When they come, everything is broken up in the world, everything is altered; boundaries, frontiers, all melt away - the whole world is put into the melting-pot.[19]

From this destruction, a new order would emerge, but first, however, a 'holy war'

must be fought. On other occasions, the Bishop's rhetoric seemed to shift towards

British Israelism, as when, in 1914, he informed civilian and military congregations

that

> Jerusalem is beautiful, standing as it does three thousand two hundred feet above the sea. But there is a more beautiful place than Jerusalem, and that is England.[20]

This statement suggests that England will emerge from the war as the 'new

Jerusalem', the modern centre of Christian faith, with the English replacing the Jews

as the 'chosen people'. But first they must become worthy of the responsibility. The

Bishop of London hoped that the war would act as 'a purifying, cleansing draught',[21]

which would unite the English, strengthen their faith, and return religion to the centre

of national life. Other nations were being 'reborn' as a result of the war; the French,

he argued, had abandoned their trivial interest in fashion and gaiety for patriotism,

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[19] A F Winnington-Ingram, 'The Day of the Lord', in *A Day of God: Being Five Addresses on the Subject of the Present War* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1914), p.70.

[20] Winnington-Ingram, 'The Day of the Lord' (1914), p.12. The theory of British Israelism was put forward in 1850, by Herbert Armstrong, and argues that the people of the USA and England represent the lost tribes of Menasseh and Ephraim respectively, who, along with the other tribes, were scattered after the Assyrian captivity in 721 BCE. The theory is an elaborate argument for Anglo-Saxon supremacy through interpretation of the scriptures and apocrypha, supported by folklore and legend, and attempts to redefine the 'chosen people' as British. Apparently forgetting Cromwell, British Israelism contends that the British monarchy is the only continuous monarchy, and therefore represents the continuation of David's royal lineage referred to in 2 Samuel, 7: 12-13.

[21] Winnington-Ingram, 'In Time of War', in *Kaiser or Christ: The War and its Issues* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1914), p.6.

and the Russians, too, had reformed: 'In a week the vodka was flung aside, ... the nation was unified, and the Tsar became the father of his people'.[22] England, too, could be strengthened through war, and must repent of her sins, in order to become fit to lead the Christian nations. In a sermon preached at St Paul's in July 1915, he called for national repentance in urgent terms, and declared 'it is only a new England, which has come back to her best self, which can save the world to-day'.[23]

Apocalyptic imagery can be effective in arousing both religious and national fervour at times of crisis, as Winnington-Ingram's successful appeals to Christian patriotism demonstrate. Despite drawing criticism from both government ministers and fellow-clergymen,[24] his sermons had great popular appeal and were widely published. Winnington-Ingram used the imagery of apocalypse and judgement not in anticipation of the second coming of Christ, but to demonise the Kaiser, defend Christian imperialism, and aid military recruitment. As the content of his sermons shows, the language of apocalypse and redemption was not confined to marginal religious groups in wartime Britain, but was also present in mainstream discourse, and had both religious and secular appeal. It is the secular use of apocalyptic imagery that I want to consider next.

Secular engagement with the theme of the war as a cataclysm that would precede a new order was immediate and enthusiastic. In a speech made in September 1914, Lloyd George anticipated the emergence of a new Britain, and declared

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[22] Winnington-Ingram, 'The Church's Call to the Soul of the Nation', a sermon preached at St. Paul's, 25 July 1915. In *The Church in Time of War* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1915), p.303.
[23] Winnington-Ingram, 'The Church's Call to the Soul of the Nation' (1915), p.308.
[24] GKA Bell notes Prime Minister (1906-1916) Herbert Asquith's dislike of the Bishop of London's jingoistic speeches, in *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, New York & Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1938), second edition, pp.886-887. For clerical reactions, see W R Inge's comments on the 'unchristian' nature of some of the Bishop's sermons, in W R Inge, *The Diary of a Dean. St. Paul's 1911-1934* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1949), p.43.

> I can see signs of its coming in the glare of the battlefield. ... A great flood of luxury and of sloth which had submerged the land is receding, and a new Britain is appearing. We can see for the first time the fundamental things that matter in life and that have been obscured from our vision by the tropical growth of prosperity.[25]

The imagery is of the 'flood', the narrative of apocalypse found in Genesis, used here to suggest the war as a fresh start. Like the clergy, politicians made selective use of biblical imagery in relation to the war, according to the desired impact. The Old Testament provided Lloyd George with metaphors for the corrupted state of pre-war British society, while Winston Churchill chose a passage from Deuteronomy, in which Yahweh calls the nation of Israel to arms, to dramatise and justify Britain's entry into the conflict. In October 1911 Herbert Asquith invited Churchill to go to the Admiralty. Foreseeing war, he accepted, and recalled the moment in his memoir:

> That night, when I went to bed, I saw a large Bible lying on a table in my bedroom ... I opened the Book at random, and in the ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, I read - Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven. ...
> Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[26]

To Churchill, this 'seemed a message full of reassurance'.[27] Whether or not events happened as Churchill described, his reference to Deuteronomy in this context suggests a view of the British as the modern 'Israelites', in much the same way as Winnington-Ingram's assertion that the beauty and spirituality of England surpassed that of Jerusalem implied the 'chosen' status of the British. This tendency to appropriate parts of the Old Testament in support of Christian projects is also found

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[25] 'Honour and Dishonour', a speech by the Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George, at Queen's Hall, London, 19 September, 1914, in *Pamphlets of the German War* (London: Methuen & Co., 1914), p.11.
[26] Deuteronomy 9:1-6, quoted in Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911-1914* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1923), p.68.
[27] Winston Churchill (1923), p.68.

among millennialists, who have sought from it evidence of proto-Christianity in their efforts to assert religious authority and convert Jews.[28] Ultimately, however, it was Revelation that provided Christians with the justification they needed for a 'holy war', since analogies between the British and the 'Israelites' could hardly be sustained in a context in which Britain was being popularly portrayed as a Christian nation. The Revelation narrative provided an account of moral warfare which, unlike the tales of divinely-sanctioned war in the Old Testament, privileged Christians. Accordingly, after its initial foray into the Old Testament, Churchill's memoir draws on Revelation for its content and structure, and chapter one, entitled 'The Vials of Wrath', portrays the war as an event of apocalyptic proportions:

> No truce or parley mitigated the strife of the armies. The wounded died between the lines: the dead mouldered into the soil. ... Cities and monuments were smashed by artillery. Bombs from the air were cast down indiscriminately. Poison gas in many forms stifled or seared the soldiers. Liquid fire was projected upon their bodies. Men fell from the air in flames, or were smothered, often slowly, in the dark recesses of the sea.[29]

In other passages, Churchill uses apocalyptic imagery to convey not the horror of the war so much as the drama of the conflict and the power of those involved. Aside from the accounts of the destruction, there is a tone of awe and admiration for the might of the participating nations in a war that brought them 'to the knowledge of their strength'. The 'vials of wrath', he wrote, 'were full: but so were the reservoirs of power'.[30]

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[28] See, for example, two papers read to the Women's Branch of the Prophecy Investigation Society in 1916: A M Hodgkin, 'The Firstfruits', and A R Habershon, 'The Day of Atonement in its Prophetic Aspect', published in pamphlet form as part of *The Dispensational Series* (London: Alfred Holness, 1916).

[29] Churchill (1923), pp.10-11. The language and imagery of this passage compares directly with that of Revelation, chapter 16, which describes the loss of human life through the seven plagues unleashed upon the earth, in which unbelievers are scorched by the rays of the sun, all life in the sea is extinguished, and 'the cities of the world collapsed' (Revelation 16: 19).

[30] Churchill (1923), p.11.

Among civilians, the drama and spectacle of 'Armageddon' generated fear and excitement, as this letter by an anonymous woman, dated 1917, indicates:

> Harry and I were in the Zeppelin raid night before last in London, and it was most interesting and exciting. … Guns were going off over us, so we charged up an alley, only to find them worse at the other end. The smell of powder was exciting. We stood in a doorway, and Harry put an arm around me and I kissed him solemnly, and we waited to be exterminated.[31]

For those who wanted to see 'Armageddon' from the soldier's perspective, the War Office and the British Topical Committee made a series of films at the Front, which were publicised in the film journal *Bioscope* in 1916 under the title '"Peeps At the Hidden War": Official Pictures of Armageddon'. The article described the war as 'the greatest event in the world's history', and one which 'the ordinary citizen' was not allowed to witness:

> The most tremendous event that has ever shaken the earth is being waged in virtual secrecy. Save for brief official narratives and vague newspaper reports, the darkness of Armageddon has been unrelieved for the spectator by any really graphic verbal description of its dreadful yet heroic course.[32]

With titles such as *Liveliness on the British Front* and *The Eyes of the Army: With the RFC at the Front*, the films claimed to offer the public 'a marvellously graphic and intimate impression not only of real fighting, but also of the life of battlefield', and guaranteed 'absolute authenticity'.[33]

The ubiquity of the theme of 'Armageddon' prompted satire, at least initially. On 5 August 1914, A A Milne published an article in *Punch* which portrayed the war not as a Christian crusade in answer to God's will, but as a game of the pagan gods in

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[31] Amy Gordon Grant, *Letters From Armageddon: A Collection Made During the World War* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), p.147.

[32] '"Peeps at the Hidden War": Official Pictures of Armageddon', in *Bioscope*, 23 March 1916, p.1234.

[33] The titles of the films advertised and their release dates were: *Liveliness on the British Front*, 27 March 1916; *Villages in Flanders, the Scenes of Hard Fighting, Now Held by the British*, 3 April 1916; *With the Royal Field Artillery in Action*, 10 April 1916; *The Eyes of the Army: With the RFC at the Front*, 17 April 1916, and *The Battlefield at Neuve Chapelle*, 24 April 1916.

response to the violent desires of humans.[34] Overhearing the views of one 'Mr

Porkins', who felt that the British were 'getting flabby' and that war was the solution,

the gods of Olympia decided to grant his wish. From trivial beginnings and fuelled by

the press, events escalated, until finally a world war broke out, providing humans with

an outlet for their belligerence and the gods with entertainment. The following issue

of *Punch* featured a cartoon in which an elderly woman, having taken the rhetoric

literally, is unable to find 'Armageddon' marked on a map of the war zones (see

Figure 10). But satire of this kind quickly became unacceptable in the rhetorical

climate of morally justified war by 'Christian' Britain against 'pagan' Germany.

Occasionally, however, a dissenting voice was heard, often attacking the jingoism of

the clergy, as in a letter from J E Symes to the editor of the *Nation* in December 1914,

which appeared under the heading 'The Moratorium for the Sermon on the Mount'.

Symes wrote:

> Sir - The clergy make excellent recruiting officers; but need they give up
> preaching that we should love our enemies? ... we need not talk as if, to the
> eye of faith, angel wings were spreading from the shoulders of Thomas
> Atkins, and horns from the forehead of Fritz.[35]

In *John Bull*, a populist weekly with a nationalist and conservative bias, the editor

Horatio Bottomley pointed out that the Germans, too, claimed divine support for their

cause, and noted 'It really is very embarrassing - this perpetual invocation and praise of

the Deity by both sides!'[36] This initial scepticism soon gave way, however, to prose

that was worthy of Winnington-Ingram, such was its evangelical tone.[37] An article

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[34] A A Milne, 'Armageddon', in *Punch*, 5 August 1914, p.128.

[35] *Nation*, 26 December 1914, p.415.

[36] *John Bull*, 5 September 1914, p.1.

[37] In fact they met during the war when, in response to criticism of his sermons in *John Bull*,
Winnington-Ingram invited Horatio Bottomley to tea. The meeting ended with Bottomley offering
temporary column space in which the Bishop would promote the National Mission of Repentance and
Hope. See A F Winnington-Ingram, *Fifty Years' Work in London, 1889-1939* (London: Longmans &
Co., 1940), pp.126-128.

**Figure 10**

**Cartoon on the subject of 'Armageddon', in *Punch*, 13 September 1914, p.262.**

The caption reads: *Old Lady*. 'I've brought back this war map you sold me yesterday, Mr. Brown. It's not up to date. I've been looking all the morning for Armageddon, and can't find it marked anywhere.'

entitled 'The Mills of God are Grinding', published in September 1914, incorporated

the themes of 'apocalypse', 'antichrist', 'judgement' and 'millennium', and read more

like a sermon than an editorial. It is worth quoting at some length:

> To-day, we grope in darkness, almost despairing of our race. But there, far ahead, we see the faint light of a New World; behind it we discern the outlines of the Prince of Peace; and as we step warily, day by day, towards him, over and above all the din of battle ... we are conscious of an awful, never-ceasing sound. And there, before the light, we see at length the Mills of God - grinding, grinding, grinding; and beneath them, beyond all hope of rescue or escape, there writhes a mad Teutonic tyrant, with blood-guilt upon his head, the greed of conquest on his lips, and the doom of a People on his soul.
> Come, brother, let us turn our eyes to the light![38]

This may well have been a satire on the imagery of apocalypse and millennium used

by press, politicians, and clergy, but whether or not the article was mocking the

rhetoric of 'Armageddon', this passage suggests that in a very short time, the notion

of the war as a conflict between the forces of 'good' and 'evil' had become an

established, perhaps even orthodox, part of wartime civilian discourse.[39]

While in the early months at least, civilians tended to view the war in glorious

terms, as a divinely-sanctioned venture, soldiers saw little evidence of God's presence

at the Front. Among combatants, the use of apocalyptic imagery was more often

descriptive than moral, and served to convey the devastation of their surroundings.

Describing a ruined cemetery at Fricourt, Max Plowman, or 'Mark Seven' as he

called himself, drew on the imagery of Judgement Day, but without its underlying

theme of resurrection, and wrote 'It looks as if it might have heard the Last Trump.

Graves are opened and monuments of stone and beaded wire lie smashed and piled

into heaps.'[40] The artist Paul Nash used the imagery of apocalypse not only to

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[38] *John Bull*. 12 September 1914, p.5.
[39] The rhetoric of 'good' versus 'evil' is a cliché of war, but the scale of death and destruction in the First World War lent this view an immediacy not found in earlier conflicts.
[40] 'Mark Seven', *A Subaltern on the Somme in 1916* (1917). p.42.

describe the horror of his surroundings but also as an indictment of civilian

enthusiasm for the war. In a letter to his wife, dated November 1917, he wrote:

> Evil and the incarnate fiend alone can be master of this war, and no glimmer
> of God's hand is seen anywhere. Sunset and sunrise are blasphemous, they are
> mockeries to man, only the black rain out of the bruised and swollen clouds all
> through the bitter black of night is fit atmosphere in such a land. The rain
> drives on, the stinking mud becomes more evilly yellow, the shell holes fill up
> with green-white water, the roads and tracks are covered in inches of slime,
> the black dying trees ooze and sweat and the shells never cease. ... It is
> unspeakable, godless, hopeless. I am no longer an artist interested and curious,
> I am a messenger who will bring back word from the men who are fighting to
> those who want the war to go on for ever. Feeble, inarticulate, will be my
> message, but it will have a bitter truth, and may it burn their lousy souls.[41]

This is an image of apocalypse without the attendant themes of 'resurrection' or

'millennium'. There is no portrayal of the German troops or the Kaiser as the

embodiment of 'evil', nor any suggestion of a 'new order' emerging from the

devastation, only continuing and pointless death and destruction. Nash is the soldier-

prophet of the war as 'apocalypse', whose message is that there is no hope to be

gleaned from this modern devastation. His hostility is directed towards those on his

'own side', the civilians who glorify the conflict but take no personal risks, and it is

they, not the Germans, who are charged with responsibility for the war.

Others used 'Armageddon' in a more geographical sense, to refer to the

Palestine campaign and specifically the capture of Jerusalem by the British in

December 1917. Raymond Savage, who served with Field-Marshal Allenby in

Palestine, recalled that this event was widely viewed 'in relation to the prophecy of

the Apocalypse for the great fight between Good and Evil', and that in celebrating the

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[41] Paul Nash. *Outline, an autobiography and other writings* (London: Faber & Faber, 1949), pp.210-1.

victory, 'the Chief selected the title of "Allenby of Armageddon" for himself'.[42] This anecdote suggests that senior and commanding officers were aware of the view of the war as the prophesied 'apocalypse' in Revelation, but did not take it seriously. More removed from the actual dangers of the war than the ordinary soldier, they could subscribe, however flippantly, to the idea of the war as a moral conflict and glorify it as civilians did. This difference in attitudes to and experience of the war is reflected in the ordinary soldiers' contempt for the military Staff, as their letters and writings show.[43] For Allenby at least, the war did bring glory, and on his return to England, he was showered with honours, including the Freedom of the City of London. The average ex-combatant, however, returned to a society that had changed dramatically, and from which he felt alienated.[44]

This sense of alienation is reflected in fiction written by ex-soldiers, much of which is critical of the political and social changes brought about by the war, and nostalgic for a more stable society ascribed to the pre-war period. Wilfred Ewart's novel *Way of Revelation* (1921) draws upon themes from Revelation in its structure and content to portray the war as cataclysmic not only in the battle zones, but also with regard to English culture.[45] *Way of Revelation* suggests that in the absence of

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[42] Raymond Savage. *Allenby of Armageddon: A Record of the Career and Campaigns of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, GCB, GCMG* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925), p.253. The theme of 'Armageddon' in relation to the Great War and Palestine has endured, and a much later account of the role of the cavalry in the campaign was published by Cyril Falls, under the title *Armageddon 1918*, Great Battles of History Series (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1964).

[43] See, for example, the trench journals, in *The Wipers Times* (1918), and Laurence Housman, ed., *War Letters of Fallen Englishmen* (1930).

[44] See Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.200-209. Leed gives details of several riots among soldiers awaiting demobilisation at various camps in Britain and France during the spring of 1919. There were also demonstrations at the Victory Day parades of July 1919 by veterans who were angered by unemployment and what they regarded as a lack of sympathy among civilians towards the difficulties they faced in attempting to integrate into industrial society.

[45] Wilfred Ewart, *Way of Revelation: A Novel of Five Years* (1921, reprinted Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1986). All further page references for this novel will be given in the text.

'Englishmen' fighting at the Front, England became vulnerable to 'bohemians' and 'Jews', who preyed upon society for their own gain. Born in 1892 into a High Anglican family, Ewart served in the Scots Guards and wrote accounts of trench life for the *Times* and the *Spectator*. In July 1918 he met Stephen Graham at the Front, and they became friends.[46] Graham was one of the Russian correspondents for the *Times*, and in 1913, had accompanied Russian peasants on their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, publishing an account of his experiences in 1914.[47] Like his colleague Robert Wilton, Graham blamed Jews for events in Russia, and it is possible that his views influenced the younger Ewart, whose novel portrays Jews and 'bohemians' as responsible for the erosion of class certainties during the war.

*Way of Revelation* is divided into five parts, each opening with a quotation from the Book of Revelation. The main character is Adrian Knoyle, the son of 'a reputedly impecunious baronet' and for this reason somewhat insecure in his class position (p.10). Section one, entitled 'Illusion' relates to the 'full force of the class tradition in England', soon to be shattered by war. Yet even before the war, the world of privilege inhabited by Knoyle and his set is threatened by modernity, in the form of rapidly changing values. This is embodied in Gina Maryon, a young woman with 'pretensions to advanced literary and artistic tastes' who mixes with artists, 'bohemians' and Jews, to whom Adrian refers as 'Maryonites' (p.13). Adrian is both attracted and repelled by her, but is more drawn to the aristocratic yet vulnerable Rosemary Meynell, who, as the narrative progresses, becomes emblematic of England and, drawn to the exotic, falls under the influence of 'foreigners'. Against the

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[46] See Hugh Cecil, *The Flower of Battle: British Fiction Writers of the First World War* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1995), p.146.
[47] Stephen Graham, *With the Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (London: Macmillan, 1914).

modernist and hedonistic 'Maryonites' and the corruptible Rosemary are set the more

traditional Ardens, in Lady Arden and her daughter Faith Daventry, who possesses 'a

beauty that belongs peculiarly to England', that of 'fair hair, regular features', and

'serenity', 'courage' and 'honesty' (p.23). Adrian, Gina, Rosemary and others are

enjoying a weekend at the Arden estate, when war is declared. Walking among the

crowds in London, Adrian reflects that they 'cheered their own peril, cheered the

triumph of the anti-Christ, cheered the downfall of the world' (p.109). Yet he has to

acknowledge that there is something undeniably exciting about the prospect of war:

> It seemed to him then as though some Judgement, great and terrible - for all its
> sins and shames, for all that city's wrongs and self-inflicted woes - impended
> above himself, above her beside him, above the generality of mankind.
> Rosemary clung to his arm in these moments, thrilled and wondering
> not less than he. And in these moments, they *lived*. (p.199)

Adrian goes to the Front, described as a region where 'Men lived, physically and

mentally ... in the dim contorted regions of the anti-Christ' (p.288). But rather than

heralding the new order imagined by civilians, he sees the war as signalling

'something closer akin to the end of things than to their beginning' (p.461). This is

confirmed when during his leave he visits the self-made Lord and Lady Freeman at

their country estate, in his sense that class relations are shifting, and that under 'the

Freeman influence ... the much-talked-of invasion of England had really begun'

(p.210). The novel suggests that it is through women, however, that a nation is most

vulnerable to degeneration and corruption. In Adrian's absence, Rosemary has

become involved with the dissolute 'Maryonites', and he views her choice of

company - 'poets and comedians and Jews and foreigners' - with suspicion and

mistrust. Rosemary eventually rejects Adrian for Harold Upton, a manipulative non-

combatant, and her decline accelerates. In keeping with the novel's concern about the

effects of the war on England, the 1918 Victory Ball is also the scene of her death, the

result of an overdose of drugs supplied by her new friends. Among her last words to Adrian are '... if only you had never left me. ... That was the war' (p.527), and her death becomes a metaphor for the infiltration and corruption of English society by plutocrats, profiteers and Jews, who, it is suggested, have taken advantage of the absence of patriotic 'Englishmen' to gain positions of power. At the end of the novel, the anxieties about national and social corruption are resolved in the marriage between Adrian and Faith Daventry, and England is secure once again. In the final scene of the novel the couple view the country from a hill in the Mendips, an idyllic setting 'Hardly defiled by the railway, seldom touched by foot of tourist', with a Norman church below them and the scent of wild thyme everywhere (p.531).

*Way of Revelation* incorporates a number of themes that were widely used in relation to the war. Apocalyptic imagery is used to describe the war landscape, but there is a parallel destruction occurring within English society as a direct result of the conflict. The marriage between Adrian and Faith and the rural idyll they inhabit may be read as the 'millennium' that follows the novel's 'apocalypse', in which, despite the undeniable impact of the war, the 'old order' has been preserved. The theme of a return to the land, expressed as an idealisation of rural life, was common in novels written by ex-soldiers.[48] Ewart's novel combines what may be broadly termed civilian and combatant perspectives on the war: there is much use of apocalyptic imagery, but this is descriptive rather than moralistic, and there are passages which depict the soldier as Christ, but as a suffering rather than a heroic or transcendent figure. It is the

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[48] See Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp.229-38 for a discussion of the fantasy of rural England in novels by ex-combatants. Such rural fantasies were encouraged, no doubt, by the proposals outlined in the Small Holding Colonies Bill for the settlement of disabled former soldiers on the land. It was proposed that 6,000 acres in England and Wales and 2,000 in Scotland were to be used for this purpose. The Small Holdings Colonies Act was passed in 1916.

absence of a distinct figure of Antichrist as a foil to the 'Christian' soldier, however, -

so common in civilian rhetoric - that marks this novel as the work of a former

combatant and reflects the cynicism with which soldiers regarded the notion of 'holy

war'. It is the centrality of the notion of Antichrist in civilian engagement with the

apocalyptic narrative that will be considered next.

## 2. 'Antichrist'

The two main uses of the Antichrist theme during and after the war correspond to

those found in the Christian tradition; namely, of Antichrist as a false doctrine or

deceiver, and Antichrist personified, as a powerful figure of evil. In the early years of

the war, popular rhetoric portrayed the Kaiser as the 'Beast' incarnate, or

alternatively, as the servant of the devil. An example of this is found in a poem

entitled 'The Kaiser's God', published in *John Bull* in 1914. The Kaiser is visited by

'A creature he mistook for God', who encouraged him to 'ravage peaceful Belgium',

and then 'vanished ere the Monarch, pale, / Could see his God *possessed a tail!*'[49] But

although the Kaiser was widely portrayed as an evil figure, the term 'Antichrist' was

rarely applied to him directly. An exception to this is found in a sermon entitled *Anti-*

*Christ and Armageddon*, by the Reverend A H T Clarke, Rector of Devizes.[50] The

author claims his text was published 'by request', although it seems unlikely that a

sermon preached by a West Country clergyman would have had a very large

circulation, unlike those given by Bishop Winnington-Ingram and the higher clergy.

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[49] 'The Kaiser's God', in *John Bull*, 29 August 1914, p.14.
[50] A H T Clarke, *Anti-Christ and Armageddon: or, the passing of Feudalism, Medievalism, and Mahometanism* (London: The Church Book Room, 1916).

which were reported in the national press and widely published. Clarke saw the war as a struggle between faiths, with Prussia, the Catholic Church and Islam as 'the triple combination let loose from hell' against the Anglican Church.[51] In his view, Antichrist was doubly personified, in the Kaiser and the Pope, who were linked through their shared despotic intent, the former focusing on civil rule, and the latter on religious domination.[52] Generally, however, the clergy refrained from identifying any individual as Antichrist, preferring instead to cast 'Prussianism' in this guise, and using the term in the sense of (German) militarism as a false doctrine. *Armageddon*, a sermon preached in 1914 by the Reverend H C Beeching, Dean of Norwich, is a typical example of this.[53] To Beeching, the war was a conflict between 'the final issues ... of good and evil, right and wrong',[54] with the British fighting against 'a new religion of anti-Christ, [a] new God of Force and Falsehood'.[55] Winnington-Ingram used similar language, but characteristically went a little further, referring to the war as a struggle between 'Kaiser or Christ', and, by extension, Antichrist or England.[56]

As the war progressed, the apocalyptic theme in its various interpretations began to circulate more widely, to the extent that in December 1917, Dr Fort Newton complained to the congregation at the City Temple, London, that the Book of Revelation had 'fallen into the hands of the puzzle-maker and the prophecy-monger', who used it as 'a kind of cryptogram to prove when the world is coming to an end'.[57] 1917 was a time of crisis for Britain: the war was in its third year and public support

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[51] Clarke (1916), p.4.
[52] Clarke (1916), pp.2-3.
[53] Reverend H C Beeching, Dean of Norwich, *Armageddon: A Sermon Upon the War Preached at Norwich Cathedral* (London: SPCK, 1914).
[54] Beeching (1914), p.3.
[55] Beeching (1914), p.12.
[56] Winnington-Ingram, 'Kaiser or Christ?'(1914).
[57] Dr Fort Newton, quoted in the *Times*, 28 December 1917, p.9.

was waning; there were food shortages, price increases, and labour unrest. In addition,

Britain's ally, Russia, went through two revolutions. The first of these, in February,

met with measured support in Britain, as the provisional government introduced

liberal reforms including the emancipation of Russian Jews. But as the Bolshevik

party gained support and influence, it was feared that they would negotiate a separate

peace with Germany, and that Britain would lose an ally. (This occurred when the

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed on 3 March 1918.) Having expressed measured

support for the Kerensky revolution, the British national press began to portray

Bolshevism as an anti-Christian politics dominated by Jews under German control.[58]

The *Times* and the *Morning Post* received their information on revolutionary

Russia from Robert Wilton and Victor Marsden respectively, both of whom had spent

years in Russia and had adopted extreme right-wing and antisemitic views which were

reflected in their bulletins. On 11 October 1917, as part of its 'Russia To-day' series,

the *Times* published an article which stated that the Russian press was more or less

controlled by 'revolutionary Jews', who were working to bring the Bolsheviks to

power.[59] At this point, however, the general view was that Russia's 'Bolshevik Jews'

served the Kaiser. A collection of reports on Russia compiled from government

sources and published by the Foreign Office in 1919 seemed to verify this, containing

a number of assertions by consulate staff and other ex-patriates to this effect.[60] A

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[58] See, for example, the *Morning Post*, "'The Russian Soviet": A Predominance of Germans', 8 October 1917, p.6, and the series 'Russia To-day', in the *Times*, 20 September to16 October 1917.
[59] The link between communist revolution and Russian Jews became established partly because Marx was Jewish, and also because of the publicity given to the involvement of some Russian Jewish immigrants in pre-war anarchism and socialism, which had produced an association between the two in the minds of both gentiles and Anglo-Jewry. As Sharman Kadish has pointed out, those Bolsheviks who were Jewish had little in common with orthodox Jews living in the Pale. In addition, radical Russian Jews were divided over Bolshevism, and the Jewish Bund clashed with the Bolsheviks over the question of retaining Jewish culture within a socialist state. Such distinctions, however, were rarely acknowledged in Britain. See Kadish (1992), p.4.
[60] See *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (London: HMSO, 1919).

telegraph from Sir E Howard to Arthur Balfour, for example, dated August 1918,

stated that most of the Bolshevik leaders were 'either fanatics or Jewish adventurers

like Trotsky or Radek'.[61] Similarly, on his return to Britain in early 1919 after ten

years in Russia, the Reverend B S Lombard, chaplain to the British interventionary

forces in Russia, wrote to Lord Curzon [62] to say that although Bolshevism 'originated

in German propaganda', it was being 'carried out by international Jews'.[63] Gradually,

the association between Bolshevism and Russian Jews began to link up with earlier

fears relating to this group, and the theme of enforced prostitution entered into

accounts of life in Russia. In January 1919 General Poole advised the War Office that

a 'Decree for nationalisation of women has been put into force', and that there was

'evidence to show that commissariats of free love have been established in several

towns, and respectable women flogged for refusing to yield'.[64] General Knox made a

similar statement in a report from Vladivostock, dated 4 March 1919, claiming that

women between the ages of 16 and 50 had been mobilised to minister to the sexual

needs of the Bolsheviks.[65]

At this stage, it can be seen that representations of the Bolshevik régime were

beginning to resemble pre-war sexual anxieties connected to Russian Jewish

immigrants. The allegations of the sexual exploitation of women in Bolshevik Russia

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[61] Telegraph from Sir E Howard to Arthur Balfour, dated 19 August 1918, in *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (1919), p.2. There is no mention of 'Jews' in the reports relating to the Tsar's imprisonment and murder at Ekaterinberg; this was a connection supplied by Robert Wilton, British military intelligence agent and reporter for the *Times*.

[62] George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925) became Baron Curzon in 1898, the same year he was appointed Viceroy of India, a post he held until 1905. He held the office of Lord Privy Seal from 1915 to 1916 in Asquith's coalition government, and Foreign Secretary from 1919 to 1924, under Prime Ministers Lloyd, Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin.

[63] Letter from Reverend B S Lombard to Lord Curzon, dated 23 March 1919, in *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (1919), p.67.

[64] Telegraph from General Poole to the War Office, received 12 January 1919, in *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (1919), p.32.

[65] Report made by General Knox to the War Office, dated 4 March 1919, in *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (1919), p.53.

were similar to the 'white slavery' scares associated with Jewish refugees before the war, and the link between both these expressions of sexual anxiety was the figure of the Russian Jew. The connection made between Russian Jews and the Bolshevik revolution re-awakened earlier fears regarding Jews as procurers, and the sexual and political combined in representations of the international 'Jewish Bolshevik' who paradoxically demanded the 'nationalisation' of Russian women as sexual commodities. In fact this association had been made very shortly after the revolution, as a cartoon in *Punch*, dated 12 December 1917, shows (see Figure 11). In this image, the feared alliance between revolutionary Russia and Germany is framed as a sexual transaction, with Russia portrayed as a woman being forced by a Bolshevik into an embrace with the Kaiser. The Bolshevik 'pander', whilst not physically caricatured as Jewish, carries a bag of German gold, which, like the title, 'Betrayed', evokes 'Judas', and suggests that Bolsheviks had betrayed both Russia and the Allies in favour of pan-Germanism.

Anti-Bolshevik pamphlets published in Britain took up the theme of the exploitation of women, framing a threatening political ideology as a sexual attack on women as individuals and as a group. One pamphlet, published in 1919, warned newly-enfranchised women that to vote for socialism would amount to their 'consenting to the destruction of [their] own family prospects'.[66] The writer referred to an 'Edict' which decreed that 'women of *any* rank, between the ages of 17 and 32' must 'register themselves with the local authorities as being at the (immoral) disposal

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[66] *The Story of Bolshevism: A Warning To British Women* (London: National Publications, 1919), p.3. This pamphlet was distributed in London by W H Smith & Sons, and in Edinburgh by John Menzies. Besides portraying Bolshevism as a sexual threat, the writer used the imagery of contagion and disease, also associated with Jewish immigrants in the pre-war period. Bolshevism is described as 'a foul far-spreading poison' which would be 'as fatal to the whole Political Body as cancer is to the human body', p.4.

**Figure 11**

**'Betrayed', cartoon appearing in *Punch*,
12 December 1917, p.399.**

of any citizen who chooses to apply for them'.[67] Former suffragette Christabel

Pankhurst also urged women to vote against socialism, but for different reasons. Her

pre-war writing and speeches had focused on the sexual exploitation of women in

Britain, but she made no reference to their alleged 'nationalisation' under Bolshevism.

Instead, as part of her morale-raising tour of wartime Britain she addressed workers

on the subject of 'industrial salvation', and in October 1918 published a pamphlet

under this title.[68] Bolshevism, she argued, was a German plot to ruin Britain's

economy, and to participate in industrial action was to co-operate with political

'invasion'. Christabel inverted Marxist theory to produce her own solution to class

conflict, arguing for the abolition not of the bourgeoisie but the proletariat, and that

rather than taking control of the means of production, workers should increase

production, thereby creating more wealth. This increased wealth, comprising

'comforts, refinements, and luxuries', would be distributed through the

'democratisation of property', as prices would drop, demand rise, and the market

increase.[69] As a result, a high standard of living would become 'as open to all, without

distinction of class, as the free air of heaven'.[70]

Unlike many opponents of Bolshevism, Christabel avoided the political racism

that was developing during 1917 to 1918, and refrained from commenting on the

'racial' character of Bolshevik activists. Despite her connection with movements that

expressed hostility or mistrust towards Jews, such as the anti-vice campaigns and the

anti-communist lobbies, she does not seem to have been antisemitic herself. After the

war, she exchanged the quasi-religious rhetoric of 'industrial salvation' for

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[67] *The Story of Bolshevism* (1919), p.8.
[68] Christabel Pankhurst, *Industrial Salvation* (London: The Women's Party, October 1918).
[69] Christabel Pankhurst (1918), p.3.
[70] Christabel Pankhurst (1918), p.11.

straightforward millennialism, in her book *The Lord Cometh: The World Crisis Explained.*[71] As a millennialist, however, she could hardly avoid the 'Jewish Question', and stated that this would be resolved by conversion, or 'the simple condition of faith in Jesus Christ - whereupon all distinction between Jew and Gentile disappears'.[72] Unusual as an anti-Bolshevik who was not an antisemite, Christabel also differed slightly from other millennialists in her attitude towards Jews. While many millennialists denounced the Jews for 'deicide', and asserted that they had forfeited their chosen status, [73] Christabel focused simply on conversion. Nor did she identify any group or doctrine as the servants or the embodiment of 'Antichrist', as other millennialists did.

Not all millennialists regarded the Jews as the chief threat to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, however, and Reformation tensions are apparent in the Reverend E P Cachemaille's interpretation of events.[74] Cachemaille addressed the Prophecy Investigation Society in 1921 and asserted that it was the Catholic Church, not the Jews, that represented the 'Antichristian body' that threatened the post-war world.[75] He identified Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) as Antichrist 'posing as the Vicar of Christ on earth', and argued that the papacy, although professing Christianity, actually represented a latent world dictatorship.[76] The Kaiser, he

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[71] Christabel Pankhurst, *The Lord Cometh: The World Crisis Explained* (London: Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1923).

[72] Christabel Pankhurst (1923), p.91.

[73] See, for example, the following papers read to the Prophecy Investigation Society during the war, all of which have antisemitic content: Ada R Habershon, 'The Dispensations' (London: Alfred Holness, 1912), 'The Place of Miracles in the Dispensation' (London: Alfred Holness, 1914), and 'The Day of Atonement in its Prophetic Aspect' (London: Alfred Holness, 1916); A M Hodgkin, 'The Return of the Jews to their Own Land' (London: Alfred Holness, 1914); E A Bland, 'The Church and the Tribulation' (London: Alfred Holness, 1915).

[74] Ernest Peter Cachemaille MA attended Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and was the Secretary of the South American Missionary Society.

[75] E P Cachemaille, 'Palestine and the Warfare of the End' (London: Chas A Thynne, 1921).

[76] Cachemaille (1921) pp.11-12.

asserted, had promised the Pope that Palestine would become a Catholic state,[77] and

the 'final conflict' between good and evil would take place in Palestine between

Britain and the Latin countries, led by the Pope, over possession of the holy places.

'Bolshevik Jews' formed the third part of the 'Formidable Sect' that sought to

dominate the post-war world:

> Not a few of the leaders of this Formidable Sect are apostate Jews, and their
> motive for destroying the Christian nations is said to be revenge for the
> wrongs that Judaism has suffered at their hands. But the Christianity the
> Jewish revolutionaries have chiefly known, and that has bitterly persecuted
> their race, is that of the Romish Church. So they will fulfil their purpose
> against her, and will then think that thereby they have destroyed Christianity,
> but it is only a parody of Christianity that they will have destroyed.[78]

Jewish revolutionaries, then, were ironically playing their predestined role in 'God's

plans' for the world by helping to undermine a false Christianity. By attacking the

Russian Orthodox Church (which has Greek rather than Roman origins), the atheist

Bolsheviks were in fact assisting the second coming of Christ.

While millennialists continued to anticipate the 'last days' after the war had

ended, the British press invoked religious apocalyptic less frequently with regard to

political events. But the themes of apocalypse and millennium did not disappear from

secular life. A new form of apocalyptic writing appeared, which represented the

'Jewish' threat as an immediate danger to the Christian state. The document that

became known as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* originated in Russia in 1905.

The main source for the content of the *Protocols* was a satire on the French second

empire by Maurice Joly, published in 1864 under the title *Dialogue aux Enfers entre*

*Montesquieu et Machiavel*. Other sources included extracts from a novel entitled

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[77] Cachemaille (1921), p.22.
[78] Cachemaille (1921), p.15.

*Biarritz*, published in 1868 by Sir John Retcliffe, also known as Hermann Goedsche, a former Prussian postal worker.[79] The key moment in the novel is a chapter set in a Jewish cemetery in Prague, where a discussion takes place between the devil and the leaders of the twelve tribes regarding plans for world domination. This chapter was published as a pamphlet and circulated in Russia during the 1870s.[80] The *Protocols* were compiled from these and other sources by Sergey Nilus, who in 1901 published a book entitled *The great in the Small. Antichrist considered as an imminent political possibility*, which in its third edition, in 1905, incorporated the *Protocols*. A subsequent version entitled *He is Near, At the Door ... Here comes Antichrist and the reign of the Devil on earth* appeared around the time of the Bolshevik revolution.[81] These titles make obvious allusions to Christian apocalyptic, but the document that reached Europe was secular, purporting to be the leaked minutes of a meeting of Zionist 'Elders', led by Theodor Herzl,[82] at the first World Zionist Congress held in Basle in 1897. Despite its secular presentation, the themes of the document remained apocalyptic, and represented a distortion of the Jewish messianic tradition, in which plans were outlined for the destruction of Christian civilisation and the enthronement of a Jewish dictator-king who would avenge Israel's suffering. The *Protocols* circulated throughout the world, and reached the British army in Palestine in 1918. In his memoir *Trial and Error* (1949), the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann recalls that

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[79] *Biarritz* was partly a reaction to the impending emancipation of Jews in the North German states, which occurred in 1869, and throughout the entire Reich in 1871.
[80] Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), p.36.
[81] Cohn (1967), p.67.
[82] Dr Theodor Herzl was an Austrian Jew who founded the modern political Zionist movement. He wrote the influential *Der Judenstaat* (1896) and led the first Zionist Congress at Basle the following year.

General Wyndham Deedes handed him a sheaf of typewritten extracts from the

*Protocols* and informed him that British officers read and believed them.[83]

The *Protocols* reached Britain in early 1920, brought by 'White' Russian

officers spreading anti-Bolshevik propaganda, and the British Museum held a Russian

copy from 1906. They were published in January or February 1920 under the title *The*

*Jewish Peril* by Eyre and Spottiswoode, who, as Norman Cohn has noted, also

published the Anglican Prayerbook and the authorised version of the Bible.[84] Their

authenticity and origins were debated in the *Times* in May 1920,[85] and also in the

*Spectator*,[86] but the *Morning Post* was less reserved, and serialised the *Protocols* in

the summer of 1920. In addition, Victor Marsden, the paper's Russian correspondent,

prepared a new English translation which was published that autumn as *The Cause of*

*World Unrest*, and included a preface by the editor, H A Gwynne. The way for their

acceptance had been paved by earlier publications suggesting that Jews were gaining

ascendancy in Europe as a result of the war. In 1918, before the Armistice, an

anonymous book entitled *England Under the Heel of the Jew* appeared, in which the

author stated that contrary to popular belief, Germany was under the control of the

Jews, as a result of its dependence upon international Jewish finance.[87] Similar views

appeared in the press and were given official 'confirmation' in a Foreign Office report

published in 1919, in which various individuals asserted that Jews were gaining

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[83] Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: the Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), p.273.
[84] Cohn (1967), p.152.
[85] *Times*, 8 May, 1920, p.15.
[86] *Spectator*, 15 May, 1920, p.640.
[87] Anon, *England Under the Heel of the Jew* (London: C F Roworth, 1918). This book was also published by the Britons' Society (London, 1921). Cited in Cohn (1967), p.149.

power through the political chaos in Russia.[88]

The appearance of the *Protocols* in 1920 supplied conspiracy theorists with a

suitably 'international' culprit for the threat represented by communism - with its

hostility to nationalism and religion - in the Jews of the diaspora, and replaced the

earlier view that the Russian revolution had been controlled by the Kaiser. Part of the

*Protocols'* impact was that, like the scriptural prophecies, they lent themselves readily

to broad interpretation with regard to recent world events, and some readers, such as

the members of the Britons' Society, founded in July 1919, regarded them as

prophetic. As Norman Cohn has pointed out, the *Protocols* represented prophecy and

apocalyptic updated and secularised, taking the irrational Christian fear of the Jew in a

new direction.[89] In them, the threat of destruction was more immediate than that

represented by Antichrist in the Revelation narrative. They appeared at a time when

the notion of 'Jewish domination' was already becoming established in Britain.

During the war, the allegation that Jews avoided enlistment while 'Englishmen'

fought and died, had produced the figure of the 'Jewish profiteer', imagined as having

exploited the situation to the extent that he now dominated the media, the

entertainment industry, and politics, as a result of his financial power.[90] This was the

'capitalist Jew', motivated by greed rather than political ideology. As Bryan Cheyette

has noted, however, 'the Jew' can be constructed to embody contradictory

opposites,[91] and in post-war Britain was made to represent the threat of both

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[88] For press examples, see the *Morning Post*, '"The Russian Soviet": A Predominance of Germans', 8 October 1917, p.6, and the series 'Russia To-day' in the *Times*, 20 September to 16 October 1917. The Foreign Office publication referred to is *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (London: HMSO, 1919).
[89] See Cohn (1957), pp.62-3, 310.
[90] See Jean-Louis Robert, 'The image of the profiteer', in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities At War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.104-132.
[91] See Bryan Cheyette (1993), p.9.

unrestrained capitalism and international communism. According to the *Protocols*, the ultimate aim of the Jews was world domination, using any means necessary, and both the capitalist and communist 'Jew' could be regarded in this light, the one gaining control through financial power, the other gaining political influence by fomenting revolution among the dissatisfied working classes, and both united in their shared hatred of Christianity.

The *Protocols* may well have informed an article by Winston Churchill, published in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* on 8 February 1920 under the title 'Zionism versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People'. As Secretary of State for War from 1919 to 1921, Churchill organised the supply of British aid to anti-Bolshevik 'White' Russians, who were responsible for pogroms against Jews during the civil war. In the context of British military intervention in Russia, his article, which drew on the theme of the 'world Jewish conspiracy' and applied it to Bolshevism, supported the idea that Bolshevism was a 'Jewish' politics. Churchill described the Jews as an exceptional people, who felt the 'conflict between good and evil' more intensely than gentiles, and in whom the 'dual nature of mankind' was 'nowhere more strongly or more terribly exemplified'. One must, therefore, distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' Jews: 'national' Jews were patriotic and contributed to the economic wealth of their adopted countries, while 'international' Jews were apostates who reacted to persecution by plotting revolution. Just as the Jews had provided Christianity with its foundations, so they had created its evil, irreligious counterpart, in Bolshevism, which was portrayed in apocalyptic terms:

> It would almost seem as if the gospel of Christ and the gospel of Antichrist were destined to originate among the same people; and that this mystic and

mysterious race had been chosen for the supreme manifestations, both of the divine and the diabolical.[92]

Churchill cited the antisemitic writer Nesta Webster's work on the role of the 'international Jew' in the French Revolution, and concluded his article by urging 'national' Jews to 'take a prominent part in every measure for combating the Bolshevik conspiracy', in order to 'vindicate the honour of the Jewish name'. Leopold Greenberg, editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, responded with a leading article in which he attacked the growing 'cult' of the 'Jew-obsession disease', and expressed anger and concern over the fact that 'a prominent British statesman had adopted the hoary tactics of hooligan anti-Semites'.[93] Churchill's suggestion that Jews were torn between Bolshevism and Zionism was false, Greenberg argued, and he cited the 'Letter of the Ten' as a reminder of the dangers of engaging in superficial debate over the nature of Jewish political identity. The 'Letter of the Ten' was a response to articles in the *Jewish Chronicle* in March and April 1919, which had explored possible links between Bolshevik idealism and the principles of Judaism.[94] Rather than reply to the *Chronicle*, ten prominent figures in Anglo-Jewry signed a letter to H A Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*, the aim of which was to demonstrate the patriotism of British Jews and disassociate them from revolutionary politics. The letter was published on 23 April 1919. It backfired on two counts, causing an internal conflict among Jewry by appearing to differentiate between 'British' and 'foreign' Jews, and being easily construed as a tacit admission of Jewish support for

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[92] Winston Churchill. 'Zionism versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People', *Illustrated Sunday Herald*. 8 February 1920, p.5.
[93] *Jewish Chronicle*. 13 February 1920. p.8.
[94] See 'Peace, War - and Bolshevism', *Jewish Chronicle*. 28 March and 4 April 1919.

Bolshevism.[95] Despite Churchill's rather simplistic assessment of the situation, then,

in the climate of mistrust and suspicion, exacerbated by the *Protocols*, it was difficult

for Jews to successfully refute the idea that they were pro-Bolshevik, since both

silence and condemnation on their part was liable to misinterpretation.

Eventually the *Protocols* were exposed as a fake in the *Times* in August 1921,

when Robert Graves identified their sources in Maurice Joly's play *Dialogue aux*

*Enfers* and Sergey Nilus' mystical writings, and press fascination with them subsided.

The Britons' Society continued to print and circulate copies, and one of its members,

Nesta Webster, produced two secular apocalyptic texts of her own, based on the

themes of Jewish conspiracy in the *Protocols*.[96] The first, entitled *World Revolution:*

*The Plot Against Civilization* (1921), claimed to bring 'scientific investigation' to

post-war political unrest, and argued that the origins of this could be traced back to

the emancipation of the Jews following the French revolution.[97] The most diabolical

and recent manifestation of the Jewish plan for world domination, however, was the

Bolshevik revolution. Webster argued that despite having gained control of Russia,

Bolshevik Jews had no specific political loyalty, but manipulated dissenters, mystics

and radicals in their drive for domination. They could even appropriate antisemitism

for their own ends, and Webster regarded German post-war antisemitism as simply a

cover for an alliance between German expansionism and Jewish internationalism.

Having seized Russia and taken financial control of Germany, the Jewish apostate

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[95] See Sharman Kadish (1992), pp.120-134 for a full discussion of the 'Letter of the Ten' and its interpretations.
[96] Nesta Webster, born Nesta Bevan, grew up in Hertfordshire and was the youngest of fourteen children. Her father was a director of Barclays Bank. She worked at supplies depots during the First World War, and afterwards wrote for the *Morning Post* and then as a member of the British Fascists, for the *Fascist Bulletin*.
[97] Nesta Webster, *World Revolution: The Plot Against Civilization* (London: Constable & Co., 1921), p.vii.

revolutionaries were now turning to England, and Webster called for an antisemitic

crusade, urging the British bourgeoisie to mobilise itself in a new war, this time

against the Jews. Like Bishop Winnington-Ingram, but with an overtly antisemitic

angle, she regarded England as Christianity's best hope against the forces of

'paganism':

> It is because England, with all her shortcomings, ... yet remains the stronghold
> of Christian civilization, that the conspiracy has made her the principal point
> of attack. If England goes the whole world goes with her.[98]

Webster wrote another book, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, published

in 1924, which expanded on the theme of the 'concerted attempt ... being made by

Jewry to achieve world-domination and to obliterate the Christian faith', and claimed

to chart this through nineteen centuries.[99] After discussing the 'immense megalomania

of the Jewish race',[100] and the extent, in her view, of Jewish domination in Europe,

Webster returned to apocalyptic themes to end her book on a dramatic note. The

'Jewish conspiracy', she argued, was simply the latest manifestation of the powers of

darkness:

> For behind the concrete forces of revolution - whether Pan-German, Judaic, or
> Illuminist - ... is there not yet another force, still more potent, that must be
> taken into account? In looking back over the centuries at the dark episodes that
> have marked the history of the human race from its earliest origins - strange
> and horrible cults, waves of witchcraft, blasphemies, and desecrations - how is
> it possible to ignore the existence of an Occult Power at work in the world?
> Individuals, sects, or races fired with the desire of world-domination, have
> provided the fighting forces of destruction, but behind them are the veritable
> powers of darkness in eternal conflict with the powers of light.[101]

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[98] Webster (1921). p.326.
[99] Nesta Webster, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* (London: Boswell Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd., 1924), pp.369, 402.
[100] Webster (1924), p.374.
[101] Webster (1924). pp.404-405.

In conclusion, it can be seen that secular use of apocalyptic imagery continued after the war, specifically in relation to the threat represented by Bolshevism, and was found in both marginal and, briefly, in mainstream discourse. Like Churchill who quoted her, Webster applied the rhetoric of 'apocalypse' and 'antichrist' to post-war political events, and specifically to Jews, as the alleged followers of an anti-Christian ideology. Such thinking was supported by the combination of political and apocalyptic themes in the *Protocols*, which seemed to 'confirm' the idea that Jews were a threat to the Christian nation. Mainstream interest in the *Protocols* decreased after their exposure as a forgery in 1921, but the idea of revolution as an attack on Christianity (which after all, had some basis in fact) continued into the post-war period.

## 3. 'Millennium'

After the war, religious apocalyptic thinking returned once more to the margins, and was confined to millennialists. Christabel Pankhurst thought that the second advent was very near, and paradoxically cited the decline of faith as a 'sign' of this, stating that current world events represented 'fingerposts to Armageddon'.[102] Others felt that 'Armageddon' was past, and focused on dealing with its aftermath. The war had left many of the participating countries in a state of disarray, facing economic problems and unemployment. The sacrifices made by all class groups in Britain during the war merited, many felt, the construction of a fairer society to reflect those sacrifices. But

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[102] Christabel Pankhurst. *'The Lord Cometh'. The World Crisis Explained* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1923), pp.100-101.

falling export demands, foreign competition, and the devalued pound (as a result of a return to the gold standard) meant that the British economy suffered, and recovery was slow. Unemployment grew, reaching over 16 per cent of the population in 1921, and dissatisfaction was widespread.[103]

The expectations of the working classes, in particular, had changed as a result of the war. The process of mass democratisation was accelerating, as men over 21 and women over 30 gained the vote in 1918.[104] Women had entered the workforce, and union membership had increased dramatically, reaching over eight million in 1920.[105] Wages had risen during the war, and many of the strikes in the immediate post-war period were a response to attempts by employers to bring wages back down to earlier levels. There were numerous cases of industrial action among miners, dockers, and railwaymen, and even the London police went on strike in 1918. The Liberal government struggled to control the situation, and in December 1918 entered into a coalition with the Conservatives. This government introduced further anti-alien legislation in 1919, which facilitated the deportation of non-naturalised Jews and their British-born children. The Jewish community fought back through the Board of Deputies, but the legislation was implemented under the Conservative government formed in 1922, and particularly by Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Home Secretary in Stanley Baldwin's cabinet in 1924.[106] Parliament was dissolved that December over Baldwin's attempt to introduce anti-unemployment tariffs, and although the Tories were re-elected, support for Labour was growing, and eventually Ramsay Macdonald

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[103] R A C Parker, *Europe 1919-45* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p.116.
[104] Women over 21 gained the vote in 1928.
[105] Parker (1967), p.123.
[106] For a full discussion of Joynson-Hicks' antisemitism, see David Cesarani, 'Joynson-Hicks and the radical right in England after the First World War', in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn, eds, *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical perspectives on fascism and race discourse in Britain* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp.118-139.

formed the first Labour cabinet in 1924. In addition to these rapid changes of

government, two new parties were formed; the Communist Party of Great Britain in

1920, and the British Fascisti in 1923. As Samuel Hynes puts it, 'The British political

spectrum had been stretched, leaving the centre less stable, and less certain.'[107]

Some working-class Jews, feeling unsupported by the Board of Deputies

against anti-alienism and fascism and attracted by the ideals of the far left, joined the

Communist Party, and the Jewish trades unions were also active against fascism.[108]

Membership figures for the British Fascisti are unreliable, but Home Office sources

indicate that in the late 1920s and early 1930s, members numbered between three to

four hundred.[109] Support for the British Fascisti came from across the class spectrum,

and included aristocrats, members of the middle and working classes, and ex-

servicemen.[110] Lord Garvagh was the group's first President, and other aristocratic

members included the Earl of Glasgow, Lord Ernest Hamilton, Earl Temple. Lord de

Clifford and Baroness Zouche.[111] The middle classes, too, were threatened by the rise

of the labour movement, and middle-class admiration for Mussolini's dictatorship was

satirised in *Punch* in 1922 (See Figure 12). This cartoon shows a member of the

'Middle-class Union' shopping for suitable attire for a 'bloodless revolution' in which

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[107] Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), p.356.
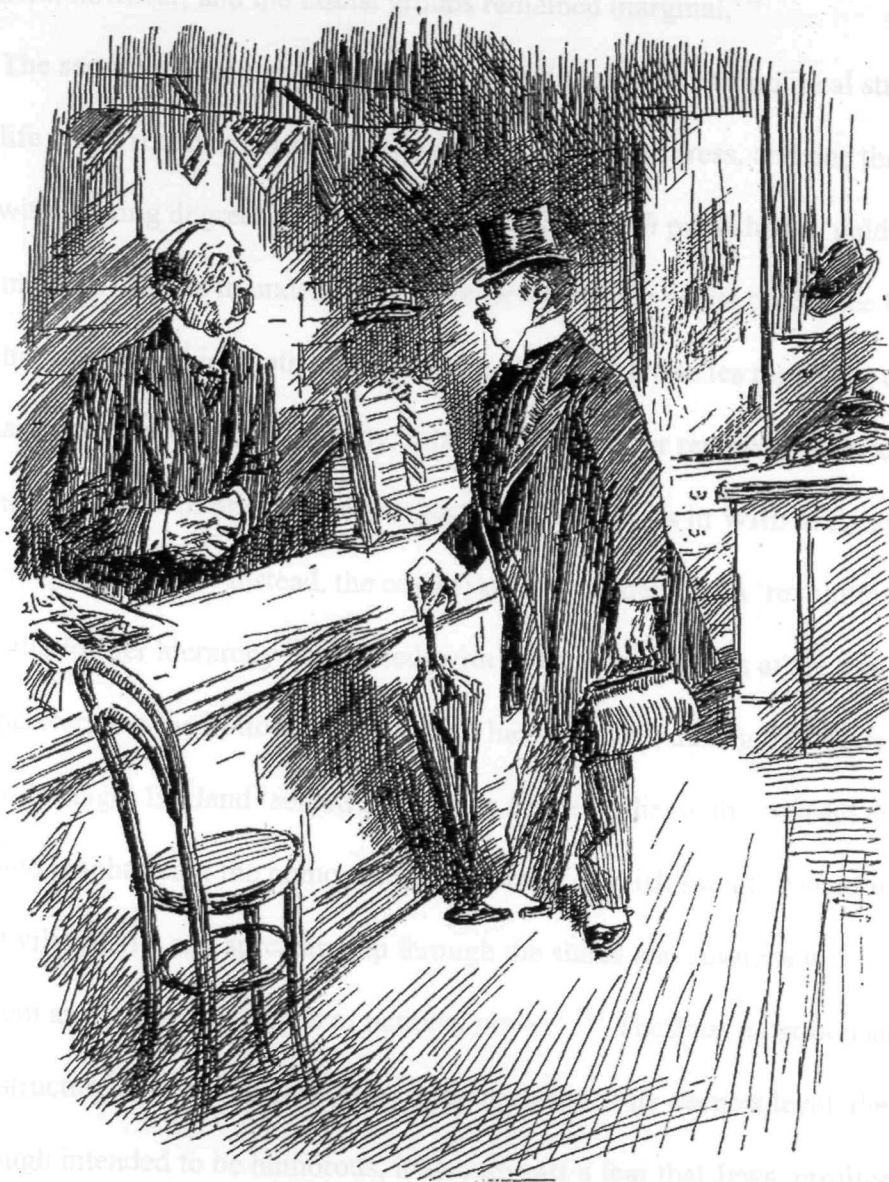
[108] See Elaine R Smith, 'Jewish responses to political antisemitism and fascism in the East End of London, 1920-1939', in Kushner and Lunn, eds, (1989), pp.53-71.

[109] See Kenneth Lunn, 'The ideology and impact of the British Fascists in the 1920s'. in Kushner and Lunn, eds, (1989), pp.140-154. British Fascisti membership figures are taken from Home Office memorandum HO144/19069/211-2, cited in Lunn's article, p.145.

[110] Kenneth Lunn, 'The ideology and impact of the British Fascists in the 1920s'. in Kushner and Lunn, eds, (1989), pp.146-147.

[111] See David Carradine. *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Picador, 1990), p.546.

## THE FASCISTI SPIRIT.

Member of Middle-Class Union (*fired by the example of Signor Mussolini*). "I WANT A BLACK SHIRT, PLEASE, SUITABLE FOR A BLOODLESS REVOLUTION."

Figure 12

'The Fascisti Spirit', cartoon appearing in *Punch*,
8 November 1922, p.435.

he will defend the interests of his own threatened class. Support for fascism in Britain was limited. however, and the fascist groups remained marginal.[112]

The sense that the war had radically altered the social and political structure of British life was a recurrent theme in popular fiction and the press, and one that was treated with varying degrees of seriousness. In 1920 *Punch* published a 'guide' to assist American tourists in understanding the new post-war social order (see Figure 13). In this cartoon, which both satirises and perpetuates anxieties regarding changes to the class structure of British society, rural areas no longer represent a place in which the 'old order' of aristocratic privilege is preserved, as in Wilfred Ewart's novel *Way of Revelation*. Instead, the countryside has undergone a 'revolution' whereby the former hierarchy has shifted, with Jews and profiteers at the top, and the gentry and clergy at the bottom. As Paul Rich has observed, during the 1920s the fantasy of 'village' England 'served as a means for neutralising the concept of class warfare and emphasising the homogeneous nature of English society rooted in small town and village life, and spreading up through the shires and counties to ... central government and the organisations of national power'.[113] The *Punch* cartoon suggests that this structure has been infiltrated by class mobility at its deepest level, the village, and although intended to be humorous, it also reveals a fear that Jews, profiteers and the working classes were becoming dominant in British society, to the detriment of

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[112] Gerry C Webber, for example. argues that the 'radical right' tried and failed to exploit nationalism and anti-alienism, but the economic and political security of the middle classes in particular was not sufficiently threatened to engender their mass support. Tory policies and rhetoric, he suggests, provided sufficient focus and outlet for anti-socialist and antisemitic feeling and the far right groups therefore remained marginal. See G C Webber, 'Intolerance and discretion: Conservatives and British fascism, 1918-1926'. in Kushner and Lunn, eds. (1989). pp.155-172.
[113] Paul Rich, 'Imperial decline and the resurgence of English national identity 1918-1979', in Kushner and Lunn. eds. (1989). pp.33-52. p.37.

**Figure 13**

Cartoon on the subject of 'countryside types',
in *Punch*, 9 June 1920, p.457.

the aristocracy and the clergy in particular, and that something of British 'identity' was being lost in the process.

Among the Anglican clergy there was general support for workers' rights, and a widespread view that in failing to address inequality the Church had assisted the rise of socialism, and that in order to create a more just society the principles of Christianity should be applied to social and political life. This Christian idealism was found at the highest level of the Anglican Church, and also, to a lesser extent, among Nonconformists.[114] Aware that the war had revealed the shortcomings of the Church, the clergy sought to investigate the reasons why the anticipated religious revival had not occurred, and why Christianity failed to attract the working classes. In 1918 a series of reports was commissioned to investigate perceptions of the Church, which resulted in calls for moderate social and ecclesiastical reform.[115] The fifth report in this series, entitled *Christianity and Industrial Problems* argued for wage increases, a revision of the taxation system and the restriction of profits.[116] At a conference at Lambeth in 1920 Church leaders called for greater co-operation between labour and capital, and in the same year a Christian Social Crusade was initiated, led by Bishop Gore.[117] In 1923 the Standing Committee on Social and Industrial Questions was formed with the aim of promoting the Church's principle of 'co-operation', and was chaired by Bishop Winnington-Ingram.[118] But although there was general support for the idea of a more egalitarian society, like any other group, the clergy were politically divided. Sympathies ranged from the avowedly socialist members of the Christian

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[114] Norman (1976), pp.228-229).
[115] Norman (1976), pp.221. 235.
[116] Norman (1976). p.241.
[117] Charles Gore (1853-1932) was Bishop of Oxford from 1911 to 1919. and President of the Christian Social Union from 1902-1911.
[118] Norman (1976), pp.245-246.

Socialist Union, to the hostility to labour shown by Bishop Moule,[119] who in 1919

criticised striking Yorkshire miners, and Bishop Henson,[120] who blamed the dispute

on Bolshevism.[121] The more moderate Archbishop Davidson attempted to mediate in

the 1919 railway strike, and in the coal strike in 1921, but his efforts aroused hostility

among more conservative clergymen and also within the government.[122]

The government did not want or need ecclesiastical intervention in politics,

having made provision for the threat of mass unrest in the Emergency Powers Act of

1920, which allowed for a military-backed dictatorship to rule in the event of a

general strike. High unemployment and industrial disputes continued to fuel fears of

class revolution throughout the 1920s and in 1925 it looked as though the Emergency

Powers Act would need to be implemented. In that year the coal owners demanded

wage reductions and longer hours for miners. When these demands were rejected, a

committee led by Sir John Anderson of the Home Office began to organise in

anticipation of a general strike. Food and coal were stockpiled, and the country was

divided into districts to be ruled by civil commissioners with sweeping legal powers.

The miners struck on 4 May 1926 and were joined by workers in the transport,

building, steel, iron, and printing industries. The General Strike ended on 12 May, but

the miners stayed out for another eight months.[123]

Two novels, both published in 1926, take up the themes of rapid social and

political change, and engage with the threat of revolution. Gilbert Frankau's

*Masterson* addresses the issues of class privilege and political reform, and introduces

[119] Handley Carr Glyn Moule (1841-1920) was Professor of Divinity at Cambridge from 1899 to 1901 and Bishop of Durham from 1901 to 1920.
[120] Herbert Hensley Henson (1863-1947) was Dean of Durham from 1912 to 1918 and became Bishop of Durham in 1920, retaining this post until 1939.
[121] Norman (1976), p.258.
[122] See Wilkinson (1976), p.286.
[123] Parker (1967), pp.124-126.

the author's response to the international 'Bolshevik Jew', in the figure of Major

Adrian Rose DSO, a right-wing Anglo-Jewish politician and playwright.[124] Through

its two central characters, Adrian Rose and John Masterson, the narrative presents an

argument for co-operation between the English and the Jews in the defeat of socialism

and the reconstruction of post-war Britain. Like Rose, Masterson served in the First

World War, but then went into voluntary exile in Abyssinia (Ethiopia). His father is a

self-made man, a 'plutocrat' given to vulgar displays of wealth, and on his death,

Masterson returns to Britain to take up his inheritance. On arrival he encounters rapid

modernisation and industrial unrest, and decides to settle the estate and leave, but his

plans are thwarted by a combination of politics and romance. Mary Millward, once

his sweetheart, is working near the estate, carrying on the family building business

after the death of her father in the war, but is hampered in this by unionisation, which

is depicted as causing a breakdown in employment relations even in rural areas. As an

alternative to unionisation, the novel argues for a quasi-feudal paternalism, a system

in which landlords and landowners take responsibility for their tenants' welfare, who,

in return for this, are content to be ruled by them. This idea comes to Masterson whilst

surveying his estate, in a flash of inspiration in which he realises the significance of

his name:

> there came on John Masterson a fantasy, and by the light of that fantasy he
> seemed to see the meaning of his own name: Masterson – the son of the
> master – the one man bound, by very reason of his dead father's mastery over
> these men, to serve them until he died. (p.214)

He begins by renovating one of his father's slum tenements, cancelling the tenants'

rent arrears and redesigning the building to create habitable accommodation. He also

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[124] Gilbert Frankau, *Masterson. A Story of an English Gentleman*, fourth edition (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1925). All further page references will be included in the text.

acts as a force of moral authority among his tenants, and warns a man found beating a child that he will be evicted if it happens again (p.287). A reunion with Adrian Rose, however (the two were at Eton), persuades him that this is not enough, and that change is needed at the national level.

Rose is now a successful playwright with political ambitions, although these are thwarted by his impending divorce and cohabitation. 'Jewishness', as in Charles Sorley's view of Revelation and Israel Zangwill's writing, with which this chapter opened, is signalled in Frankau's *Masterson* by emotional and physical 'excess'. An intense and volatile character, Rose is described as

> a forceful rock of a man, just over-long in the arm, and just over-broad in the shoulder, who looked, despite the jet-black moustache clipped to a tight line between the big, only slightly Hebraic nostrils and the big, though even less Hebraic, mouth, far more like an old-time prize-fighter than a modern playwright. (p.85)

The mark of the 'Englishman', by contrast, is moderation, and Masterson is

> Not over-quick to perceive, yet never quite lacking in perception. Not over-imaginative, yet not wholly devoid of imagination. A man of quiet compromise rather than of flashing talent, of plodding purpose rather than of sudden intuition. (p.9)

But Rose's 'Hebraic excess', his passionate patriotism, is what Britain needs at this point of crisis. Frankau uses Rose and Masterson to portray the Englishman and the Jew as complementary opposites, each providing what the other lacks. Rose is politically astute and capable of providing inspired if eccentric leadership, but his credibility is weakened by the consequences of his sexual appetite, whilst Masterson attracts no scandal but lacks the firmness necessary to resolve his country's problems. Learning of Rose's sexual past, which includes several mistresses and two illegitimate children, Masterson, a celibate, views him as 'an animal – just a lustful animal' (p.100). Like the 'Bolshevik Jew' who insists on the 'nationalisation of women', the

sexual appetite of the right-wing Jew becomes a marker of his difference. Yet

although flawed, Rose possesses qualities portrayed as vital to Britain's success, and

in this virulently anti-socialist Jewish character, Frankau seems to be attempting to

counter the stereotype of the 'Bolshevik Jew'. This becomes clear when Rose warns

Masterson of the threat that Bolshevism represents to Christianity:

> you can take it from me, as a Jew, that these Bolshevik Jews are the dregs of
> my race. And that the dregs of my race are just as much anti-Gentile as the
> dregs of yours are anti-Semite. That's the whole truth of Bolshevism; and the
> sooner the Christian countries wake up to it, the better. (p.202)

Jews, the novel suggests, possess a political acumen that the English lack, in the gift

of 'imaginative foresight' (p.318), which allows them to predict the outcome of a

situation. Rose can see the way parliamentary democracy is leading Britain, and in his

view, Britain is faced with a choice between class revolution under Labour and an

incompetent and ineffectual Tory Party. Frustrated by his inability to enter Parliament

owing to his marital situation, Rose has instigated the Fellowship of Loyal Citizens, a

nationalist group that includes members of the British Fascists. Eventually, Rose's

divorce becomes absolute and he is free to remarry and seek election. He wins the

Thameside South seat, previously a Labour stronghold, for the Tories with a majority

of five hundred, and takes his anti-socialist campaign to Parliament.

There is no such optimism in Ursula Bloom's *The Judge of Jerusalem*, also

published in 1926.[125] This novel 'predicts' revolution in Britain, and is set in a 1930s

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[125] Ursula Bloom was a parson's daughter, who grew up in Whitchurch, near Stratford-on-Avon. The family was friendly with the writer Richard Aldington (1892-1962), who married the Imagist writer H.D. (1886-1961) in 1913. The Catholic writer Marie Corelli lived nearby and was Ursula's friend until the latter asked her about rumours that she was divorced. She also met Guy Thorne, author of the best-selling novel *When It Was Dark* (1903). Thorne's novel features a Jewish millionaire who devises a plot to bring about the collapse of Christianity, and forces the British Museum into faking archaeological evidence to demonstrate that the resurrection of Christ did not occur. Bloom wrote a problem page and film criticism for the *Daily Mail*, and religious articles for the *Sunday Express*. Her first novel, *The Great Beginning*, was published in 1924. See Ursula Bloom's autobiography, *Mistress of None* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1933), pp.26, 30, 139.

communist dystopia, in which the north of the country is run by revolutionary tribunals. The 1930s had been imagined as a period of working-class ascendancy even before the Bolshevik revolution, in *Punch* back in 1913 (See Figure 14), and Bloom's novel continues this theme.[126] Like Frankau's *Masterson*, *The Judge of Jerusalem* posits an idealised quasi-feudal society as an alternative to the growing Labour movement. In this type of post-war utopian fantasy, the landowner is responsible for the welfare of his tenants, and the social group operates according to a distinct hierarchy, which is often portrayed as 'in harmony with nature', whereas socialism is represented as counter to this. Bloom's novel adds an extra dimension, however, by framing class revolution in terms of the crucifixion narrative; its two main characters, Andrew Stevens and Sir John Booth representing reincarnations of Pontius Pilate and Christ respectively. Stevens is of lower middle-class origins, a grocer's son from the Midlands, and Booth a local landowner. Their paths cross when the balance of power is inverted through revolution.

From childhood Andrew Stevens had wanted to be a judge, but his father expects him to enter the family business. Andrew capitulates, but continues to study law in his spare time. By 1911 he is an adolescent with an interest in socialism, which the narrative implies stems from a lack of religious faith. When war breaks out Andrew volunteers, but is rejected because he is lame. He lays in stores, anticipating food shortages, and later becomes the local Food Controller, effectively a 'profiteer'.

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[126] Ursula Bloom, *The Judge of Jerusalem* (London: George G Harrap & Co., 1926). All further page references will be given in the text.

**Figure 14**

**'In 1930', cartoon appearing in *Punch*, 3 September 1913, p.199.**

After the war, the class war begins, and Andrew anticipates revolution and his own ascendancy. It is at this point that the novel's language becomes apocalyptic:

> These great tidal waves that flooded England – they were the aftermath of the War. He considered them critically. Waves of crime, waves of resentment, and the seventh wave - the greatest - would be the wave of revolution. When that burst the country would be swept off its feet by the tumultuous flood. When it burst power would come to him; then was the time to strike. (p.111)

The revolution begins with strikes by railway and transport workers, followed by the engineers and shipbuilders. The unrest spreads to Liverpool, where the army and navy join the revolt. The revolutionaries are, however, unable to cope with power, and a reign of violence and terror begins. Andrew climbs a hill outside the town and looks towards the cathedral, which becomes a symbol for the impending martyrdom of the ruling classes, who become synonymous with Christ:

> Everywhere the shadows seemed to be engulfing, everywhere save the cathedral, and that seemed to be dripping with blood. ... It reared its battlements to the sky, its great tower defined against the night. Century after century so it had stood, red with the blood of martyrs, grey with the dust of saints; it stood for something that no man could touch, no war could sully; it stood for the hidden, intangible element in life that had never been understood. It was not red with the blood of nations alone - it was empurpled with the blood of Christ.
> The first knell of revolution had struck. (pp.135-136)

In this explicit parallel between revolution and the crucifixion, Bloom is suggesting that revolution is a catastrophe akin to a repetition of the death of Christ. The modern 'Christ' is Sir John Booth, a local land and property owner, who is charged falsely with 'treason', and the revolutionaries become the Jews who in the New Testament story betray Jesus to the authorities and insist upon his death. Unlike popular portrayals of the Russian revolutionary, Bloom's revolutionaries are not portrayed as Jewish; there is no need, because the analogy between the 'crucifixion' of the landowner and class revolution already provides that association. Sid Field, 'a foe disguised with a Judas-like friendship' (p.220), sets a trap for Booth, but Andrew, by

now a judge, discovers the plan and writes to warn him. Sid finds the letter and

blackmails Andrew with it, insisting that he find Booth guilty at his trial, to which he

agrees. The next day Andrew hears the evidence against Booth in the Hall of

Judgement, and defers sentence. At the end of the day he has a vision, in which he

seems to travel back in time, to the events preceding the crucifixion. He is Pontius

Pilate, threatened with the loss of his procuratorship if there are any more rebellions

amongst the Jews. He watches as Jesus is led into the Hall of Judgement:

> In front came Caiaphus and the elders, and behind them the prisoner, led by
> chains in the hands of angry-looking Jews. It seemed to Pilate that it was an
> age-old picture - the hostile crowd with their bestial faces and their raucous
> upraised voices, and their prisoner. (p.258)

Looking at the prisoner, the judge is shocked:

> It was his eyes. ... They were not the eyes of a felon, they were not the eyes of
> a rabbi or a Nazarene. ... They were the impenetrable eyes of a god. (p.259)

Andrew awakes in the grocer's shop, and recognises this as his chance to fulfil the

Christian dictum of self-sacrifice, by way of atonement. The next day, he enters the

Hall of Judgement for the trial, and sees from papers on his desk that the revolution is

failing. He acquits Booth, and leaves the chamber, climbing the hill outside the town

(an image of Calvary), where he sees the cathedral lit up by sunshine, representing the

restoration of his faith. Having atoned for his part in the crucifixion by declaring

Booth/ 'Christ' innocent, Andrew dies a peaceful death on top of the hill, just as the

revolutionaries come to arrest him.

In the absence of a stable post-war government and with high levels of

unemployment and unrest, Ursula Bloom and Gilbert Frankau engaged with the threat

of political catastrophe and the possibility of redemption through fiction that was

highly topical and proposed solutions. Although Bloom's novel draws on the

crucifixion narrative, its emphasis is on the choice faced by the judge over whether to

condemn a man he knows to be innocent. The destruction of the class foundations of British society is portrayed as an injustice and catastrophe comparable with the crucifixion of Christ, in which the revolutionaries, by implication, would become 'deicides', although the aristocratic landowner Booth is a very different figure from the itinerant preacher that was Jesus. Through the crucifixion/ revolution analogy, the narrative implies that the ruling classes are a benign and blameless group, facing martyrdom for the sake of a political ideology. Bloom portrays socialism as an attack on Christianity, and in the conversion of the revolutionary judge, suggests that it is not politics but faith that will counter this threat.

Frankau, on the other hand, appeals to patriotism rather than religious faith, and explores political solutions to post-war problems. He assigns the right-wing Jew a specific role in the reconstruction of national life, as a means of strengthening and providing leadership for the Tories in the fight against socialism. In this, he is responding to the caricature of the 'Bolshevik Jew' with the 'good' political Jew - a right-wing ultra-nationalist and the intensely patriotic counterpart of the socialist 'international Jew'.

## Conclusions

As metaphors for military conflict, 'Armageddon' and 'Antichrist', if they are to be effective, rely upon the identification or construction of an enemy that is 'demonic'. Initially, this was 'Prussianism', with the Kaiser as its figurehead, but after the Bolshevik Revolution, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the murder of the Romanovs, much of the hatred previously directed towards the Germans became focused on Russian Jews, who were widely blamed for the political 'heresy' of Bolshevism. This, after 1917, seemed to constitute a greater threat than Prussian imperialism. Germany was, after all, a Christian nation that had temporarily strayed from the path, whereas the Bolsheviks had attacked the Russian Orthodox Church and killed the Tsar. Reports from Britons inside Russia asserted that Jews were at the forefront of the revolution, and the figure of the international revolutionary Jew, the enemy of the Christian nations, began to emerge, building upon the pre-war association between Eastern European Jews and anarchism, and the sexual anxiety aroused by the pre-war 'white slave traffic'.

Once the Jews had been identified as the 'real' threat, a process that was assisted by the appearance of the *Protocols* in 1920, the rhetoric of apocalypse was transferred onto Bolshevism. In this context, the 'Antichrist' analogy became more coherent than when applied to the Kaiser and Germany, because according to Christian apocalyptic, the followers of Antichrist would come from among the Jews, who would recognise in him their Messiah. For some, Bolshevism became the anti-Christian doctrine that threatened the 'millennium' of a regenerated post-war Britain, and 'Bolshevik Jews' the obstacle to Britain's recovery. Winston Churchill made explicit reference to Bolshevism as 'the doctrine of Antichrist', which held a

particular appeal for Jews, in his article published in 1920, and urged 'national' Jews

to enlist in the fight to defeat it. Nesta Webster, on the other hand, made no distinction

between 'national' and 'international' Jews, but regarded all Jews as conspiring

against the Christian nations and manipulating events for their own purposes.

Symptomatic of the increase in antisemitism during the immediate post-war

years, a number of ultra-nationalist and fascist groups emerged, of which the Britons'

Society and the British Fascists are examples. These groups attracted some cross-class

support, but ultimately remained marginal because, as Gerry Webber has argued, the

revolutionary movement was never large enough to represent a real threat to the

parliamentary system or the economic security of the middle classes (membership of

the Communist Party in Britain was no higher than 10,000 during the 1920s).[127] There

were not, he suggests, enough aliens in Britain for anti-alienism to be exploited, and

most antisemites remained in the Conservative Party, which met the needs of the

'radical right' sufficiently to inhibit the success of any far-right political movement in

Britain before the 1930s.[128]

The antisemitism that fascist groups tried to mobilise was never far from the

surface of British politics, however, and as Foreign Secretary in Bonar Law's

Conservative government, William Joynson-Hicks enthusiastically implemented post-

war anti-alien legislation. After successive governments, disillusionment with

democracy and admiration for Italian fascism led to calls for strong, autocratic

leadership to take Britain out of the war years. But political messianism was not

confined to the far right. At his Romanes lecture in Oxford in 1930, Churchill

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[127] Gerry C Webber, 'Intolerance and discretion: Conservatives and British fascism, 1918-1926', in Kushner and Lunn, eds. (1989), p.167.
[128] Webber, in Kushner and Lunn, eds. (1989), pp.161-162.

discussed the 'failure' of democracy, and declared the need for alternative methods of government. Following this, a number of minor aristocrats, facing the loss of their estates through land taxes, called for the temporary disbanding of Parliament in favour of a more authoritarian rule, and proposed Churchill as leader.[129] It was Oswald Mosley, however, that emerged as Britain's 'political messiah', forming the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in 1932 after a trip to Mussolini's Italy. Aspects of the kind of quasi-feudal society being portrayed in post-war popular fiction were incorporated into BUF ideology through the notion of 'Merrie England', a pre-capitalist era loosely imagined as the Elizabethan period, and frequently invoked by BUF writers and speakers as a lost 'golden age'.

Although the BUF never became a mass movement, the conditions for its emergence can be traced to the secular apocalyptic of the immediate post-war period, in which Bolshevism was identified as a potential cataclysm, orchestrated by Jews. This was not initially a marginal discourse, but it became marginalised when the antisemitism upon which it was founded was made overt, after which it became the territory of extremist groups such as the Britons' Society. It is ambivalence that has characterised majority attitudes towards Jews in Britain, as exemplified in Charles Sorley's comment ('I love Jews – of a type'), with which this chapter opened, and in similar distinctions made between 'good' and 'bad' Jews. The antisemitism of the far right did not make such distinctions, but regarded all Jews with suspicion. Mainstream ambivalence was grounded in the perception of the dual nature of 'the Jew', in which the occasional 'outburst of revolting sensuousness' could be overlooked.

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[129] In *The Decline of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1990), pp.546-47, David Cannadine cites 'declining and embittered landowners', including Sir Henry Fairfax-Lucy, Lord Knebworth, Viscount Lymington and the Duke of Manchester as examples.

# CONCLUSION

One of the effects of the First World War was to reveal the instability of the idea of the nation, as demarcations of class, gender and politics that had previously been taken for granted began to shift. Attempts were made to consolidate national identity through the rhetoric of Britain as a Christian nation engaged in a battle against the non-Christian forces of 'evil'. But the idea of a Christian Britain was old-fashioned and inaccurate, a nineteenth-century view that, like the concept of chivalry, was revived during the war. Yet the rhetoric of Christian nationhood was effective, and was widely taken up, as the range of texts discussed above indicates. Whilst the concept of a Christian nation united against non-Christian forces may have provided a sense of cohesion amongst even non-observant Christians, it excluded Jews, both British-born and recent immigrants. Furthermore, as I have argued above, the Christian nationalist rhetoric that circulated at this time could not be used selectively, and the rhetoric of 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse' in particular found an outlet in existing fears associated with Jews, as it had during the medieval crusades.

The war did not generate violence towards Jews on the scale witnessed during the crusades, but there was at least one incident of 'racial' murder, and the case illustrates how popular prejudices could override legal justice. In early September 1917, Lieutenant Douglas Malcolm was charged with the murder of Anton Baumberg, or Count de Borch as he was also known. The incident took place on 14 August, when Malcolm shot Baumberg three times at close range. In his defence, Malcolm argued that Baumberg was 'a White Slave trafficker and a spy', who was luring his wife into dishonour, and claimed to have offered Baumberg money to keep away from her.[1]

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[1] See the *Times*, 12 September 1917, pp.4-5.

The defence exploited the fact that Malcolm was enlisted and Baumberg was not, and the latter was described as a 'Russian', with a false name and a bogus title, who cast 'a black, evil, ugly shadow' over the marital home in Cadogan Square. In summing up, the judge reminded the jury that British justice should be available to all, whether foreign or British-born, and that if a 'guilty' verdict was reached the Crown had the power to show mercy in Malcolm's case. Nevertheless, the jury treated what appears to have been a 'racial' murder as a 'crime of passion', and took twenty minutes to find the defendant not guilty.

The images of the 'white slave trafficker' and the spy were associated with Jewish immigrants in particular during the early years of the war. Later, these gave way to representations of the 'Jewish' threat that combined religious and political anxieties, in a perceived double attack, on Christianity and the liberal partial democracy that existed in Britain at the time. This is clearly seen in the emergence of the figure of the 'Bolshevik Jew', depicted in the press and in popular fiction after the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. Following the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the death of Tsar Nicholas II in 1918, an image that I have termed the 'Bolshevik Judas' took shape, based on the idea of betrayal that was associated with Russia's separate peace with Germany, and on comparisons between the Tsar and Christ, as sacrificial figures. Robert Wilton's book *The Last Days of the Romanovs* (1920), which explicitly compares the Tsar to Christ, and claims that Bolsheviks erected a statue to Judas Iscariot in Moscow, is the clearest example of this.

It was in relation to Bolshevism, and the fear that it would spread through the labour movement in Britain, that the imagery of 'apocalypse' became linked to popular antisemitism. The Book of Revelation provided metaphors with which to describe the scale of the war, and a narrative of redemption that promised deliverance.

But Revelation also casts 'unbelievers' as the followers of Antichrist, and in the context described above this threat became identified particularly with Jews and the political left. The concept of 'Antichrist', integral to the Revelation narrative, was identified in various ways during and after the war. Initially it was 'Prussianism' that was most commonly regarded as the force of diabolical 'evil' in the world, but after October 1917 this was replaced by Bolshevism, and the modern secular rhetoric of 'Antichrist' took on a 'Jewish' aspect, through the popular association between Russian Jews and revolutionary politics. This thinking drew on pre-war associations between Jewish immigrants and anarchism, but was also part of right-wing attempts to discredit the left and the labour movement. Thus antisemitism was used to fuel the fears that were linked to the rapid political changes that occurred in the post-war period.

Another important component of the Revelation story is the concept of 'millennium', and this became linked to both hopes and fears of what post-war reconstruction would bring. There seems to have been a fear - expressed in reactions to 'Jewish' Bolshevism and shifting class demarcations, and in the imagery of the 'Jewish' profiteer and class usurper - that the post-war ('post-apocalyptic') landscape would be dominated by the 'enemies' of Christianity. Again, this anxiety found an outlet in popular fiction as well as in the press and political statements. An example of this is found in a collection of stories written by the journalist Sir Philip Gibbs, based on his experiences as a war correspondent and his visits to post-war Europe. In the preface to this collection, entitled *Little Novels of Nowadays* (1930), Gibbs argued that the journalist was best equipped to write fiction, having travelled widely and

witnessed all aspects of human life.[2] Yet Gibbs' stories simply peddled antisemitic

rumours from Germany and Russia, and disinformation about Jews that pandered to

popular prejudices. One story, 'The Stranger in the Village', tells of the 'resurrection'

of the dead Tsar Nicholas II, and his sighting in the village of Lubimovka, in the

Volga region, in 1920, during the famine. Gibbs claims to have heard the story from

Sacha, a poet from Lubimovka, who saw the stranger. The association that Robert

Wilton had created between the Tsar and Christ is continued in this story, as the

peasant who finds the collapsed monarch in the snow thinks to himself 'He is like a

saint ... He is even a little like the good Christ' (p.15). When the man awakes he

identifies himself as 'Nicholas Alexandrovitch, a wandering beggar' (p.18), and his

appearance becomes linked to expectations that Christ would return to save the village

from famine. The discovery is heralded as a miracle by all in the village except

'Braunberg the Jew', secretary of the Bolshevik village council (p.19). After an

encounter with Braunberg and another Bolshevik official, the stranger moves on,

leaving only a jewelled cross as evidence of his visit.

Another story, 'The Beggar of Berlin', tells of Gibbs' encounter in the German

capital with an ascetic young man who resembled 'John the Baptist in a picture by

Titian' (p.59). After their brief meeting, Gibbs returned to his hotel. He described his

fellow-guests as 'the international vultures who gather in the capitals of Europe in

which there is financial decay and corruption upon which they thrive' (p.61). The

diners are *déclassé*, overweight figures who speak German with foreign accents, wear

a great deal of jewellery and drink liqueurs between courses. They are 'curiously

stunted, coarsely-made', and although not specifically identified as 'Jewish', their

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[2] Philip Gibbs, *Little Novels of Nowadays* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1930). All subsequent
references will be incorporated into the text.

description is consistent with images of 'the Jew' as a vulgar and greedy figure (p.62).

Seeing his interest in the group of 'vultures', the waiter approaches Gibbs, and

confides his view that 'Most of this crowd ... ought to be put in a death chamber with

poison gas' (p.62). Three years after this story was published, Hitler became

Chancellor of Germany.

Two other examples of popular fiction of the inter-war period shed an

interesting light on the relationship between Jesus and Judas in the Christian

imagination. John Oxenham's novel *The Hidden Years* (1927) gives an account of the

life of Jesus, in which Judas is conspicuously absent, as is Mary Magdalene.[3] The

narrative uses the device of several 'eye-witnesses' and members of Jesus' extended

family to tell the story, but leaves out Judas altogether, possibly in an attempt to

appear 'neutral' on this matter. The Romans are portrayed as impartial and even

sympathetic, through the character of Longinus, a centurion, who provides details of

Jesus' audience with Pilate. The scene of the procession to Calvary, however, draws

on stock images of the vengeful Jew, and exonerates the Romans:

> Jesus had fallen again and lay with his face on the ground. A venomous little
> Jew, with a most evil face, ran up and began striking him with a stick, till one
> of the soldiers drove him off with the butt of his spear. (pp.214-215)

> Round the crosses, some of the High Priest's ruffians hung about jeering and
> mocking. They looked ready to stone Jesus as he hung there helpless, but the
> soldiers kept them at a distance. (p.217)

The novel ends with an affirmation of Jesus' divinity by the narrator, a boyhood

friend: 'I knew Jesus and loved him as my dearest friend. And that same Jesus ... was

in truth The Christ, the Son of the Most High God ... So we live in the constant hope

of seeing him again sometime' (p.244).

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[3] John Oxenham, *The Hidden Years* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1927). Subsequent references will be included in the text.

Two years later, in 1929, the Anglo-Jewish historian Cecil Roth published a novel entitled *Iscariot*,[4] which may, perhaps, be a response to Oxenham's novel *The Hidden Years*, although this cannot, of course, be proved. *Iscariot* describes the childhood and early youth of Judas, and frames the betrayal of Jesus as a result of frustrated messianic expectation and sexual rivalry with Jesus over Mary Magdalene. Roth portrays Judas as in conflict with both Judaism and the sect that would become Christianity, and indicates that Jews, taught to expect a reforming and avenging messiah, were frustrated and disappointed by Jesus' teachings. Judas is a Judaean, of Kerioth ('Is-cariot'), who has red hair and blue eyes, and seems 'foreign' even in his own country. His father is Simon, a zealot of the tribe of Reuben who is patriotic rather than religiously devout. Simon's ancestors had fought with the Maccabees, and he himself had fought against the Romans. He named his son after Judas Maccabee, and the boy was imbued with a deep messianic hope.

Hearing of a young teacher in Galilee, who is being hailed as the messiah, Judas resolves to join him. In Magdala, he meets the prostitute Mary, and becomes infatuated with her, but Mary is fascinated by Jesus, and Judas becomes increasingly alienated from the group of disciples. The group travels to Jerusalem for the Passover, where Jesus desecrates the Temple by evicting the money-changers, but disappoints the people by advising them to continue to obey Roman law. Judas meets Eliazar, a scribe from his native Keriot, who doubts that Jesus is the messiah, and reminds Judas of the short lineage of the Galileans, saying 'I have never yet met a Galilean who could trace his ancestry above three generations, or four at the utmost. You know full well that they are for the most part the seed of Gentiles, circumcised by force by the

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[4] Cecil Roth, *Iscariot* (London: The Mandrake Press, 1929). Subsequent references will be included in the text.

kings of the House of Hasmonaeus' (pp.135-6). Judas begins to have doubts about

Jesus, and, realising that he will never marry Mary, considers suicide, but instead

begins to seek ways of revealing Jesus as an impostor. He approaches Caiaphas, and

tells him where Jesus and the disciples rest on their way out of the city each evening.

Caiaphas asks him what he will have in reward, but, overcome with the enormity of

his deed, Judas does not answer. Assuming he wants money, Caiaphas somewhat

contemptuously gives him the thirty pieces of silver. The next day, Judas reasons to

himself that if Jesus is the messiah, he will know he has been betrayed, and will

escape the Romans. But he also feels remorse, and in the Garden of Gethsemane that

evening, is about to confess, but becomes jealous of Mary's attention to Jesus, and

gives him the kiss which is the signal. He then goes to the Valley of Hinnom, where

he finds a dead tree, and hangs himself with his girdle. The field, Aceldama, becomes

the place where outsiders are buried.

Even in a largely secular culture, the figure of Judas remains significant, as an

image of rebellion and treachery. As Hyam Maccoby has observed, the Judas story 'is

part of a larger myth, which gives to the Jews an archetypal role as being people of

the Devil. ... many, perhaps most, people today believe themselves to have outgrown

the Christian myth. But it is just at this point in the development of culture, when a

myth is renounced on the conscious level, that it can take hold even more strongly on

the unconscious level.'[5] One mythic creature that excites the modern imagination and

is associated with both anti-Christian 'evil' and the drawing of blood, is the vampire.

Vampiric images of 'the Jewish threat' appeared on front covers of editions of the

*Protocols* that were published in numerous countries during the inter-war period.

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[5] Hyam Maccoby, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil* (London: Peter Halban, 1992), p.162.

In an example from France in 1934, the threat of 'world Jewish conspiracy' is depicted as a 'Jew' digging his nails into the globe, from which a blood-like substance oozes. Another example from Brazil, which appeared in 1937, symbolises the threat as a snake, with large fangs, while a Spanish edition, dated 1963, shows 'Jewish' vultures perched upon the cross from which Jesus hangs.[6] The association between the 'Jew' and 'Christian blood' is clear.

The image of the vampiric 'Jew' that preys upon Christians has endured even into the twenty-first century. The film *Dracula 2001*, directed by Patrick Lussier, conflates the figures of Dracula and Judas, portraying Judas as the first vampire. Most versions of the Dracula legend trace the vampire's origins to fifteenth-century Transylvania, and many link him with Vlad the Impaler. There is a vagueness in the stories, however, which film-makers have attempted to address, that relates to Dracula's origins; his motives for feeding on human blood, and whether or not he can actually be killed. In many popular versions of the story, Dracula is not sensitive to light, nor is he frightened of the cross, all of which frustrates traditional methods of bringing about his demise. The stories trade on the fear of the original vampire as an indestructible personification of 'evil', and thus the genre perpetuates itself. This is the fear that *Dracula 2001* both invokes and assuages.

The action takes place in New Orleans, at the Mardi Gras festival, the traditional pre-Lenten Christian celebration. As a result of an attempted robbery by a gang of black and Hispanic youths, Dracula has escaped from his sealed coffin, held in the vault of the Van Helsing family. Early clues as to his identity include a scene in which the vampire sees Mardi Gras coins falling to the ground, which, in a

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[6] These images can be found in Norman Cohn's book *Warrant for Genocide* (1967), between pages 144 and 145.

'flashback', become Roman silver coins. Another clue is his familiarity with Aramaic script. Like many films in this genre, *Dracula 2001* plunders stock images of horror and 'evil' for sensational effect in its attempt to portray the vampire as a demonic threat that is both familiar and new, and develops the idea of Dracula as a motiveless figure of 'evil' into a sworn enemy of Christianity. There is no 'semitic' imagery in the screen representation of Dracula/ Judas: he is portrayed as more of a religious than a 'racial' threat, but in other respects the film makes an uncritical and unreflective appeal to the racist fears associated with non-white groups in the modern USA. The gang of blacks and Hispanics who attempted to rob Van Helsing become the first vampires created by newly-released Dracula/ Judas, and the effect of this is that the forces of 'good' are represented as white and Christian, while those of 'evil' are black, Hispanic, and Jewish.

In *Dracula 2001*, Dracula/ Judas functions as an image of what Hyam Maccoby has termed 'the black Christ'. In *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil*,[7] Maccoby argues that Judas is an essential component in the Christian narrative of human sacrifice and redemption, and that this figure developed in accordance with the emotional needs of Christians throughout history. Judas, he suggests, answers the need for a personification of an independent force of 'evil' in the world, and his function is to complete the narrative of human sacrifice and redemption that is central to Christianity.[8] Judas the betrayer plays the role of the 'sacred executioner', the member of the community who performs the appalling but necessary sacrifice that the community believes it needs in order to continue. In this respect, he is both 'holy' and 'evil'. The collective guilt over the necessity of the sacrifice is passed on to Judas,

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[7] Hyam Maccoby, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil* (London: Peter Halban, 1992).
[8] See Maccoby (1992), p.82.

who becomes the 'black Christ' to Jesus' sacrificial 'Lamb', and is himself sacrificed. Depending on the version of the story, Judas hangs himself in remorse at his betrayal of Jesus, or is struck down by God and dies in a field known as 'Blood Acre'. Either way, his sacrifice has no redemptive aspect, but is simply presented as a suitable fate for a traitor.

Yet there is a redemptive aspect to the death of Dracula/ Judas in *Dracula 2001*. The film suggests that Judas did not hang himself, as in the legend, but survived, because the rope snapped. It is this that provides the clue to the means of his destruction. Dracula is also given a motive in this film, albeit an incoherent one: in the final scene, which takes place on the roof of a church, the vampire talks to a neon image of Jesus on the cross, saying: 'You knew that my destiny was to betray you, because you needed me. And now, I drink the blood of your children.' He continues, asserting that he can offer humans 'all the pleasure and freedom you would deny them', and adds 'You made the world in your image – now, I make it in mine'. All this is witnessed by Mary, a young English woman whom Dracula/ Judas has kidnapped and fed upon. She realises that the way to destroy him is to re-enact the scene of his death in the legends, and slips a noose around his neck, which she then fastens to the neon cross. This falls forward under his weight, and he hangs from the cross on the roof of the church. His dying act is to release Mary from her own vampire state, and in this he becomes almost Christ-like.

As Maccoby points out, the nature of ritual is that it is repeated, as an assurance against disaster. He argues that in the structure of imagination shaped by the Christian sacrificial narrative, there is a compulsion to enact this ritual of sacrifice and salvation, and that this has historically been enacted upon Jews through pogroms,

expulsions, and conversions.[9] But the enactment of ritual in the Jesus/ Judas, or

Christian/ Jew binary has been one-sided: Jesus was crucified once, whereas Jews, as

the 'betrayers', or the 'black Christ', have been sacrificed many times.

It is fear of the repetition of persecution that underlies the opposition to the

recent decision by the British Board of Deputies - an organisation that was founded to

protect the interests of Jews in Britain - to auction the Victorian explorer Sir Richard

Burton's treatise *Human Sacrifice among the Sephardine or the Eastern Jews*, which

was written in 1877. The work refers to the charge of 'blood libel' made in 1840

against thirteen Jews in Damascus, who, it was alleged, had carried out the ritual

murder of a Capuchin friar named Padre Tomaso and his servant.[10] In order to raise

funds for new premises, the Board of Deputies announced that this text, which had

been bought in 1911 and suppressed since then, would be auctioned at Christie's in

London. Opponents of the Board's decision argued that the text could be used by neo-

Nazi groups to fuel antisemitism, while representatives of the Board felt that

sufficient time had elapsed for the document to no longer be considered a threat to

Jewry.

Burton's treatise failed to attract bids for its reserve price of 150,000 pounds,

and the sale was withdrawn. But the conflation of two figures of anti-Christian 'evil'

– Dracula and Judas – in the film *Dracula 2001*, suggests that the suppression of

antisemitic historical material cannot in itself prevent the circulation of ancient

images of 'evil' in popular culture. I doubt whether Lassier's film is intended to

arouse antisemitic feeling: the link between Judas and Dracula seems to have been

made for the purpose of introducing 'new blood' into a very familiar genre. Yet in

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[9] See Maccoby (1992), pp.139-140.
[10] See the *Times*, 4 June 2001, the *Observer*, 3 June 2001, and the *Guardian*, 7 June 2001.

attempting to take a fresh approach to the Dracula legend, *Dracula 2001* returns to a very old allegation made against the Jews, that of the blood libel. In this most recent version of the vampire legend, Dracula is given a reason for his aversion to crosses, and Judas attains vampire status. Dracula's creation of fellow-vampires through feeding - always by implication a blasphemous version of the Christian sacrament - gains, through Judas, a more strongly Christian focus, even in a largely secular age. In this respect, just as the narratives of 'crusade', 'crucifixion' and 'apocalypse' found their antisemitic closure in the context of the First World War, so the image of Dracula is completed in 2001, through the figure of Judas, and *vice versa*. In this latest expression of popular Christian paranoia, Dracula is charged with 'deicide', and Judas becomes the original vampire. Judas provides Dracula with origins and a motive: Dracula provides Judas with a modern significance that simultaneously draws upon ancient representations of 'the Jew', and both are reconstructed, in a new image of anti-Christian malevolence.

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