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**Scientific 'Race' Thinking and Migration: Blacks and Jews in  
Britain, 1918-62**

by

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Abstract

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This thesis provides a comparative analysis of the impact of scientific 'racial' thinking on attitudes and policy towards Jewish and Black immigrants and minorities in Britain between 1918 and 1962. It offers an original assessment of the relationship between immigration policy and 'race' theory by highlighting the importance of 'racial' ideologies and scientific thinking in informing societal attitudes towards minority groups. It explores the relationship between science and society arguing that a symbiotic connection existed between scientific research on 'race' and wider social and political thought. The comparative approach within the thesis is utilised to illuminate a clearer picture regarding the role of 'race' thinking in setting responses to immigrants and minorities. It enables an exploration both of the role of traditional 'racial' discourses in the formation of popular, governmental and scientific attitudes towards Blacks and Jews and of the importance of 'colour' prejudice and anti-Semitism in shaping responses towards these minorities in Britain.

The thesis begins with a discussion of the role of 'racial' theory and ideology in shaping majority-minority relations. It discusses the validity of Black/Jewish study and explores traditional British images of Blacks and Jews from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. The following three chapters chronologically consider changing British scientific and societal attitudes towards 'race' and assess how 'racial' theory and thinking affected Black and Jewish immigrants and minorities across three different time periods. The first of these chapters considers the interwar period, focusing on anti-alienism in the wake of the First World War and on the role of 'racial' discourses in setting attitudes towards Jewish and Black immigrants, especially Jewish refugees from Nazism. The next chapter addresses British wartime 'race' thinking, analysing attitudes towards the increased Black soldier and volunteer presence in wartime Britain and the enlarged Jewish community, focusing on issues of internment and rescue. The final chapter considers post-1945 British society, probing the role of 'race' thinking in post-war immigration policy and in the passing of the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962.

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To my Mum and Dad with love  
(and in recognition of the age old wisdom about apples and  
apple trees).

**Chapter One**  
**An Introduction to ‘Race’ Thinking and Theory in Britain,**  
**1850-1939**

This thesis sets the history of British scientific ‘race’ thinking against the histories of Black and Jewish immigration to the UK in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Whilst considerable research has been conducted into both these areas respectively, the impact of ‘race’ theory on attitudes and responses to Black and Jewish immigration (and vice versa) has been an often overlooked chapter in British history.<sup>2</sup> The comparative nature of this thesis, comparing the histories of Black and Jewish immigration, will illuminate the nature of scientific ‘race’ theory, and analyse how this kind of thinking shaped the experiences of both these communities in the UK.

a) The History of Scientific ‘Race’ Thinking

i) Darwin, Eugenics and ‘Objective’ Racism

It is first important to explain the concept of scientific ‘race’ thinking. The term assumes and epitomises a dividing line between earlier racisms and the nineteenth and twentieth century phenomena under discussion in this thesis. Whilst this introduction will go on to contend that this dividing line is somewhat spurious, scientific ‘race’ thinking describes the common tendency (especially post-Darwin) towards utilising pseudo-scientific rationales to entrench ‘objective’ theories which differentiated between ethnic groups. These theories usually highlighted supposed

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘Black’ will be used throughout this thesis, and is preferred to terms such as ‘Afro-Caribbean’ or ‘Asian’, within a recognition that none of these labels are ideal. The description ‘Black’ will be employed to incorporate Asian, African and Caribbean immigrants and minorities within its scope. The decision to use this term is rooted in an awareness that within scientific ‘race’ writing, Blackness was usually considered as a signifier of psychological and physical difference in a manner which transcended at many points any thinking about geographical roots of Black people. Where ‘racial’ characterisations were specifically targeted against one particular ‘Black’ community, the thesis will utilise the appropriate geographical terminology.

<sup>2</sup> Some scholars have considered the importance of ‘race’ in setting the reception of both Jewish and Black immigrants in the twentieth century. See Gilroy, P, *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 2000, and Holmes, C, *John Bull’s Island: Immigration and British Society 1871-1971*, Macmillan, Basingstoke and London, 1988.



inherent 'racial' differences and hierarchies of capability.<sup>3</sup> Darwinian theory (which will also come under scrutiny in this introduction) provided the justification for a crude transference of the 'survival of the fittest' concept into a post-fact 'racial' explanation for European white superiority, appropriating Darwin's nature theory for human and national analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Considering scientific racism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries requires a recognition of the significant changes which occurred at many points both within science and society. This study begins by assessing the writings of eugenicists and 'race' thinkers in the late nineteenth century and concludes with an analysis of the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962. Attitudes, perceptions and knowledge regarding 'race' undoubtedly changed dramatically over these years. However, this thesis will analyse some of the key changes within 'race' science during the period in order to assess the extent to which there was continuity of core 'race' ideas and approaches.<sup>5</sup>

The popularity of eugenics at the turn of the twentieth century clearly reflected a change in tone and emphasis from earlier nineteenth century 'race' science. Fuelled by readings of Darwinian theory, the obsession of eugenicists with the primacy of heredity in determining man's qualities and potential gave 'race' a new focus.<sup>6</sup> The publication of Galton's *Heredity Genius* in 1869 should be viewed as a pioneering

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<sup>3</sup> See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism : Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States Between the World Wars*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, Macmillan, London, 1982, Jones, G, *Social Darwinism in English Thought: The Interaction between Biological and Social Theory*, Harvester Press, Sussex, 1980 and Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> Jones has cautioned that Darwin's scholarship did not wholly facilitate any new approach to 'race' thinking. More, she argues, it provided a conducive academic environment for the growth of analysis of this kind. In this context, the transition to scientific 'race' thinking should be seen as more about the eagerness of 'race' scientists to link their analysis to Darwinian theory. Jones argues that 'Darwin was rapidly cast in the role of midwife to the social sciences' and that 'before the *Origin's* publication there already existed a readiness to accept the relevance of biological thought' in Jones, G, *Social Darwinism in English Thought*, pp.1-5.

<sup>5</sup> Some scholars have argued that there was considerable continuity in 'race' thinking during the period. Notably, see Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.130-134. Also see Mosse, G, *Towards the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1978, pp.45-91.

<sup>6</sup> See Hawkins, M, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp.70-75.

work in this context.<sup>7</sup> However, Stepan's seminal study on 'race' and science has argued for caution about considering eugenics as a wholly new perspective on 'race'.

Apart from the new emphasis given by eugenics to heredity and intelligence, eugenicists' views on race were clearly variations on existing racial themes, not new compositions. Their views gave support to, but did not fundamentally alter, the racial paradigm in science.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst Stepan is correct to highlight continuity in 'race' thinking, the emphasis placed within eugenics on heredity did facilitate the decline of some nineteenth century focuses of 'racial' difference. The physical anthropology that was so treasured as scientific method by Beddoe and others became more peripheral as the twentieth century progressed.<sup>9</sup> In general, it is arguable that the ascension of 'heredity' as a concept moved the emphasis of 'racial' study away from nineteenth century 'racial typologies', which had considered 'racial' difference primarily in terms of physical appearance. Early twentieth century 'race' thinking became more concerned with perceptions of internal or psychological differences, before questions over the validity of such thinking led to a partial retreat back to considering 'race' as primarily a physical manifestation.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the polygenist school of 'racial' thought (which held that mankind did not evolve from one source, but from a variety of different, yet similar animals), became generally discredited in the wake of Darwin. Stepan, though, has again emphasised continuity, showing that some forms of polygenism continued to be proffered by scholars up to the 1940s.<sup>11</sup> Whilst polygenism cannot be considered as part of the scientific mainstream into the twentieth century, Stepan is correct to note that it did not disappear. Notably, British

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<sup>7</sup> Galton, F, *Hereditary Genius*, Macmillan & Co, London, 1869. For analysis of the role of Galton in British 'race' science see Hawkins, M, *Social Darwinism*, pp.73-75.

<sup>8</sup> Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.134.

<sup>9</sup> 'Head measuring' became a prominent feature of 'race' science after the 'cephalic index' was invented by Swedish anatomist Anders Retzius in 1844. The categorisation of people in this method between long headed (dolichocephalic) and wide headed (brachycephalic) fascinated 'race' scholars. Populations were analysed in this way, notably in Beddoe, J, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe*, London, 1885. Beddoe also conducted 'racial' analysis according to eye colour, hair colour and body size and shape.

<sup>10</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.4.

<sup>11</sup> Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.110.

anatomist and anthropologist Arthur Keith's eager analysis of the later discredited 'Piltdown Man' famously carried a form of this thinking into the inter-war period.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars of 'race' science have often been keen to demonstrate changes in thinking between early twentieth century thinkers and analysts in the inter-war period.<sup>13</sup> However, other scholars have instead stressed continuity notably in eugenics. Making exceptions for the writing of Lionel Penrose and Lancelot Hogben, Barkan has argued, regarding changes in eugenics in the 1920s, that:

To the best of my understanding, all the scientists who in the twenties formulated a critique of eugenics...also subscribed to the main tenets of eugenics and supported some kind of modified, if general, eugenics programme.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most significant change from *fin-de-siècle* thinking concerned the academic arena in which 'race' was discussed. Earlier 'race' studies were conducted across a range of academic disciplines from palaeontology and archaeology to ethnology, phrenology and even theology. However, as the twentieth century progressed, anthropology and biology ascended to become the significant academic debating arenas for 'racial' issues.<sup>15</sup>

Undoubtedly, a significant ideological change did occur amongst many scientific 'race' thinkers in the 1930s as British scholars began to question the validity

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<sup>12</sup> See Sawday, J, 'New Men, Strange Faces, Other Minds': Arthur Keith, Race and the Piltdown Affair (1912-52)', in Ernst, W, and Harris, B, (eds.), *Race, Science and Medicine, 1700-1960*, Routledge, London, 1999, pp.259-288. British 'race' thinker, Reginald Ruggles Gates, posited polygenist theory until his death in 1962. Indeed, these beliefs were recorded in his final academic contribution published posthumously one year after his death. See Gates, R.R., *The Emergence of Racial Genetics*, International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics, New York, 1963.

<sup>13</sup> Notably Kelves, D, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Use of Human Heredity*, New York, Knopf, 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.190 (ft.).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Barkan has noted the disparate arenas of 'racial' study across several academic disciplines. He argues that into the twentieth century, increased differentiation between 'race, culture and language' enabled the growth of a 'new anthropology', pp.19&20. Whilst Barkan is correct to cite that the final academic home for considerations of 'race' was anthropology, it is significant that the 'fatal blows', which were struck by scientists against 'race' difference came from within the fold of biology. Barkan notes: 'The growth of biological knowledge enabled false racial claims made in the name of science to be refuted', p.11.

of 'race' as a concept, especially in response to the increasingly extreme policies of Nazi Germany. Perhaps the most notable challenges in this context came from biologist Julian Huxley in his pre-Nazism 1931 publication *Africa View* and famous 1935 collaboration with A.C. Haddon, *We Europeans*.<sup>16</sup> Again, however, these changes of attitude must not be overstated. At the same time as Huxley and others were beginning to significantly challenge concepts of 'racial' difference, other leading biologists (such as Reginald Ruggles Gates at Kings College) continued to articulate views of 'racial' difference which were not dramatically different from those which had been common academic currency even forty years previously.<sup>17</sup> This thesis will question when non-'racial' thinking became the majority position amongst British academics and will assess the hypothesis that it was not until after the Second World War that 'racial' difference as a concept and way of thinking became discredited within most British scientific communities.<sup>18</sup> Even in the post-war years, it is arguable that 'racial' doctrines of difference merely transformed into ostensibly less essentialist notions of cultural or ethnic difference.<sup>19</sup> The thesis will address this question, considering whether 'race' thinking disappeared in the post-war period in anything more than a semantic sense.

Whilst this study will explore changes in 'racial' thinking through twentieth century Britain in far greater detail, the key hypothesis offered by way of an introduction here is that whilst the ideas behind 'race' science were never static, there was continuity in key areas of 'racial' thinking regarding Blacks and Jews in twentieth century Britain. This study will investigate throughout the significance of both continuity and change, in order to consider how scientific 'race' thinking affected attitudes and perceptions regarding Jewish and Black immigrants to the UK and the Jewish and Black British population in general.

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<sup>16</sup> Huxley, J, *Africa View*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1931 and Huxley, J, & Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1935.

<sup>17</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, Constable and Co, London, 1923. Gates was not isolated in this position. The scholarship of Pitt Rivers, Keith and Mudge amongst others will also be considered.

<sup>18</sup> See Schliebinger, L, *Nature's Body: Sexual Politics and the Making of Modern Science*, Pandora, London, 1994, Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism* and Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*.

<sup>19</sup> Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, Routledge, London, 1993.

It is also important at this early stage to explain the relationship between the 'Eugenics' movement and scientific 'race' thinking as a whole.<sup>20</sup> The term 'eugenics' was first employed in the 1883 writing of scientist Francis Galton.<sup>21</sup> The Eugenics Society (which first met as the Eugenics Education Society in 1908 under Galton's leadership) aimed to promote the importance of 'good breeding' as a vital national issue. As such, the organisation's primary concern was the control of procreation among what they perceived to be 'degenerative' groups within society (notably, the physically unfit, the feeble minded, alcoholics and criminals).<sup>22</sup> Simultaneously, eugenics called for a concentrated 'national' effort to maximise desirable breeding. The movement transcended political divisions with believers coming from across a broad political spectrum.<sup>23</sup> Their policies were underpinned by a belief in the importance of 'heredity' in human character and by the corresponding belief that by controlling who mated with whom, one could bring about a real improvement to the quality of the nation. As one leading eugenicist argued:

We of this generation are responsible for the production of the next generation and, therefore, of all mankind in the future; and all in whom this sense of racial responsibility acts as a deep seated sentiment, greatly affecting their action and their policy, are in truth guided by the genetic ideal.<sup>24</sup>

The relevance of the movement to this study emanates from the fact that many eugenicists were significantly concerned with the impact of inter-'racial' breeding, and focused their studies and campaigning on issues surrounding immigration to Britain. Stone has argued that 'race, in particular the standing of the British "race" in the world, was a key concern of the Eugenics Society's members'.<sup>25</sup> It is erroneous,

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<sup>20</sup> See Hasian Jr, M.A., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought*, University of Georgia Press, Georgia, 1996 and Stone, D, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.111.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard Darwin (Chairman of the Society throughout the 1920s) warned of 'national deterioration resulting from the unchecked multiplication of inferior types'. Darwin, L, 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Eugenics, September 1921, New York, in *Eugenics, Genetics and the Family*, Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1923, p.19.

<sup>23</sup> The conflicting views of Caleb Saleeby and Arnold White, recorded below, provide an excellent example of the diverse views that co-existed under the banner of the Eugenics Society.

<sup>24</sup> Darwin, L, *Eugenics, Genetics and the Family*, p.18.

<sup>25</sup> Stone, D, *Breeding Superman*, p.107.

however, to use the terms 'eugenicist' and 'race thinker' as if they were one and the same. Many eugenicists never concerned themselves with 'race' thinking at all, instead they were pre-occupied with other social issues notably regarding class and urbanisation.<sup>26</sup>

Analysts need to display awareness that the term 'eugenicist' was highly ambiguous and used to describe a myriad of conflicting agendas.<sup>27</sup> Some theorists, such as Caleb Saleeby, seem to have been advocating little more than wider welfare provision to improve the nation's health. Saleeby's work called for the eradication of the 'racial poison' of alcohol and the establishment of free health centres.<sup>28</sup> The inconsistency between Saleeby's views on social welfare and those of eugenics enthusiast, writer and politician Arnold White, highlight the ambiguities and internal contradictions of the 'eugenic' agenda. White argued that 'modern civilisation and philanthropy, on the whole, are hostile to conditions of sound national health' and that society must be 'content to see the idle perish'.<sup>29</sup> Despite their entirely antagonistic approaches, Saleeby and White both spent their active careers united within the fold of British 'eugenics'.

Just as 'eugenicist' was not a synonym for 'race thinker', not all 'race thinkers' were motivated or involved with eugenics.<sup>30</sup> Writers and theorists on the 'race' question approached the subject from a plethora of angles, including historical, religious and political, and did not necessarily retain any interest in eugenics. Eugenics merely served as a milieu for 'race' thinking and provided a solid support base, justifying 'racial' agendas as part of a sensible and objective domestic policy. Scientist and famous eugenicist Karl Pearson's conclusions (following his research

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<sup>26</sup> Saleeby is a good example of a leading British eugenicist who directed all his attention at class issues. See Saleeby, C.W., *The Eugenic Prospect: National and Racial*, T Fisher Unwin, London, 1921.

<sup>27</sup> Hasian Jr has noted in this context that the term 'Eugenics' was utilised in eight entirely different ways in Hasian Jr, M.A., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics*, pp.28-29.

<sup>28</sup> Saleeby, C, *The Eugenic Prospect: National and Racial*. Attitude to alcohol, p.39, National Health Centres, p.237. Saleeby used 'race' as a term to describe collectively all people living in Britain. He was seemingly unconcerned about the origins of the population, and instead focused his work on improving welfare and living standards in order to improve the British 'race'.

<sup>29</sup> White, A, *Efficiency and Empire*, Methuen, London, 1901, pp.111-117.

<sup>30</sup> Some 'race' thinkers were hostile towards eugenics. See Chesterton, G.K., *Eugenics and Other Evils*, William Collins and Sons, London, Glasgow and Brussels, 1922.

into the 'racial' quality of Jewish immigrant children), highlight this interplay between 'race' policy and eugenics:

The welfare of our own country is bound up with the maintenance and improvement of its stock, and our researches do not indicate that this will follow the unrestricted admission of either Jewish or any other type of immigrant.<sup>31</sup>

## ii) Politics, Empire and the Autonomy of 'Race'

The relationship between society, politics and the 'race' theorists will receive attention throughout the thesis. Many recent analysts, especially in the field of 'race' relations, have seen fit to dismiss 'scientific racism' as a legitimising tool, seemingly created to facilitate and justify colonial expansion. This 'reductionist' approach has been particularly popular amongst Marxist analysts who have willingly dismissed 'racial' ideologies as sub-structures, masking wider economic motives. The work of Eric Williams provides a good example of this tendency. In his study, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Williams concluded (concerning the ascendancy of theories of 'racial' difference), that 'the reason was economic not racial; it had to do not with the colour of the labourer, but the cheapness of the labour'.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Yeboah has argued that 'race' theory was 'an ideology generated within an economic relationship to justify the European's brutality to, and exploitation of, the African'.<sup>33</sup> Sivanandan's analysis of 'race' and colonialism offers a similar perspective.

The Colonial phase of capitalist expansion when the opportunity to amass vast profit from the enslavement and proletarianisation of whole continents of people required a commensurate philosophy of justification.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Pearson in Moul, M, and Pearson, K, 'The Problem of Alien Admission into Great Britain, Illustrated by an Examination of Russian and Polish Jewish Children', *Annals of Eugenics*, Vol: 1, 1925, p.127.

<sup>32</sup> Williams, E, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1964 (first published 1945) , p.51.

<sup>33</sup> Yeboah, S.K., *The Ideology of Racism*, Hansib Publishing, Herts, 1988, p.59.

<sup>34</sup> Sivanandan, A, 'Race, Class and Power: An Outline for Study', *Race*, Vol: 14, No: 4, 1973, p.384.

Ultimately, the writing of Colette Guillaumin exposes the extent to which this mind frame dismisses any ideological or scientific basis for scientific racism. She instructed her readers that racist views should be assessed merely as 'a practical logic for domination'.<sup>35</sup>

Even scholars who have not approached 'race' in this way have conceded that 'racial' notions of difference played a helpful role in colonial conquest. Banton and Harwood have argued that the concept of 'social Darwinism' enabled colonial expansion to be perceived as the 'laudable unfolding of natural law'.<sup>36</sup> Clearly, the use of scientific racism in this way was significant in providing 'objective' justification for British Empire building.<sup>37</sup> Edward Said has accurately explained the crucial role of 'race' thinking in ideology of this nature. Imperialism and colonialism, he has recorded, 'are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that included notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination'.<sup>38</sup>

Nationalism, like eugenics, certainly provided a milieu in which 'race' ideas could flourish, providing theorists with a western audience who had, like Churchill, emotionally proved 'racial' difference to themselves well in advance of any scientific

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<sup>35</sup> Guillaumin, C, 'The Idea of Race and its Elevation to Autonomous, Scientific and Legal Status' in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, UNESCO, 1980, p.52. The most forceful proponent of the Marxist position on 'race' that I have seen is Oliver Cox's *Class, Caste and Race*. Cox argues that 'racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism and nationalism, and that because of the world wide implications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced to policies and attitudes of the leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America'. Cited in Miles, R, *Racism and Migrant Labour*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982, p.82. Also see Phizacklea, A, and Miles, R, *Labour and Racism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980 for a more balanced but ultimately 'reductionist' perspective.

<sup>36</sup> Banton, M, and Harwood, J, *The Race Concept*, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1975, p.15. For a recent and sophisticated analysis of the ideology of Social Darwinism see Hawkins, M, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought 1860-1945*.

<sup>37</sup> This transference of Darwin's theory to explain expansion and conquest is epitomised in the following 1898 analysis of Winston Churchill, who utilised 'race' theory along national lines in order to justify colonial expansion. 'Nations exist and peoples labour to produce armies with which they conquer other nations, and the nation best qualified to do this is of course the most highly civilised and the most deserving of honour', cited in Gilbert, M, *Churchill's Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1981, pp. 28-9.

<sup>38</sup> Said, E, *Culture and Imperialism*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1993, p.8. Although serious academic challenges have been made to Said's analysis of the host/colonial relationship, that a construction existed within this relationship that facilitated domination is largely uncontested. Cannadine has indeed described the British Empire in this context as 'a culturally created and imaginatively constructed artefact'. See Cannadine, D, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 2001, p.3.



confirmation of their 'racial' superiority.<sup>39</sup> Barkan has noted in this context: 'The driving force behind racial differentiation was nationalism, which demanded of its followers total commitment, even at the expense of internal logic and incoherence'.<sup>40</sup> This thesis will further assess the relationship between 'race' thinking and nationalism and will analyse the extent to which the decline of the scientific respectability of 'race' can be linked with the discrediting of nationalist extremism after the fall of Hitler and Nazism in the 1940s.

The thesis will consider more widely whether national agenda and imperialism provide a sufficient explanation for the phenomena of 'race' thinking. Analysing the writings of the theorists themselves, one must question whether it has been appropriate for scholars to dismiss 'racial' writing and thinking solely as an effort, conscious or otherwise, to legitimise white colonial domination. It is necessary to highlight the scholastic integrity and independence of many scholars who worked in this field, and it seems inadequate in this context to dismiss these theorists as stooges of political interest. The majority of Britain's 'race' thinkers sincerely believed in the sagacity of their analysis and in the objectivity of their field of learning. Perceptions of British scientific objectivity have led Barkan to draw a sharp line dividing the work of British scientists from that of their American colleagues, who, he has argued, were far more political in their work due to the highly charged 'racial' atmosphere of the United States.<sup>41</sup> The thesis will question whether Barkan has over-stated this point regarding the objectivity of British 'race' thinkers.

It certainly seems that British analysts were not as politically absorbed as their American counterparts. The marked difference in dogmatic conclusions between most British and American 'race' scientists does suggest a genuine attempt at objectivity on the part of British thinkers. The work of British geologist J.W. Gregory highlights Atlantic differences. Gregory did not pursue an egalitarian agenda in his

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<sup>39</sup> For the relationship between 'race' and European nationalism see Hobsbawm, E.J., *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1987 and Burrow, J.W., *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought 1848-1914*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.17. MacKenzie has concurred, describing ideology in the Empire period as 'imperial nationalism, compounded of monarchism, militarism and social Darwinism, through which the British defined their own unique superiority'. See MacKenzie, J, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1984.

<sup>41</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.137-142.

work on 'race'. He concluded that 'owing to the essential differences between the white and Negro races some measure of separation is best for both, and that no intermixture should be tolerated'.<sup>42</sup> However, Gregory vehemently criticised American colleagues for making 'baseless' accusations against Black people and for 'exaggerated assertions' in their analysis.<sup>43</sup> Gregory's conclusion regarding the sexual morality of Blacks ultimately demonstrated the 'objective' middle ground that British scholars believed themselves to occupy. 'After all the bogus cases and false charges are omitted sufficient remain to make every Negro bow his head in shame'.<sup>44</sup>

The thesis will question the extent to which the endeavour of British scientists was still affected by contemporary politics and society. In this context, Dan Stone has been correct to challenge traditional images of British 'race' scientists as a 'naive movement of tweed clad fogies'.<sup>45</sup> However, this does not mean that 'race' scientists worked towards a particular and agreed political direction and goal, as reductionist scholars would have us believe. It merely means that it is impossible for any scientist or theorist to work unaffected by the prejudices of the society in which they live.<sup>46</sup> This study will not dismiss the idea that British 'race' scientists genuinely believed in the objectivity of their analysis. An awareness will be retained that scholars did not achieve the scientifically impossible goal, of living and working in a political and cultural vacuum. Interestingly, it seems that Barkan's overstating of the objectivity of British science in 'racial' affairs has itself been conditioned by a lingering belief which permeates modern British society, namely that Britain is a country of traditionally egalitarian principles, largely exempt from the prejudices which have blighted the histories of the U.S. and the European continent.<sup>47</sup> If politics and society necessarily permeated the work of British 'race' scientists to some extent, it does not necessarily follow that these individuals were working towards any agreed coherent position. In this context, the thesis will display caution towards bold statements that

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<sup>42</sup> Gregory, J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, Seeley, Service and Co, London, 1925, p.99.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 40 & 231.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p.84.

<sup>45</sup> Stone, D, 'Race in British Eugenics', *European History Quarterly*, Vol: 31, No: 3, p.404.

<sup>46</sup> See Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.144.

<sup>47</sup> This seemingly romantic view of British 'racial' history has most recently been expressed by Randell Hansen in his study: Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000. The roots of this kind of thinking about Britain's record on 'race' issues can be seen in A.J.P. Taylor's analysis of the British war record. Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, Hamilton, London, 1961.

set to reduce the agenda of the scientists to the role of simply legitimising colonial policy.<sup>48</sup>

It must, however, be acknowledged that some scientists clearly did set a course of research designed to fulfil pre-ordained beliefs in the superiority of the British and of the white northern European, and that 'race' science undoubtedly was influenced by the colonial historical context. This study will not deny that this was the case, but will emphasise that colonialism was one of many political factors which affected scientific research on 'race'.<sup>49</sup>

Even a scientific racist belief in white superiority did not necessarily mean that the science in question would conveniently justify colonial policy. A good example here concerns the mid-nineteenth century research and writing of scientist Robert Knox. Knox, despite positing the most vehemently racist of arguments, sustained a firm opposition to British colonialism despite his belief in the superiority of all white men over Black men. He wrote that conflicts between white and Black men were battles of 'the strong against the feeble'.<sup>50</sup> To Knox, all Black 'races' were as insignificant as they were uncivilised, little more than animals with no organisation or culture. 'The past history of the Negro, of the Caffre, of the Hottentot, and of the

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<sup>48</sup> Carter has offered a sophisticated analysis of this relationship in Carter, B, *Realism and Racism: Concepts of Race in Sociological Research*, London and New York, 2000, pp.159-164.

<sup>49</sup> The impact of colonialism is evident in the hangover belief in *polygenism* (discussed above), years after the idea was discredited by Darwin. Darwin wrote on this subject: 'If their [mens] whole structure be taken into consideration they are found to resemble each other closely in a multitude of points. Many of these are of so unimportant or of so singular a nature, that it is extremely improbable that they should have been independently acquired aboriginally distinct species or races. The same remark holds good with equal or greater force with respect to the numerous points of mental similarity between the most distinct races of man'. Darwin, C, *The Descent of Man*, London, John Murray Edition, 1901, p.276. For analysis of Darwin's role in British 'race' thinking see Hawkins, M, *Social Darwinism*, pp.72-73. Fifty years after this writing, 'race' scientists in Britain (notably Reginald Ruggles Gates) were still clinging to polygenist theory. See Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.85. This polygenist thinking undoubtedly served to justify European domination. Jones has noted the 'helpfulness' of polygenist theory in justifying 'racial' division in post slavery Southern states of the U.S., as theorists searched for justifications to sustain and entrench segregation. 'The popularity of polygenist anthropology amongst intellectuals in the slave owning states of America testifies to the political dimension which this sort of anthropology rapidly acquired in social circles' in Jones, G, *Social Darwinism and English Thought*, p.141. Stepan has also interestingly noted the manner in which it was possible for 'race' science to become embroiled in political agenda. She cites the French anthropologist Armard de Quatrefages' barely objective conclusion, drawn in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war, that German invaders were not Teuton at all but were in fact of Slavo-Finnish origin! See Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.101.

<sup>50</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, Savill and Edwards, London, 1850, p.221.

Bosjeman, is simply a blank'.<sup>51</sup> In spite of (or more accurately because of) these prejudices, Knox believed that colonial conquest would lead to disaster, as white men could not survive or prosper in a climate for which they had not been 'designed'. 'It never can absolutely become theirs; nature gave it not to them as an inheritance; they seized it by fraud and violence'.<sup>52</sup> European populations could only survive in colonies on a temporary basis, if constantly replenished by fresh European stock. Knox offered the fate of South American whites as an example. Despite being 'replenished' with several million Europeans 'they have not increased by a single soul in three hundred years'.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, Knox was far from alone in this opinion. Writing seventy years after Knox, J.W. Gregory cited in his study on *The White Man in the Tropics*, source after source on the impossibility of white settlement in tropical climates. He concluded: 'These simple facts are so impressive that those who hold that the white man can colonise in the tropics have to face a strong prepossession to the contrary'.<sup>54</sup>

The prevalence of hostility amongst 'race' thinkers towards European acquisition and settlement of Empires has led Banton to conclude that 'all the typologists warned against colonisation'.<sup>55</sup> The impact of this anti-colonial attitude on the relationship between theorists and government has led him to further comment regarding the writing of Knox and the French 'race' thinker August de Gobineau: 'Their theories would have been useless as justifications of the privilege of the powerful classes of their day'.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, Gilroy's contention that 'theory was being annexed by the imperatives of colonial power even in its emergent phase' is clearly directly oppositional to Banton's understanding of the relationship between science and politics.<sup>57</sup> This thesis will probe this relationship in order to explore the attitudes of British 'race' scientists to the agenda of British nationalist politics, towards political ideology in general and importantly towards each other.

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<sup>51</sup> Knox, R., *The Races of Men*, pp.243-4.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p.108.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p.262.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory, J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, p.29.

<sup>55</sup> Banton, M., 'The Idea of Race and the Concept of Race', in Verma, G, and Bagley, C, (eds.), *Race, Education and Identity*, Macmillan Press, London, 1979, p.20.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.59.

However, it is clear even at this early stage that overly deterministic 'tying' of science and colonialism is inappropriate and that a more sophisticated interpretation is necessary as 'race' scientists, throughout, offered opinions on key issues that diverged from nationalist ideology and continuously conflicted with each other. For example, whilst some thinkers saw the nation building that had occurred across Europe in the previous fifty years as a 'racially' natural occurrence, others viewed it as highlighting the decline of 'races' in modern society. Anatomist, anthropologist and 'race' thinker, Arthur Keith wrote in 1920:

Racial mixtures thwart nature's plan, but she immediately sets out to repair the mischief and to build up a new race by the fusion of old elements. Nation building is the first step to race building..In an evolutionary sense every nation is an adiacritic or potential race.<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, Keith's sustained belief in the validity of nations as distinct 'races' led him to launch a vigorous defence of Hitler and Nazi Germany in 1937:

Here we have expounded the perfectly sound doctrine of evolutionary isolation; even as an ethical doctrine it should not be condemned. No German must be guilty of 'the greatest racial sin' – that of bringing the fruits of hybridity into the world. The respective 'genes' of Germany must be kept uncontaminated, so that they may work out the racial destiny of the German people without impediment.<sup>59</sup>

A conflicting argument was posited by fellow anthropologist H.J. Fleure. Whilst being far from non-'racial' in his outlook, Fleure saw modern nations in a completely different light. 'These [national] groupings are purely artificial', he concluded.<sup>60</sup> Fleure's contention that modern nations had nothing to do with 'race'

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<sup>58</sup> Keith A, 'The Evolution of the Human Races' in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 58, 1925, p.319.

<sup>59</sup> Keith, A, 'The Behaviour of Germany Considered from an Evolutionary Point of View in 1942' in *Essays in Human Evolution*, p.9, cited in Ernst, W, and Harris, B, (eds.), *Race, Science and Medicine, 1700-1960*, p.277.

<sup>60</sup> Fleure, H.J., *The Nations of England and Wales*, Benn Brothers, London, 1923, p.13. Fleure reinforced this position in another publication two years later, noting: 'We are dealing, in modern

was far from isolated. Nineteenth century anthropologist John Beddoe had offered a similar analysis forty years earlier as he bemoaned the decline of indigenous groups in Britain that he would be prepared to define as 'English'.

It is best to rely on the undoubted fact that the Gaelic and Iberian races of the west, mostly dark haired, are tending to swamp the blond Teutons of England by a reflux migration.<sup>61</sup>

These arguments show that understanding the complexities of 'race' thinking require an awareness that 'racial' discourses were multi-faceted and formed nothing like one coherent, cogent position.<sup>62</sup> To scholars such as Beddoe and Fleure, modern 'nationalities' had nothing to do with 'race'. To Keith, the modern nation was the significant manifestation of 'racial' development.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, biologist Reginald Ruggles Gates, writing in 1923, saw European nations as 'racially' distinct from one another. He argued that 'even after a thousand years of intermarriage, separate racial traits may still be traceable in the modern Englishman'.<sup>64</sup> For Beddoe and other scholars, such wide categorisations of massively divergent communities would have been unthinkable. Amid recognition of these scientific divisions, the idea of 'race' science as a straightforward product and tool of colonial interest falters.<sup>65</sup>

The bi-product of 'reductionist' thinking is the theoretical dismissal of autonomous and consistent Black/Semitic discourses. Within this mind-frame, discourses are malleable tools of convenience, utilised sporadically to achieve certain economic goals. Laura Tabili's analysis of the 1919 'race' riots (specifically regarding the reception of Black sailors in Salford) provides an excellent example of

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populations, with survivals of a group of characters of high antiquity among peoples whose other characters vary too much for us to be able to speak of a common type'. Fleure, H.J., 'Some Early Neanthropic Types and their Modern Representatives' in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 50, 1920, pp.29-39.

<sup>61</sup> Beddoe, J, *The Races of Britain*, p.298.

<sup>62</sup> See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.164.

<sup>63</sup> Keith similarly argued: 'At the most, hybridity is a minor factor in the production of new races; its action cannot explain the racial state of the world: on the other hand, the theory of evolution does'. Keith, A, in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 58, 1925, p.319.

<sup>64</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.232.

<sup>65</sup> Dispute amongst theorists concerning nation and 'race' indicates that the time of writing did not set scientific views as much as personal attitude. Fleure and Beddoe seem to stand together against the opinions of Knox and Keith, despite the fact that Beddoe and Knox wrote seventy years before Fleure and Keith.

this tendency. Tabili records that the reception of these sailors was dependent on the availability of work at a local level. Thus, where work was readily available, Black immigration was accepted and where it was scarce, rejected. The relationship between Black and white was not set by any overarching 'racial' discourse but was decided at grass-roots level, as locals judged each situation and arriving group as they saw fit. 'Racial and cultural groups [Tabili writes] are thus not objective entities but are both made by external factors, and remake themselves through choice and action'.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps the biggest stumbling block towards forming an opinion of 'race' scientists as 'legitimisers' of material interest in this way was their writing on the subject of Jews. During the period under consideration, Jews were frequently the subject of analysis by 'race' thinking scientists and intellectuals. Francis Galton, widely renowned as the father of British eugenics, gave two papers to the Anthropological Institute on the 'racial characteristics' of Jews, as well as considering issues of Jewish 'race' in other studies.<sup>67</sup> Galton argued that Jews maintained a prominent racial 'type', renowned for craftiness and business acumen. Karl Pearson published an exhaustive study of Jewish immigrant children in conjunction with Margeret Moul in 1925.<sup>68</sup> Many other key 'race' thinkers also wrote on the subject, from Robert Knox in the mid-nineteenth century through to Reginald Ruggles Gates, Arthur Keith and Anthony Ludovici amongst others in the first half of the twentieth.<sup>69</sup>

Jews held no obvious place in Britain's desire for colonial expansion, or at least they only did so within the conspiratorial mind frame of 'race' thinking.<sup>70</sup> The role attributed to Jews within the British 'racial' imagination will be considered at length below, but it is important to understand at this stage that 'racial' discourses

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<sup>66</sup> Tabili, L, *'We ask for British Justice'. Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1994, p.9.

<sup>67</sup> See for example, Galton, F, *Hereditary Genius*, p.4.

<sup>68</sup> Moul, M, and Pearson, K, 'The Problem of Alien Admission into Great Britain', pp.6-203

<sup>69</sup> Gates, R.R., see on Jews in Gates MSS, Liddell Hart Archive, Kings College, London. Files 11/5, 11/27, 11/41. See Keith, A, On Jews in 'The Aryans', *The Times*, 8/8/34. Ludovici, A, (Wrote *Jews in England*, Boswell, London, 1938 under the pseudonym of Cobbett, see Stone, D, *Breeding Superman*, p. 45). Knox, R, wrote one of the earliest 'race' thinking studies that considered Jews, *The Races of Men*, pp.157-210.

<sup>70</sup> Within conspiracy theory, guarding against the influence of Jewry was sometimes presented as an important goal of the British Empire. See White, A, *The Modern Jew*, William Heinemann, London, 1899, pp.80-82 or Freeman, R. A., *Social Decay and Regeneration*, Constable and Co., London, 1921, pp.265-268.

concerning Jews served no obvious or substantial function in justifying or facilitating the growth of the British Empire. Colonial conquest did not require anything from the Jews and thereby, within the mind frame of 'reductionist' reasoning, there should have been little reason for the creation of elaborate theory regarding Jewish 'racial' rank or type. Theory poured forth, however, as 'race' thinkers developed their analysis of 'racial' groups, pursuing personal academic agenda without regard for British imperial policy.<sup>71</sup>

Tabili, amongst other reductionist scholars, has largely excluded Jews from her analysis of 'race'.<sup>72</sup> This thesis will assess the consistency and potency of theories of 'racial' difference using the history of the reception and absorption of Black and Jewish communities in England as a source base. It will question whether the history of Semitic discourses provoke a consideration of 'race' as an autonomous factor in societal relations, in a way not acknowledged within the reductionist perspective.<sup>73</sup> Goldberg has argued in this context that 'race in its various articulations has served not only to rationalise already established social relations but to order them'.<sup>74</sup> The study will set this kind of analysis, with its greater emphasis on the agency of 'race' as a force, against the reductionist position in order to illuminate the role of scientific 'race' thinking in shaping 'race' relations in Britain.

This introduction has argued so far that political and social influence over 'race' science existed, but that this influence cannot be over-simplified or over-stated. This is not to say that the prejudices of society did not influence the conclusions of supposedly impartial research and indeed this idea will be important throughout the analysis of this thesis. The writings of British eugenicists and 'race' thinkers are overtly littered with a myriad of political and personal agenda as science, especially concerning the highly politicised matter of 'racial' difference, could not escape the

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<sup>71</sup> Cheyette has analysed Semitic discourse from the nineteenth and early twentieth century highlighting the diverse and contradictory currents of opinion on Jews. See Cheyette, B, *Constructions of "the Jew" in British Literature and Society: Racial Representations 1875-1945*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Tabili, L, 'We ask for British Justice'. Also see Sivanandan, A, *Communities of Resistance. Writings on Black Struggles for Socialism*, Verso, London, 1990.

<sup>73</sup> Cheyette has coined the term 'Semitic discourse' to describe the prevalence of various autonomous often contradictory Jewish images in the British imagination. See Cheyette, B, *Constructions of "the Jew"*, pp.1-13.

<sup>74</sup> Goldberg D.T., *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, Blackwell Publishing, Massachusetts, U.S.A., 1993, p.45.



significant undermining of its attempted objectivity. However, scientific lack of objectivity over 'race' will not be addressed here as being rooted in any one coherent political agenda, but instead will be analysed as diverse and complicated personal motivations and dogmas surrounding the notions of 'race' and prejudice.

### iii) Understanding the Complex Motivations of 'Racial' Science

Perhaps 'race' science can be seen as most obviously rooted in personal political agenda when one studies the writings of 'race' scientists from persecuted minority groups. These writers often worked overtly within the world of 'race' science, partly in an attempt to emancipate their own communities from the negative 'racial' conclusions previously drawn about them by other theorists. Looking at examples from the nineteenth century, it becomes evident that scholars from both the communities under investigation in this thesis worked to pull their respective groups into categories of men that were considered 'racially' advanced by their academic peers. These categories were usually reserved in scientific 'race' thinking for northern European whites.<sup>75</sup> Jewish and Black scholars often worked inside 'race' science with a thinly veiled political agenda to alter these perceptions.

The best example of this tendency can be seen in the writings of Jewish intellectual and social scientist Joseph Jacobs. Jacobs pursued an intellectual career, which barely obscured his political motive and desire to establish the Jewish community as a 'racially desirable' group within British 'race' thinking. Far from challenging the pertinence of 'race' theory, Jacobs worked to show that Jews (as a 'race') had been, throughout history, vital contributors to the development of western civilisation. Jacobs himself outlined this motivation as he explained his reasons for writing *Jewish Contributions to Civilisation*, in 1919:

The claim of the Jews to a 'place in the sun', in modern life, must, in the last resort, be based on their capacity for contributing valuable

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<sup>75</sup> See Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.99-101. Theories of Northern European 'racial' superiority were common in 'race' thinking. Notably see Chamberlain, H.S., *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, John Lane, London and New York, 1911 or Gobineau, A, *On the Inequality of the Races of Man*, Fertig, New York, 1967 (original English translation published by William Heinemann, London, 1915). For analysis of this scholar, see Biddiss, M, *Father of Racist Ideology: the Social and Political Thought of Count Gobineau*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970.

elements to that life. This can only be determined by the history of the past, remote and recent. Unless they have shown themselves in the past capable of contributing to the higher aspects of European culture, it would be improbable that they would be able to join fully in it now that they are allowed, in some measure, to work with their fellow citizens. Again, if they have acquired, by a long process of unnatural selection, any special capabilities, adapting them for special work in the world, this ought to show itself in actual achievement during recent times, when they have been allowed, to some extent, to show their capacity.<sup>76</sup>

Jacobs' work cited both Beddoe and Galton and revealed no desire to deconstruct 'race' as a divider of men.<sup>77</sup> In fact, Jacobs concluded (regarding the power of 'race') that 'it is one of the most permanent forces on earth; so much may be granted to race theorists like Gobineau or Chamberlain'.<sup>78</sup> Jacobs' belief in Jewish 'racial' superiority permeated every aspect of his work. Analysing the role played in western history by Jews, Jacobs told his readers that it 'is little less than to write the history of civilisation for the past two thousand years'.<sup>79</sup> However, the emancipatory agenda of this author was always evident within his analysis. Having 'proved' the qualities of the Jew in the study, Jacobs outlined the logical conclusion, namely that Europe's Jews should be able to rise from a position of persecution or begrudged toleration to a position of equality and mutual appreciation with Gentile neighbours. Armed with his 'racial' 'evidence', Jacobs ordered the world: 'Stand aside; let us to our appointed work'.<sup>80</sup>

Paul Gilroy has exposed the tendency amongst persecuted minorities to seize the language and politics of their oppression and learn to use it to defend themselves.

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<sup>76</sup> Jacobs, J, *Jewish Contributions to Civilisation*, Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1919, p. 39.

<sup>77</sup> Jacobs, J, *Studies in Jewish Statistics*, D.Nutt, London, 1891, Appendix A, p.XIII and p.XVI.

<sup>78</sup> Jacobs, J, *Jewish Contributions to Civilisation*, p.45. The Comte de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain were European 'race' thinkers who openly expressed pro-Aryan sentiments in their writing. See footnote 70.

<sup>79</sup> Jacobs, J, *Jewish Contributions to Civilisation*, p.48.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p.46 Additionally, similar ideas to those of Jacobs can be found in the writings of Jewish intellectual Israel Zangwill notably in *Chosen Peoples: The Hebraic Ideal vs the Teutonic*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1918, pp.15-72.

Offering the example of American Black writers resisting 'racially' justified colonialism and oppression, Gilroy reinforces the argument that 'race' thinking was utilised by minority groups to lever themselves out of disadvantageous 'racial' positions.<sup>81</sup> 'Even voices of dissent from imperial misconduct and colonial expansion had to engage the same anthropological ideas of 'race', nation and culture which had applauded imperial power'.<sup>82</sup>

The relationship between the 'race' theorists and the popular and political spectrum is a fascinating one. If it is to be argued that 'race' theory was not merely created by political expediency, was it a product of some sort of 'natural' popular prejudice, or did 'race' theorising serve to create popular prejudice by codifying, entrenching and spreading theories of 'racial' difference? Some analysts have pertinently argued that the relationship between 'race' theory and popular prejudice was symbiotic in nature.<sup>83</sup> Popular prejudice provided theorists with a dogmatic starting point of research and with expected conclusions. Theorists, unable to avoid corruption by their own prejudices, produced theory that legitimised and reinforced the popular prejudice as espoused through the media and ultimately through government policy.<sup>84</sup> Hasian Jr has described this analysis as an 'ideographical' approach, where distinctions between scientific and popular opinion are separate but constantly and unavoidably engaged with each other.

In sum, eugenic arguments were not simply the creation of a coterie of pseudo scientists, nor were they the products of politicians who misunderstood or misapplied genetical analysis. They were also rhetorical fragments, representing the ideologies of multitudes of social actors who at different historical junctures have reconfigured these ideographs to legitimate a plethora of political, social and economic agendas.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Gilroy cites the writings of Olaudah Equiano, Phillis Wheatley and Edward Wilmot Blyden in Gilroy, P, *Between Camps: Nations, Culture and the Allure of Race*, pp.119-125.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. p.138.

<sup>83</sup> See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.138.

<sup>84</sup> Stepan has argued in this context that that the history of 'racial science' should be seen as a history of 'accommodations...to the demands of deeply held convictions about the "naturalness" of the inequalities between human races', Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp. xx/xxi.

<sup>85</sup> Hasian Jr, M.A., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought*, University of Georgia Press, 1996, Athens, Georgia, p.193.

Other scholars have highlighted this relationship as part of a rejection of reductionist theory and a realisation of the more powerful and complex role played by 'race' in modern society.<sup>86</sup> Albert Memmi's study of Jews has concluded in a similar vein to Hasian Jr. Notably, the following citation reveals an opinion that there were similarities of process, which governed prejudice towards Jews and Blacks respectively. Unlike the reductionist model, within a recognition of the agency of racism in its own right, analysts like Memmi have begun to de-construct Black and Semitic discourses as similar phenomena and to develop a greater understanding concerning how these ideas ascended through the supposedly objective medium of science.

It is the idea people have of the Jew that suggests and imposes a certain idea of Jewish biology. The same technique probably works in most of the contexts of oppression even in the case of more remarkable biological facts, like the colour of the skin among Negroes or several feminine traits.<sup>87</sup>

Said's concept of 'Orientalism' argues on similar lines that characterisations of the 'Orient' were primarily influenced by existing cultural stereotypes. 'Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object'.<sup>88</sup> Said has exposed the complex and inter-dependent relationship between 'racial' characterisation and colonial power, in a firm rebuttal of reductionist perspective. 'To say that Orientalism was a rationalisation of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact'.<sup>89</sup> Whilst recent pertinent challenges to Said's analysis have offered improved insight into psychological perceptions of Empire, Said's core argument,

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<sup>86</sup> For example: Banton, M, & Harwood, J, *The Race Concept*, p.9. 'The sources of popular imagery concerning race are very diverse and the interrelations between their growth and contemporary political affairs are far too complex for the whole historical sequence to be explicable in simple terms'. Also see Hall, S, 'Racism and Reaction', *Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain: Talks on Race Relations Broadcast on BBC TV*, Commission for Racial Equality, London, 1978, pp.23-35.

<sup>87</sup> Memmi, A *Portrait of a Jew*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1963, p.114.

<sup>88</sup> Said, E, *Orientalism*, Routledge, London, 1978, p.22.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* p.39.

that 'racial' ideas of colonial people had their own history and agency in advance of colonisation, remains insightful and relevant.<sup>90</sup>

It is important to assess whether the methods and rationales of scientific 'race' thinking comprise a distinct period for investigation within the history of racism. This thesis will investigate the idea that notions of 'racial' difference were inexorably altered during the period under investigation, coming to a crescendo of authority within the nationalist mind frame of the early twentieth century and to their widespread decline in the wake of the horrors of German National Socialism. It is important, however, to consider whether theorists fed from reservoirs of traditional 'racial' animosity and simply re-generated old 'racial' ideas, having developed and entrenched them within a tougher 'logical' casing. Paul Gilroy, in his recent study on the 'allure' of 'race', outlined that the origins of 'representations' of Jews and Blacks that were portrayed within scientific 'race' discourse were inherited from earlier mind sets.

It is important to recognise that, as with the Negro, another obvious contender in the dynamic interplay of modernity, selfhood, and alterity, representations of the Jew have a lengthy history and that modern inventions, elaborations, and projections of that figure were reworked from ample materials inherited from a previous time in which the cosmos, the global, and the divine were quite differently configured.<sup>91</sup>

There seems to be a general academic consensus that scientific 'race' theory indeed inherited and developed representations of Jews and Blacks from earlier generations. Nancy Stepan's conclusion that 'evolutionism provided a new, emotionally charged,

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<sup>90</sup> Cannadine has famously challenged Said's notion of 'Orientalism' by arguing that images of Empire were grounded in western perceptions of self and not of the other: '...the imperial constructions and transoceanic visualizations that resulted were primarily (and unsurprisingly) the mirror images – sometimes reflected, sometimes refracted, sometimes distorted – of the traditional, individualistic, unequal society that it was widely believed existed in the metropolis'. However, Cannadine has concurred with Said regarding the autonomy of ideology in setting Empire/British relations. 'The British Empire was not only a geopolitical entity; it was also a culturally created and imaginatively constructed artefact'. See Cannadine, D, *Ornamentalism*, pp.xix & 3.

<sup>91</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps: Nations, Culture and the Allure of Race*, p.259.

yet ostensibly scientific language with which to express old prejudices' provides a largely uncontested synthesis of the views of most analysts.<sup>92</sup>

This thesis will not attempt to address the origins of these 'racial' prejudices. To do so would require a study more rooted in psychology than in history and would even then only be able to hypothesise in the widest terms. New studies into the power of skin colour itself in generating animosity are certainly moving towards conclusions in this area but even these, in conceding the ultimate subjectivity of how colour is viewed, seem to leave as many questions as they provide answers.<sup>93</sup> The purpose of this introduction has been merely to suggest that 'race' thinking needs to be considered as a force above and beyond any one political agenda and deserves autonomous investigation in its own right. As Stuart Hall concluded: 'While racism cannot be reduced to other social relations, neither can it be explained autonomously from them. Thus, racism commands a relative autonomy from economic, political and other social relations.'<sup>94</sup> This thesis will concentrate on analysing the impact of scientific 'race' thinking on Jewish and Black immigration to the UK, whilst displaying an awareness that 'race' theory did not begin or end within the parameters of scientific racism. It aims to illuminate the relevance of scientific 'race' thinkers as theory shapers in the modern history of British immigration. The thesis will thus assess the potency of 'scientific racism' in influencing British policy and public opinion and in affecting the experience of the immigrants themselves. At every chronological stage, Jewish and Black experiences will be compared. The decision to approach the study in this comparative manner requires further consideration and explanation within this introduction.

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<sup>92</sup> Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.83. For similar views see Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, Routledge, London 1991, pp.18-20, Hasian Jr, M.A., *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought*, pp.6-31 and Gilroy, P *Between Camps: Nations, Culture and the Allure of Race*, pp.68-165

<sup>93</sup> See Dyer, R, *White*, Routledge, London, 1997: 'Whiteness can determine who is to be included and excluded from the category and also discriminate among those deemed to be within it. Some people – the Irish, Latins, Jews – are white sometimes, and some white people are whiter than others', p.51. For the potency of skin colour as a factor in 'racial' history, also see Hoch, P, *White Hero Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity*, Pluto Press, London, 1979, Morrison, T, *Playing in the Dark, Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Harvard University Press, London, 1992 and Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*.

<sup>94</sup> Hall, S, cited in Back, L, and Solomos, J, *Race, Politics and Social Change*, Routledge, London, 1995, p.26.

## b) Comparing Semitic and Black Scientific 'Racial' Discourses

As the British scientific community developed typologies for different ethnic groups, substantial similarities can be seen between emerging Semitic and Black discourses. This introduction will outline and evaluate these similarities (and corresponding differences) but will first consider the validity of a comparative approach of this nature.

The starting point for comparing the experiences of Black and Jewish people is a recognition that both groups suffered similarly disastrous fates at the hands of 'race' theorists.<sup>95</sup> In each case, theorists seized upon insignificant and spurious aspects of Black and Jewish appearance and wove elaborate discourses of consequence around these meaningless and often imaginary physical images.<sup>96</sup> These discourses served to reinforce and entrench existing prejudices by utilising the powerful weapon of scientific objectivity, printing values on neutral physical attributes. Having classified both groups, Jews and Blacks were often portrayed as similarly undesirable 'additions' to European society. One of the starting points for the exclusion of both groups was the perception that neither Jews nor Blacks were 'white' enough to mix in British society.<sup>97</sup>

### i) The Jew as a 'Black' Man

The desire to portray Jews as black should be seen as rooted in the supposition of 'race' thinkers that whiteness was a sign of 'racial' difference and superiority.<sup>98</sup> This belief was a central backbone of Atlantic 'race' thinking.<sup>99</sup> Following the rationale that the African was the lowest form of human, it followed in the mind frame of thinkers that the darker a person's skin tone, the less civilised they were.

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<sup>95</sup> See Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.80-94.

<sup>96</sup> See Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, pp.110-120 or Fanon, F, *The Wretched of the Earth*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1965, pp.239-242.

<sup>97</sup> Scholars analysing the shaping of 'racial' prejudices have shown the ultimate subjectivity of colour classification, one noting: 'Degrees of similarity and difference are in the eyes of the beholder, constructed by a history of ideas'. Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, p.99.

<sup>98</sup> Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, pp.236-7. 'The term "whiteness" signals the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage'. Also see Dyer, R, *White*, or Hoch, P, *White Hero, Black Beast*.

<sup>99</sup> See Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.166-169.

Richard Dyer has cited early writers on 'race' such as C. White to highlight this belief.

Ascending the line of gradation, we come at last to the white European; who being most removed from the brute creation, may, on that account, be considered the most beautiful of the human race.<sup>100</sup>

This idea permeated Beddoe's analysis regarding the 'races' of Britain as he noted how the 'fairer' upper classes were being swamped by lower 'darker' ranks of society. Beddoe bemoaned 'the relative increase of the darker types through the more rapid multiplication of the artisan class, who are in England generally darker than the upper classes'.<sup>101</sup> This view was reinforced seventy years later by anthropologist H.J. Fleure, who expressed his agreement with Beddoe in a 1920 article for the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. Fleure argued that in analysing the quality of any group, the 'less dark colouring' evident, indicated 'somewhat higher stature'.<sup>102</sup> Blackness was seen to infer a general inferiority of being. Jews and other 'white' groups were sometimes labelled as having a higher degree of 'negritude' than other white people. Simply, as Blackness conferred inferiority, inferiority implied Blackness. Other writers pursued this idea in their analysis of British social classes.

Taking the population of England in a general sense the upper classes and the country folk seem, on the whole, to be fairer and taller than the industrial sections of the population; a disposition which may indicate a natural drift of the northern race towards modes of life giving openings for their directing and organising powers and to their love of a free life in the open air. It seems probably, then, that these modern tendencies of our civilisation favour selectively the racial elements of southern origin, the

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<sup>100</sup> White, C, cited in Dyer, R, *White*, p.71.

<sup>101</sup> Beddoe, J, *The Races Of Britain*, p.298.

<sup>102</sup> Fleure, H.J., 'Some early Neanthropic Types and their Modern Representatives', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 50, 1920, p.29. More support for Beddoe's analysis was expressed in this volume. F.G. Parsons' article titled 'The Colour Index of the British Isles' argued: 'Personally I agree with every word that Beddoe wrote on the definition of these tints, in *The Races of Britain*', p.160.



elements that, as far as we can ascertain, have been least productive of ability and genius in England.<sup>103</sup>

Just as the white working classes, the Irish and other groups were often perceived as not white enough, Jews were often classified as ultimately 'Black' people.<sup>104</sup> Whilst it was difficult to conclude that Jews and Blacks shared the same skin tone (and thus 'racial' position), it was certainly possible to portray Jews as being essentially Black, at least significantly darker than their Christian British brethren. 'Race' writing on Jews is littered with ideas claiming that the white European Jew was actually a Black man at heart, posing a special 'racial' danger as a hidden Black man in white Europe.

The origins of perceiving Jews as Black in a 'racial' context lies in pre-Darwin polygenist theory and highlights the previously described subjectivity of whiteness within the 'race' thinking mind frame. As has been noted above, 'race' theorists well into the twentieth century clung to the idea that humankind was comprised of different species. As late as 1935, writing in *Eugenics Review*, biologist K.B. Aikman outlined this belief that man was in fact made up of three distinct species: Negro, Mongolian and Caucasian. Aikman explained: 'So great are the differences between these three primary races that they are comparable to the differences between the species of the zoologist rather than to those between the varieties'.<sup>105</sup> Whilst there was a divergence of opinion concerning this monogenist/polygenist debate, few 'race' scientists contested that the differences between the main species/'races' of man were massive. Robert Knox's ambivalence towards this debate is revealing. 'Men are of various races; call them species, if you will; call them permanent varieties; it matters not'.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Whetham, C.D., & Whetham, W.E.D., 'The Influence of Race on History', International Conference on Eugenics 24-30<sup>th</sup> July 1912, cited in Jones, G, *Social Darwinism and English Thought*, pp.148-149.

<sup>104</sup> Some scholars have noted that the Irish were sometimes presented as Black within British representations. See Curtis, L, *Nothing But the Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism*, G.L.C. Ireland Information, London, 1984, pp.60-64 or Curtis, L. Perry, *Apes and Angels: the Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 1997.

<sup>105</sup> Aikman, K.B., *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 25, 1935, p.161.

<sup>106</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.2.

Importantly, within these classifications, Jews were often considered as members of the Negro 'race' or type, which was usually dismissed by 'race' thinkers as the lowest of the groups of mankind. Knox was sure that Jews were merely advanced, Black men; an idea supported by Robert Latham who viewed both Jews and Arabs in this way.<sup>107</sup> Latham, describing the differences between Jewish and Arab types, seems to have found the Jew most similar to his African brethren with his 'greater massiveness of frame [and] thicker lips'.<sup>108</sup> In a characteristic remark, Robert Knox revealed something of the dogma which enabled Jews to be classified as Africans in his mid-nineteenth century 'race' study. In the *Races of Men*, Knox speculated on the relationship between the ancient Jewish tribes and modern Africans, expressing his desire to show a link between the two.

Wild, visionary, and pitiable theories have been offered respecting the colour of the black man, as if he differed only in colour from the white races; but he differs in everything as much as in colour. He is no more a white man than an ass is a horse or a zebra: if the Israelite finds his ten tribes amongst them I shall be happy.<sup>109</sup>

This was far from the only speculative desire amongst nineteenth century thinkers to link Jews and Blacks.<sup>110</sup> Cheyette, in his seminal study on the representation of Jews in British literature, has cited Kipling as seemingly eager to portray Jewish blackness, in *Life's Handicapp*. The story describes a Jew from Shushan as being susceptible to the kind of atavistic urges (in this case a desire to follow his 'primitive' Judaic law), which the author considers typical of a Black man. Cheyette concludes that Kipling 'brings together the 'Jew' and the 'Nigger' as racial primitives which need to be 'governed' by a superior imperial power'.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Also see the analysis of Freeman, R.A., *Social Decay and Regeneration*, Constable and Co, 1921, London, pp.266-267.

<sup>108</sup> Latham, R.G., *The History of the Varieties of Man* cited in Efron, J, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin de Siècle Europe*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1994, p.46

<sup>109</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.245.

<sup>110</sup> See Melamed, A, *The Image of the Black in Jewish Culture: a History of the Other*, Routledge Curzon, London and New York, 2003. 'A strong European tradition, dating back to the Middle Ages, maintained that Jews were Black or at least swarthy, and finds sharp expression in modern anti-Semitic literature', p.31.

<sup>111</sup> Cheyette, B, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society*, p.81. Also see Cheyette, B, 'Neither Black Nor White: The Figure of the "the Jew" in Imperial British Literature', in Nochlin,

More blatantly, Joseph Banister, author of one of the most infamous 'racial' studies of British Jewry, described Jews in a 1930 news sheet as 'negroid tribesmen' and in a 1901 book as 'bigoted, puritanical aborigines'.<sup>112</sup> Whilst Banister was an extreme and isolated thinker on Jews, other mainstream scientists still perceived Jewish 'Blackness' well into the twentieth century. Moderate biologist Alfred Haddon described the 'racial' composition of Jews in his 1924 study, as showing 'some Negro admixture'.<sup>113</sup>

## ii) United by Struggle? Jews and Blacks against 'Race' Science

Paul Gilroy has contended that Jewish and Black communities recognised each other as being similarly afflicted by 'race' theory, and that the suffering and emancipation of the communities were linked in many ways.<sup>114</sup> Gilroy has noted that anti-Jewish pogroms in the early twentieth century drew 'sympathetic and comparative assessments in the black press'.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, sympathetic reporting can be seen from within the Jewish press in Britain after attacks against the Black community in the wake of the First World War. The *Jewish Chronicle* reminded its readers:

Not to forget how easy it is to formulate false charges about those against whom we are prejudiced or whom we hate...As Jews, we naturally have a special interest in this matter. For once justice became the prerogative of the mob, and vengeance for wrongs, real or imaginary, were permitted them, all those of different racial origin

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L, and Garb, T, (eds.), *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, London, 1995, pp.31-41.

<sup>112</sup> Banister, J, *England Under the Jews*, (Private Publication), London, 1901, p.153, News letter: Eugenics Society MSS, SA/EUG/J19, Box 62, 1930.

<sup>113</sup> Haddon, A.C., *The Races Of Man and Their Distribution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1924, p.2. Haddon went on to co-write (with Julian Huxley) the most significant challenge to 'race' thinking of the inter-war period, *We Europeans*, in 1935. It is revealing that even the most 'enlightened' of scientists in this period expressed views regarding Jewish 'negritude', albeit ten years before the publication with Huxley.

<sup>114</sup> Gilroy P, *Between Camps*, pp.80-124.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p.265.

to the majority- and that would include Jews- would be liable to be made victims of insensate persecution.<sup>116</sup>

Gilroy has further claimed that similar recognition led to favourable treatment of Black immigrants arriving in Britain after the Second World War by Britain's Jews who, Gilroy claims, 'opened their homes' to West Indians, when it was otherwise near impossible for them to rent property.<sup>117</sup> Whilst this thesis will later question whether such mutual empathy was always the case, it is interesting to consider the idea that Jews and Blacks did sometimes recognise each other as victims of similar hatreds. However, Jewish and Black hostility to the other will also require investigation in this thesis in order to discover if Black/Jewish relations were actually enhanced by a recognition of collective suffering as Gilroy has argued.<sup>118</sup>

That the emancipation of one group was significant to the emancipation of the other has not only been suggested by Gilroy but was an idea considered by some of the more dogmatic 'race' thinkers themselves. Biologist Reginald Ruggles Gates believed that Jews were conspiratorially working to destroy anti-Black prejudice in order to free themselves from similarly targeted 'racial' theory.

It is a curious fact, which presumably has some devious psychological explanation, that the bulk of biological writers who take the role of apologists for the Negro and attempt to decry the

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<sup>116</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 20/6/19. Similarly, there is some evidence that the Jewish press and Jewish communal leadership opposed the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. The legislation led to the statement from the Secretary of the Anglo-Jewish Association, that the organisation was 'opposed to racial or religious persecution in whatever form it might appear', (Anglo-Jewish Association MSS, AJ95/98, 3/1/62). Likewise, the *Jewish Chronicle* heavily criticised the Act in an editorial, (see Waldenberg, M, 'The History of Anglo-Jewish Responses to Immigration and Racial Tension, 1950-70', Unpublished M.A., University of Sheffield, p.37). However, it is revealing that other than making sympathetic noises towards the plight of the Black community, Jewish bodies took no substantial action to support Black immigrants. Indeed, in the same statement in which the Anglo-Jewish Association condemned the Commonwealth Immigrant Act, it concluded that 'no formal representations by the Board are required' (Anglo-Jewish Association MSS, AJ95/98, 3/1/62).

<sup>117</sup> Gilroy P, *Between Camps*, p.4.

<sup>118</sup> The thesis will assess the reactions of Blacks and Jews to each other through each period under consideration. Jewish and Black reactions to persecution and attempted restriction will receive particular attention as will the similarities between Pan-Africanism and Zionism in order that a more sophisticated understanding of the roles of Jewish and Black people within British 'race' thinking can be achieved.

existence of any racial differences are themselves of Jewish stock.

It is all part of the Myrdal scheme.<sup>119</sup>

It has been made clear that many British 'race thinkers' portrayed substantial 'similarities' between Blacks and Jews within their scientific 'racial' theory. These similarities (and indeed differences) between Black and Semitic 'racial' discourses will be explored in the remainder of this introduction.

### iii) 'Racial' Roots: Questioning Black and Semitic Discourses

The most obvious similarities between the 'racial' theories formulated about Jews and Blacks concerned the perceived inferiority of both these groups to the white, Northern European and the corresponding undesirability of allowing Jews and Blacks to enter Britain and corrupt the superior 'racial' stream. The articulation of these ideas highlighted the thin line between science and popular prejudice as inferiority was 'proved' by a whole range of ambiguous and spurious means.

The starting point for anti-Black discourse was usually the supposition that the Black man was a primitive, a belief so widely held that some writers felt no obligation to bother with the matter of evidence. Early 'race' thinker Robert Knox simply stated this inferiority as obvious in his study of 'race'. 'Since the earliest times, then, the dark races have been the slaves of their fairer brethren...In size of brain they seem also considerably inferior'.<sup>120</sup> Knox's work does not come complete with any evidence whatsoever, only with dogmatic assertion accompanied by the complacency of knowing that few questioned analysis of this nature. Likewise, Knox took the inferiority of the Jew as an obvious reality. Jewish feebleness, Knox argued, would soon render the 'race' extinct. Whilst the Jew could pose as a cultured

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<sup>119</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/41, 'Myrdal scheme' is a reference to the anti-racist work of Swedish trained lawyer and anthropologist Gunnar Myrdal who wrote on the equality of the American Black man notably in his 1944 study: *An American Dilemma. The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy*, Harper and Bros, New York and London, 1944. Gates seems to imply in this source that Myrdal was Jewish, and aiming to achieve Black emancipation for his own benefit. This idea dominated much of Gates' personal correspondence. Criticising a 1935 text by Klineberg, Gates commented: 'Like all Jews, he tries in every way to minimise race differences'. This scholar even put forward a theory that Jews had created Jazz music as a tool for Black Americans to gain emancipation. Black music, he recorded in a review of 'Along this way' by J.W. Johnson, was 'devised chiefly by Jewish musicians'.

<sup>120</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, pp.221-226.

European, it was impossible for him to escape his 'racial' inferiority. 'Losing sight of his origin for a moment, he dresses himself up as a flash man about town; but never to be mistaken for a moment – never to be confounded with any other race'.<sup>121</sup> Whilst it must be noted that Knox was one of the most extreme British 'race' theorists, one must go a long way to find analysts that significantly challenged his conclusions regarding the 'racial' 'otherness' of Blacks and Jews. Francis Galton, for example, presented equally dogmatic evidence to 'prove' Black and Jewish inferiority. His observations of Black people were enough in terms of evidence to advance the conclusion that the entire 'race' was inferior. 'The mistakes the Negroes made in their own matters, were so childish, stupid, and simpleton like, as frequently to make me ashamed of my own species'.<sup>122</sup> Galton's studies of British Jewry enabled the formulation of the similarly derogatory opinion that the Jewish 'race' possessed only a base, natural tendency towards financial acquisition, without the sophistication to display 'the slightest interest of any other kind'.<sup>123</sup>

The line between 'racial' and 'cultural' inferiority was frequently blurred within the mind frame of nineteenth century 'race' thinkers. Dogmatic beliefs regarding the dearth of culture in Jewish and Black societies were frequently invoked as scientific evidence of 'racial' inferiority. As Paul Rich has argued, the very notion of anthropological study into Black society worked on the supposition that these societies lacked 'any significant history of their own'.<sup>124</sup> As late as 1923, Ruggles Gates was still arguing that Black society had no history or culture at all.

Many native African and other tribes are in the stone age, so far as their culture is concerned, and it cannot be expected that their mentality has advanced beyond that period.<sup>125</sup>

The Founder of the World Scouting Movement, Baden Powell, a fierce believer in 'race' difference, posited similarly dismissive views of Black culture in his turn of the century guide to understanding the Australian Aborigine. Powell commented that

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<sup>121</sup> Knox, R., *The Races of Men*, pp.193-207.

<sup>122</sup> Galton, F., *Hereditary Genius*, p. 339.

<sup>123</sup> Galton, F., 'Photographic Composites' 1885, Cited in Gilman, S., *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence*, University of Nebraska Press, 1996, U.S.A., pp.34-37.

<sup>124</sup> Rich, P., *Race and Empire in British Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p.93.

<sup>125</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, Constable and Co, London, 1923, p.84.

these communities were 'an absolutely wild, uneducated people who know nothing about law and civilisation, living almost like animals, but not quite'.<sup>126</sup> Again, Robert Knox (writing fifty years before Powell and eighty years before Ruggles Gates) provided an influential example, regarding the perception of Black culture within the mind frame of British 'race' thinkers.

Without arts, without religion, and without civilisation of any kind, for how many centuries had they occupied their kraals, content to live, and to perish like the beasts of the field, leaving no name behind them.<sup>127</sup>

In a similar way, 'race' thinkers held up the poverty of Jewish culture as an example of 'racial' inferiority. Whereas remote Black populations were easily dismissed as little more than animals, the European Jew had been the neighbour of other communities in Europe for so long that it was harder to 'write off' Jewish culture, which existed in similar settings and on similar terms to that of other white Europeans.

Ultimately, though, it still proved possible for some 'race' thinkers to utterly dismiss Jewish cultural achievement and to utilise this dismissal as evidence of Jewish 'racial' inferiority.<sup>128</sup> British theorists added to an elaborate European dismissal of the culture of Jews by portraying Jewish sophistication and innovation as imitation of their European neighbours. Nationalist anti-Semitic theorist Houston Stewart Chamberlain outlined this view in his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. Jews could only succeed, Chamberlain argued, in 'professions...which demand only intelligence and application...poverty of imagination is a fundamental trait of the Semite'.<sup>129</sup> The roots of this mind frame are evident in Galton's analysis regarding Jews. Galton dismissed the notion of Jewish genius, arguing instead that the characteristic that had enabled Jews to succeed was in fact market awareness and a

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<sup>126</sup> Rosenthal, M, *The Character Factory: Baden Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement*, Collins, London, 1986, p.259.

<sup>127</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.238.

<sup>128</sup> See Gilman, S, *Smart Jews*, pp.34-57.

<sup>129</sup> Chamberlain, H.S., *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Vol:1, p.50. Sachs concurs with this view in Sachs, J, *The Jewish Genius*, Goldston, London, 1939, p.191.

certain 'craftiness'.<sup>130</sup> By dismissing Jewish achievement in this way, as merely imitation combined with a certain commercial 'nouse', Jews were pushed into the category of 'racially undesirable' and their worth, in 'racial' terms, was often dismissed. Knox described Jews (along with Gypsies) as 'races which cultivate not the earth, which manufacture nothing, which progress not in art nor in science...their absence or their presence must in the history of man go for little'.<sup>131</sup> This last comment emphasises the similarities of perception within some 'race' discourses between the roles allocated to the Jew and the Black respectively. Theorists often dismissed both as having offered little or nothing to the world, set against the ingenuity and courage of the Northern European whose gift for innovation had been crucial to the development of modern civilisation. Geologist J.W. Gregory concluded in his 1920s study on 'race' that 'the most striking mental characteristic of the European as compared with men of other races is his initiative'.<sup>132</sup>

The dismissal of Jewish achievement in this way provides the reader with an interesting example of the ultimate malleability and power of 'race' theory. As 'race' thinkers were mostly both racist and Euro-centric, one may have thought that it would have been impossible to dismiss the contribution of the Jew.<sup>133</sup> However, the above examples highlight the ability of theory to include/exclude groups within discourses of 'racial' desirability. Perhaps the ultimate example of the ability of 'race' thinkers to mitigate Jewish success comes again from the writings of Knox, whose comments reveal how the belief in 'racial type' overrode any other evidence or fact. Responding to Disraeli's list of Jewish achievers presented in *Coningsby*, Knox simply replied:

In the long list of names of distinguished persons whom Mr Disraeli has described as of Jewish descent, I have not met with a single Jewish trait in their countenance, in so far as I can discover, and, therefore, they are not Jews, nor of Jewish origin.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Galton, F, 'Photographic Composites' 1885, in Gilman, S, *Smart Jews*, p.37.

<sup>131</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.157.

<sup>132</sup> Gregory J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, p.240-241.

<sup>133</sup> Indeed, some 'race' thinkers considered Jews a superior 'race' because of their cultural achievements. See Jacobs, J, *Jewish Contributions to Civilisation* and Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.102-105.

<sup>134</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.208.



Just as both Black and Jewish communities were often considered 'racially' inferior, many 'race' theorists consistently warned of the perils that the British 'race' would suffer if it allowed its blood to be mixed, through 'miscegenation', with either of these groups. Whilst fears concerning 'racial' mixing with Jews never generated the impact in Britain that was caused by the fear of mixing with Blacks, both communities were mostly considered by 'race' theorists as undesirable breeding partners for British people.<sup>135</sup> The 'race' theorists' obsession with 'miscegenation' will be a repeated theme throughout this thesis.

Concern for the preservation of the British 'race' rose to a crescendo towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>136</sup> The atmosphere of competing European nationalisms combined with the reverses of the British army, notably during the Boer war, convinced many analysts that the state of the nation hung precariously and would be settled by the success of British breeding.<sup>137</sup> This mind frame was, of course, the *sine qua non* of the Eugenics movement. Frequently, the matter of concern was British class degeneracy, but the issue of the potential effects of 'racial' mixture was never far from the forefront of concerns for many thinkers. As more Jews and Blacks entered Britain during the early parts of the twentieth century, concerns about 'miscegenation' abounded. The opinion of 'race' thinker Anthony Ludovici is typical of other eugenicists in this period.

In the only cultures that have left a permanent mark on the world, we find not only inbreeding, but also a strong conscious tendency to keep apart, to segregate.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Many 'race' thinkers maintained this position towards 'race' mixing throughout the period under investigation. See Knox, R., *The Races of Men*, p.263, Galton, F., *Hereditary Genius*, p.350, White, A., *The Modern Jew*, pp.139-140, Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.245, Keith, A., *Essays on Human Evolution*, Watts and Co, London, 1946, p.48.

<sup>136</sup> See Burrow, J.W., *The Crisis of Reason*, pp.100-105 or Mosse, G., *Towards the Final Solution*, p.45

<sup>137</sup> For a clear example of these ideas in 'race' thinking see White, A., *Efficiency and Empire* or Freeman, R.A., *Social Decay and Regeneration*. For analysis see Searle, G.R., *The Quest for National Efficiency*, Basil Blackwood, Oxford, 1971.

<sup>138</sup> *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 25/6,1933-35, p.147. Similarly, Arthur Keith argued: 'There is also in operation some system of segregation which causes the members of a group to cling to each other, and which also at the same time serves to isolate its members from all surrounding or competing groups' in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 58, 1925, pp.306-321.

The *Eugenics Society* wrote to the government in 1923 outlining the necessity of 'racial' separation in the apocalyptic terms that governed the thought processes of 'race' thinking in this period.

Their [politicians] success will in the long run depend on whether they can succeed in barring the immigration of all such stocks as are badly endowed by nature with those inborn qualities which tend to promote efficiency. Immigration laws should be like a sieve, only letting through the fine material, whilst rejecting all that is coarse. If British immigration laws are defective in this respect, the British Empire may become the dumping ground of human refuse.<sup>139</sup>

Most theorists believed that mixing with some 'similar' types or 'races' could produce harmonious effects of 'hybrid vigour'. Gates argued that mixing between allied 'races' could produce 'increased vigour and a greater range of alternative characters' in the offspring.<sup>140</sup> However, most scientists thought that mixing with Blacks and Jews would produce the opposite effect.<sup>141</sup> As far as mixing with Blacks was concerned, 'race' theorists frequently argued that even before mental issues could be discussed, breeding could cause gross physical disharmonies.

Theories of this kind were most prominent in the U.S. and were epitomised in Charles Davenport's notorious study of mixed 'race' Jamaicans.<sup>142</sup> British theorists, however, were central in the development of these ideas. Gates, in his 1923 study on eugenics, concluded:

The cross-bred races which have sprung up through miscegenation between Europeans and more backward peoples are at a disadvantage from almost every point of view. Physical disharmonies result, such as the fitting of large teeth into small jaws; or as Davenport points out,

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<sup>139</sup> *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 15, 1923-1924, pp.646-647.

<sup>140</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.223.

<sup>141</sup> Some 'race' thinkers actually thought that mixing with Jews would be beneficial to 'racial' quality and bemoaned the Jews' reluctance to mix. See for example Goldwin Smith, A, 'Can Jews Be Patriots?', in *Nineteenth Century*, Vol: 3, 1878, pp.877-887. Also see below, pp.38-39.

<sup>142</sup> Davenport, C, and Steggarda, M, (et al.), *Race Crossing in Jamaica*, Carnegie Institute, Washington, 1929.

large men with small internal organs, or inadequate circulatory systems, or other disharmonies which tax the adjustability of the organism, and may lead to early death.<sup>143</sup>

Similar views were put forward in *Eugenics Review* by K.B. Aikman who argued that inter-'racial' breeding would cause children to be born with unfitting skulls, jaws and teeth and with a 'chaotic constitution' throughout.<sup>144</sup> 'Race' thinkers were equally concerned with the mental effects of mixing with 'inferior' Black communities. Gates, commenting on the performance of children who were born with Black fathers during the 1923 Ruhr occupation, noted their 'mental weakness' and 'very poor school records'.<sup>145</sup> Labour politician, E.D. Morel, raised similar concerns regarding the post war use of French colonial troops to police the Rhineland.<sup>146</sup> Geologist J.W. Gregory invoked history to show what happened when white 'races' allowed their blood to be 'polluted' by Blacks. 'The dilution of the Portuguese by Negro blood is often regard as one of the main causes in the fall of Portugal from its political, scientific and intellectual pre-eminence'.<sup>147</sup> Gregory concluded that black and white mixing would be 'a disaster to humanity'.<sup>148</sup>

Likewise, theorists and activists argued that 'alien' arrivals in Britain (usually a euphemism for Jewish immigrants) posed an equivalent threat to the development of the British 'race'. An undated, anonymous memorandum on the subject, written for the *Eugenics Society*, noted: 'The Eugenics Society is not concerned with political effects of alien immigration, but only with its effect on the race...probably the majority of alien immigrants are of a physically poor type'.<sup>149</sup> In 'Eugenics Review', G.P. Mudge commented more strongly on the 'racial' quality of the immigrant Jews and on the impact that mixing with them would have on Britain.

They can add nothing to, but will certainly take from, the physical and moral character of the people of this country.....To permit any

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<sup>143</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.222.

<sup>144</sup> *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 25, 1935, p.161.

<sup>145</sup> Gates MSS, Kings College London, Section 11/File 27.

<sup>146</sup> Morel, E.D., *The Horror on the Rhine*, Union of Democratic Control, London, 1920.

<sup>147</sup> Gregory, J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, p.19.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* p.89.

<sup>149</sup> *Eugenics Society* MSS, SA/EUG, Box 33, File 103, (Undated, circa 1920).

admixture of this immigrant race with our people, whether by marriage-monogamous or polygamous- or by interpolation, is to produce a hybrid community of very undesirable character, to deteriorate the physical and mental equipment of our race, and eventually to end the English race in England.<sup>150</sup>

Just as Blacks and Jews were perceived as 'racial' undesirables, in both cases the frenzy caused by their immigration into the UK well surpassed any reasonable reaction to the number of arrivals.<sup>151</sup> Fleeing Nazism, fewer than 10,000 Jews were allowed to enter the UK before 1939, whilst the number of permanent Black British residents numbered less than 20,000 before the Second World War.<sup>152</sup> Fuelled by theoretical fears of 'racial' poisoning, protagonists always argued the case against Jewish and Black presence in Britain in apocalyptic terms of 'racial swamping' and destruction. In this context, Cesarani has noted that the idea of the immigrant in Britain 'was always more feared in the imagination than it was confronted in the flesh'.<sup>153</sup> The number of immigrants entering the country was frequently exaggerated within debates concerning the impact of these new minority communities.<sup>154</sup>

By exaggerating immigrant numbers, protagonists created fears and tensions concerning employment, housing, health and sexual competition. Immigrant communities were portrayed as a threat to the daily existence of indigenous Britons. However, this thesis will consider whether allegations against immigrants and minorities were ultimately underpinned by the fears discussed above, namely those concerning 'miscegenation' and the potential decline of 'racial' British society, which was supposedly caused by the presence of Jewish and Black immigrants.

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<sup>150</sup> *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 11, April 1919-January 1920, pp.206-211.

<sup>151</sup> The tendency of exaggerating immigrant numbers within 'racial' thinking has been noted by scholars. For example, see Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, Macmillan, London, 1989, p.52

<sup>152</sup> London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews, British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p.104 & Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, Pluto Press, London, 1984, pp.298-340.

<sup>153</sup> Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept? The Continuity of Anti-Alienism in British Society before 1940', in Kushner, T, and Cesarani, D, (eds.), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain*, Frank Cass, London, 1993, p.31.

<sup>154</sup> Such hyperbolic responses are evident in Home Office reaction to post First World War immigration. Mr Haldane Porter warned Home Office colleagues that 'more drastic restrictions were necessary to prevent the labour market being flooded by aliens', (PRO, HO 73/112, Meeting to consider Aliens Restriction Order, 9/5/19). This view was reiterated by the Home Secretary, who warned the Commons of an 'imminent danger of alien invasion', (*Hansard*, Vol:114, Col: 2748, 15/4/19).

Finally, it must be made clear that the comparative nature of this thesis will not entail an over simplification or over-stating of the similarities between anti-Black and Semitic discourses. Whilst it has been argued here that many similarities existed between the way that Blacks and Jews were seen within the mind frame of British 'race' thinkers, this thesis will not attempt to homogenise these two distinct histories.<sup>155</sup> Instead, it will set to explore how the similarities and differences between 'racial' perceptions concerning Jews and Blacks affected their respective histories in Great Britain. In accordance with this recognition of difference, the final section of this introduction will consider some key factors that condition any comparison between Semitic and anti-Black discourses in British 'race' theory.

Primarily, it seems that Semitic discourses were capable of remarkable ambivalence, whilst theories concerning Black people were more uniform in their composition. Recurring themes run through Black discourses: Blacks were inferior, stupid, child-like and primitive, sexually rapacious and emotionally unstable. Psychologist Franz Fanon has rightly categorized anti-Black racism in this period as 'a racism of contempt'.<sup>156</sup> The only ambiguity that tended to surround theories of this nature concerned the ability of Black communities to 'develop'. Whilst more dogmatic writers contended that the Black man was a different animal, forever incapable of ascending to the 'heights' of white sophistication, more liberal theorists argued that whilst Blacks were obviously 'backward', exposure to European ways would gradually lead them to civilisation.<sup>157</sup> Gregory outlined the modern history of India as having occurred in this way. Now that the British had taught the Indians the correct way to live they should happily agree to their independence 'with the pleasure of a parent at the independence of a competent son'.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Theorists of Jewish and Black comparative studies have been keen to emphasise 'difference' and the corresponding importance of not presenting analysis of these communities as 'parallel histories'. See Fredrickson, G, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1995 and Green, N, 'The Comparative Method and Post-Structural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol: 13, 1994, pp.3-21.

<sup>156</sup> Fanon, F, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.132.

<sup>157</sup> Knox, Keith and Ruggles Gates are all good examples of theorists who believed that the Black 'races' would never attain the ability to behave like 'civilised' Europeans.

<sup>158</sup> Gregory, J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, p.237.

Semitic discourses were, however, far less static in terms of composition.<sup>159</sup> Theories often contradicted each other. Jews were commonly perceived as controllers of world capitalism whilst being seen by other theorists as the fomenters of communist or anarchist revolution. Jews were attacked as inferior sometimes, conspiratorially brilliant at other times; as full of disease whilst being slyly immune to others. Memmi noted, regarding his own experience of being perceived within Semitic discourses: 'I am supposed to be sickly and weak, a biological wreck, and at the same time swollen and fat as the golden calf'.<sup>160</sup>

Ambiguities surrounding Semitic discourses are perhaps most evident concerning the issue of Jews and 'miscegenation'. This study has already noted that generally Jews were considered along with Blacks as an undesirable group to breed with the British people. However, conditioned by ideas of Jewish intelligence, some nineteenth century writers based their 'racial' antipathy towards Jews around the Jewish refusal to assimilate. George Bernard Shaw argued in *The Revolutionist's Handbook*, that Jewish refusal to assimilate was a major obstacle to the development of the 'racial superman'. The child of such a union, Shaw argued, 'might be very superior to both his parents; but it is not likely that the Jewess would find the squire an interesting companion'.<sup>161</sup> Eugenicist and politician Arnold White also based his hostility to Jews on the perceived Jewish refusal to blend with the societies in which they lived.

No race or fragment of a race can be deemed English when their diet is foreign, their origin, oriental, when their ties with alien co-religionists in other lands are closer than with Britons, and when, for successive generations, they have proudly declined to inter marry with the people of their adopted country.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> See Cheyette, B, *Constructions of "the Jew"*, pp.1-12.

<sup>160</sup> Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, p.168.

<sup>161</sup> Bernard Shaw, G, *The Revolutionist's Handbook* cited in Cheyette, B, *Constructions of "The Jew"*, p.107.

<sup>162</sup> White, A, *The Modern Jew*, pp.144-5.

Historian Goldwin-Smith concurred that anti-Semitism was the fault of the Jews themselves for 'refusing to mingle with humanity'.<sup>163</sup>

This issue opens up questions concerning how to understand essential differences between anti-Black and Semitic discourses. The 'racism of contempt' described by Fanon does not neatly correspond with the racism targeted at Jews. Semitic discourses were often rooted in beliefs of Jewish conspiracy and betrayal, not merely in 'racial' distain. Whilst the Black man was hated for the unalterable inferiority of his being, Semitic discourses orientated more around the belief that the Jew had chosen his 'undesirable' nature. This is evident in the resentment expressed above concerning the Jewish refusal to assimilate. Sander Gilman has highlighted this point and developed it even further:

The difference between the two attitudes is apparent. The Jew is attacked in his religious identity, in his history, in his race, in his relations with his ancestors and with his posterity; when one sterilises the Jew, one cuts off the source; every time a Jew is persecuted, it is the whole race that is persecuted in his person. But it is in his corporeality that the Negro is attacked. It is as a concrete personality that he is lynched. It is as an actual being that he is a threat.<sup>164</sup>

This thesis must consider whether Gilman has overstated this point. The boundary that he draws between the persecution of an 'actual being' and that of a 'whole race' seems too permeable to be presented as an absolute rule. Whilst it is pertinent to observe that discourses varied between the 'primitive' and 'conspiratorial' images of Blacks and Jews, this study will be hesitant about 'neatly' designating Semitic and anti-Black theory as entirely differing phenomena.

The thesis will engage in a detailed investigation as to how 'racial' discourses ascended and altered during the main waves of Jewish and Black immigration over the twentieth century. Therefore, it will begin in chapter one by assessing the role of 'race' in setting responses to Jewish and Black communities in the wake of the First

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<sup>163</sup> Goldwin Smith, A, 'Can Jews be Patriots', p.884.

<sup>164</sup> Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, pp.162-3.

World War. It will then move on to consider the impact of the presence of Jewish refugees from Nazism and Black soldiers and volunteers during the Second World War on British 'racial' thinking, in chapter two. Finally, chapter three will analyse attitudes towards Jewish and Commonwealth immigration after the war, assessing the thinking behind the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962. The study will focus throughout on how 'racial' theory affected the reception and development in the UK of Black and Jewish communities and will examine how these groups themselves developed and affected 'racial' theory as active agents. The thesis will analyse the decline of 'racial' theory between 1918 and 1962, assessing the origins and development of challenges to 'racial' thinking and the growth of non-'racial' concepts of difference in twentieth century Britain. Government documents, the private papers of key individuals, published texts on 'race' (and on Jews and Blacks especially) and media records will provide the bulk of the primary source material for this study.



**Chapter Two**  
**Riots, Restriction and the Question of Reform: Scientific ‘Race’**  
**Thinking, Anti-Alienism and Jews and Blacks in Britain in the**  
**Interwar Period**

Jewish immigration to the United Kingdom was not a new phenomenon in the interwar period. Britain’s Jewish community had been growing since the arrival of substantial numbers of Eastern European Jews in the 1880s and refugees from Nazism took their places within well-established communities.<sup>1</sup> The First World War also witnessed the first widespread Black immigration to Britain. The nascent Black community expanded especially in port towns as maritime workers from the Empire were brought to Britain to fulfil war needs and chose to settle permanently on the British mainland after the conflict.<sup>2</sup> However, the growing Black population was not merely comprised of ex-sailors. Other people, especially students, were also prominent amongst this expanding community.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of ‘anti-alienism’ requires explanation at the beginning of this chapter. Some analysts have argued that hostility towards war enemies ignited into a wider xenophobic tendency in the wake of the war, an opposition to people perceived as non-British or ‘alien’.<sup>4</sup> Cesarani has concluded: ‘Anti-alien discourse by definition had no boundary: It comprehended everything that was “other” to Britain and Englishness’.<sup>5</sup> This study will consider whether anti-alienism can be differentiated and explained as a more focused ‘race’ thinking than Cesarani has suggested. It will assess the influence of beliefs regarding ‘racial’ differences amid the post-war circumstances of British society in order to discover whether any consistent attitude dominated domestic reactions to different foreign communities in Britain after the First World War. It will probe changing attitudes towards ‘race’ as a concept within

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<sup>1</sup> For analysis of communal growth see Endelman, T, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000*, University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 2002, or Gartner, L, *History of the Jews in Modern Times*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> For early reactions to this settlement and details see Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.298-305 or Holmes, C, *John Bull’s Island*, pp.106-112.

<sup>3</sup> See Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.298-346.

<sup>4</sup> See Holmes, C, *John Bull’s Island*, pp.140-160.

<sup>5</sup> Cesarani, D, ‘An Alien Concept?’, p.36. Also see Gainer, B, *Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905*, Heinemann, London, 1972, p.208.

scientific communities and in wider society during this period. Significantly, it will consider Cesarani's observation concerning the wide parameters of anti-alien hostility and especially whether the nature of Semitic and anti-Black 'racial' discourses left these groups particularly vulnerable to prejudice and hostility, rooted in 'racial' anti-'alien' thinking. This chapter will explore the histories of Jewish and Black immigration in the interwar period in order to assess the impact of 'race' thinking and of changing attitudes towards 'race' on these minority communities in Britain. It will, however, begin by considering the changing perceptions of 'race' as a concept in interwar British scientific communities.

### a) Scientific 'Race' Thinking in the Interwar Period: Continuity or Change?

By the time that Britain went to war with Nazi Germany in 1939, an established scientific critique of earlier notions of 'racial' difference had unquestionably emerged. The publication of Huxley and Haddon's *We Europeans*, in 1935, should be seen as a pivotal moment in this context.<sup>6</sup> Science, as has been argued in the introduction to this thesis, did not develop in a social or political vacuum and many British scholars clearly perceived a role for themselves in the face of British opposition to Germany.<sup>7</sup> This role was to de-construct the 'racial' rationale of the Third Reich and involved the dismantling or at least re-ordering of traditional British scientific attitudes towards 'race'. In this context, the publication of *We Europeans* should be viewed as an overtly political event as should the 'Race and Culture' conference and publication of the same year.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> There has been academic discussion over the authorship of this book. Some scholars have alleged that Charles Singer and Charles Seligman were actually the writers of much of the text but that Huxley and Haddon published *We Europeans* in order to reach the widest possible audience and avoid allegations of a Jewish agenda (see Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.302-310). This study, whilst acknowledging other contributors, will generally present the work as that of Huxley and Haddon. They after all took responsibility for its contents and clearly wrote large sections of the text themselves despite seemingly taking contributions from other scholars.

<sup>7</sup> Hasian Jr has argued in this context that 'race' scientists in this period should not be seen as 'spectators' in society, but as 'participants who legitimate and certify particular performances as science' in Hasian Jr, M, *The Rhetoric of Eugenics*, p. 7. Barkan has presented a similar analysis: 'If popular opinion holds that science has its own determinism and that it is applied in a coherent manner as a result of its substance and objectivity, historical records suggest otherwise' in Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.228.

<sup>8</sup> The political contexts of these 'race' studies were well understood by their authors. Whilst the conference took no firm or final stance on 'race', its tone was generally 'reformist' and it is clear that

With this British challenge to Nazi Germany in mind, the leading analysts of scientific racism during the interwar years have portrayed the period as a crucial time of change in terms of British scientific 'race' thinking.<sup>9</sup> These scholars have further asserted that the entire interwar period (not just the 1930s) should be seen in these terms, with 'racial' critiques beginning in the 1920s as British academics became uncomfortable with the political repercussions of 'race' thinking in the Empire and the United States. Opposition, it is argued, then accelerated in the face of Nazism in the 1930s. Barkan has asserted that 'the 1920s saw scientists moderating their views and moving in an egalitarian direction' whilst Stepan has concurred:

At the very least the debate about the concept of race inside and outside the scientific community left a question mark over its scientific credentials, even before the Nazi eugenics programme and Nazi anti-Semitism virtually destroyed its credibility.<sup>10</sup>

This chapter will consider interwar 'race' thinking and will re-assess the extent to which change really did occur in science during these years, especially regarding scientific 'racial' perceptions of Jewish and Black people.

The idea of acceleration of scientific 'change' in the face of Nazism is a tempting one. It has been epitomised in the minds of some scholars by the transforming attitude of zoologist Julian Huxley towards the idea of 'racial' difference in the interwar period. Barkan has written three separate sections for Huxley in his 'race' study: one recording his earlier racist thinking, the second his more moderate 1931 position, the last, his famous change of heart in the face of

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the participants well realised the political significance of their conclusions. In the conference publication, the introduction records: 'recent events have awakened the interest of large numbers of people in such questions'. See *Race and Culture*, Royal Anthropological Institute and the Institute of Sociology, Le Play House Press, London, 1935, p.2. Barkan has written in detail on this conference in Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.285-296. Similarly, the political importance of *We Europeans* was recorded in its conclusion. Science, the authors noted, must refuse 'to lend her sanction to the absurdities and horrors perpetrated in her name'. See Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, p. 287.

<sup>9</sup> See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp. 228-277, Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp. 137-144 or Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp. 109-119.

<sup>10</sup> See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p. 279 and Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.143.

Nazism in *We Europeans*.<sup>11</sup> Barkan is not mistaken in analysing Huxley in this way. Huxley's very real changing perspective (which Barkan acknowledges betrays some continuities throughout) offers insight into how some British scientists were indeed affected by wider political events during the interwar period.<sup>12</sup> However, perhaps Huxley's *volte face* on 'race' has been utilised in order to suggest an over-generalised model of change in interwar British 'race' science? This chapter will argue that change must be seen as a complex and non-uniform process. Some mainstream scholars sustained their traditional attitudes towards 'race' throughout the period, whilst the 'racial' critique of others was not always rooted in opposition towards Nazi Germany. Other political factors (notably domestic right and left wing political perspectives) should perhaps be seen as equally important in shaping the 'racial' attitudes of British scientists, and perhaps better explain the changes which historians have noted throughout the period.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, scientific rivalries, methodological disputes and personal prejudices (especially anti-Semitism) should be seen as playing a significant part in shaping the 'race' thinking environment of interwar Britain.

Unarguably there was significant continuity in 'race' science in interwar Britain. Despite some important changes in scientific approach (which will be discussed below), key elements of 'racial' theory remained intact within mainstream British science and continued to influence wider public thinking in this period. The idea that Britain, or perhaps more significantly England, was comprised of a distinct 'race', continued to resonate in parts of the scientific community. Gates maintained the belief throughout his career that being English was very much a 'racial' matter. 'Even after a thousand years of intermarriage, separate racial traits may still be

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<sup>11</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*. See sections: 'A Racist Liberal. Julian Huxley's Early Years', pp.177-189, '“Africa View” – Huxley's Changing Perspectives', pp. 235-249, and 'We Europeans', pp.296-302.

<sup>12</sup> Huxley can be seen to have first moderated his 'racial' views after a trip to Africa, which he recorded in the 1931 study, *Africa View*. The extreme racism of white settlers clearly upset Huxley, who developed a critical attitude towards exploitative imperialism and a more positive view about the potentials of Black peoples. His reaction to racism can be seen in his argument that '...the Africans, though the ignorant persist in classing them all merely "blacks", "natives", or even "niggers", show more variety of physical type and way of life than is to be found in all Europe', in Huxley, J, *Africa View*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the anti-racism of Lancelot Hogben and J.B.S. Haldane was primarily based in their hostility towards the British Empire. See Haldane, J.B.S., *Science Advances*, p.233, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1947 and *Science and Everyday Life*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1939, p.178. Also see Hogben, L, *Dangerous Thoughts*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1939, pp.50-51.

traceable in the modern Englishman'.<sup>14</sup> Twelve years later Gates still maintained this position as he told the 'Race and Culture' conference that 'under modern governments innumerable races are thus in process of formation, and the development of ancient empires had similar racial effects'.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the most famous proponent of thinking of this kind was Arthur Keith, who also maintained his position on 'nations' and 'races' throughout the interwar period. Keith argued that 'the races with which politicians have to deal are usually imperfectly differentiated races, but they are none the less biological races in the full sense of that term'.<sup>16</sup> Keith further argued that nation building and a desire for 'racial' separateness within nations was scientifically valid and natural behaviour.

National spirit and patriotism are its modern manifestations. Racial mixtures thwart Nature's plan, but she immediately sets out to repair the mischief and to build up a new race by the fusion of the old elements. Nation-building is the first step to race building.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, Keith proposed that 'racial' prejudice was a laudable and benevolent feature of human character. In his 1931 study on the subject, he argued that 'prejudice has a place, a very important place, in the development of peoples'.<sup>18</sup> Keith further asserted: 'This antipathy or race prejudice Nature has implanted within you for her own ends – the improvement of Mankind through racial differentiation. Race prejudice, I believe, works for the ultimate good of mankind'.<sup>19</sup>

To thinkers such as these the preservation of 'racial' purity as epitomised in the character of a nation was a logical governmental goal. F.A.E. Crew, Professor of Public Health and Social Medicine at Edinburgh University, outlined the basis of such an argument in his 1927 study.

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<sup>14</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, Constable and Co., London, 1923, p.232.

<sup>15</sup> Gates, R.R., in *Race and Culture*, p.12.

<sup>16</sup> Keith, A, 'The Evolution of the Human Races', in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 58, 1925, p.319.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Keith, A, *The Place of Prejudice in Modern Civilisation: (Prejudice and Politics)*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1931, p.53.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p.48.

The modern civilised peoples come of an ancestry that has been passed repeatedly through the fine meshes of the sieve of civilisation, those individuals and those stocks whose mental abilities fitted them for the discipline of civilisation passed through: those who have refused to accommodate themselves to the demands of changing social orders have been rejected and eliminated. The destiny of a race is determined by its genetic composition.<sup>20</sup>

Geologist, J.W. Gregory, offered similar analysis in his 1925 book *The Menace of Colour* arguing that 'the instinct of the nations of modern Europe for the preservation of their racial purity rests on a sound basis'.<sup>21</sup>

An allied belief to the idea that each nation had its own 'racial' stock was a corresponding conviction that different 'races' of people had inherently different mental and physical perspectives and potentials. Notions of mental 'racial' difference remained widespread within British scientific communities in the interwar period, and even those scholars most associated with moves away from 'racial' thinking did not often break wholly free from these beliefs in their writing.<sup>22</sup> Amongst many scientific networks ideas of 'racial' mental difference validated and underpinned a range of the academic studies undertaken in this period.

Pearson and Moul's research into the intelligence of Jewish immigrant children in 1925 provides a good example of this tendency.<sup>23</sup> The rationale behind this research held that the desirability of Jewish immigration to Britain could be objectively assessed by seeing whether Jewish children were mentally and physically inferior or superior to indigenous British children. The authors argued:

Any wise immigration law would admit into a crowded country only those who are physically as well as mentally well above the average natives. The investigation of the Polish and Russian

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<sup>20</sup> Crew, F.A.E., *Organic Inheritance in Man*, Oliver and Boyd, London, 1927.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory, J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, p. 239.

<sup>22</sup> See below, p.8.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Pearson was Professor of Mathematics at University College London until his retirement in 1933. He initiated this study of Jewish refugee children with assistant Margaret Moul armed with the belief that eugenic trends could be observed through statistical analysis.

Jewish children does not lead us to consider them even the equals physically of the native gentile children.<sup>24</sup>

Moul and Pearson were adamant that the differences that they found to exist between the British and 'alien' children were not the product of environmental factors but of hereditary ones.

Our material provides no evidence that a lessening of the aliens' poverty, an improvement of their food, or an advance in their cleanliness will substantially alter their average grade of intelligence, and with it their outlook on life.<sup>25</sup>

The scholars concluded regarding this question. 'Let us admit finally that the mind of man is for the most part a congenital product, and the factors which determine it are racial and familial'.<sup>26</sup> Other academics challenged Pearson and Moul's assessment that the intelligence of 'alien' children was inferior to their English counterparts. Tests conducted by Hughes and Davies in 1927 in fact produced directly contradictory results.<sup>27</sup> However, these scholars did not produce a challenge to the idea that 'racial' background was a key factor in shaping intelligence, only to Pearson and Moul's conclusion of immigrant inferiority. Looking at an essay by Hughes from a year after his report in fact reveals his firm belief in inherent mental 'racial' difference.

Even the most ardent internationalist would admit that if races ought to be reckoned as equal, it is on a basis of diversity of

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<sup>24</sup> Pearson, K, and Moul, M, 'The Problem of Alien Immigration into Great Britain Illustrated by an Examination of Russian and Polish Alien Children', p.46.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.124.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> These scholars argued: 'On an average, both in General Intelligence and in attainments in English and Arithmetic, Jewish children are definitely superior to the non-Jewish children attending the same school, the superiority being more marked with the boys than with the girls'. See Davies, M, and Hughes, A.G., *An Investigation into the Comparative Intelligence and Attainments of Jewish and non-Jewish School Children*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1927, p.145.

usefulness and not of identity of capacity...That Jews differ from non-Jews is generally accepted as an axiomatic truth.<sup>28</sup>

This example is interesting as it reveals a pattern in the way 'race' thinking altered during the interwar period. The difference between those scholars who have been recorded as staunch advocates of 'race' thinking and those who have been heralded as reformers was not always rooted in the fact that the former group believed in 'racial' difference whilst the latter did not. The real difference between these thinkers often lay more in their stated or implicit conclusions regarding the significance of 'racial' differences.<sup>29</sup>

Even amid the substantial 'racial' critique that was offered in *We Europeans*, Huxley and Haddon fell short of completely dismissing the idea of 'racial' mental difference. The authors concluded, regarding the notion that some ethnic groups were mentally inferior: 'These objections undoubtedly have some validity'.<sup>30</sup> In Huxley's *Africa View*, mental 'racial' difference was presented as a likely truth.

...there is not the least reason why races should not differ in the average of their inborn mental capacities as they do in their physical traits. In fact, there is every reason to suppose that such mental differences do exist.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, reformist anatomist and anthropologist Grafton Elliot Smith told the 'Race and Culture' committee in 1934 that 'it would be unjustifiable to pretend that considerations of temperament may not play some part in the acquisition of culture'.<sup>32</sup>

Importantly, however, reformist thinkers were increasingly reluctant to draw firm conclusions regarding the issue of 'racial' difference. Elliot Smith's comment above, that 'race' ideas might 'play some part' in cultural formation, and Huxley and

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<sup>28</sup> Hughes, A.G., *Jews and Gentiles: Their Intellectual and Temperamental Differences*, Garden City Press, Letchworth, (reprinted from *Eugenics Review*, Vol:18, July 1928), pp.1-6.

<sup>29</sup> The political views of 'race' thinkers were also crucial to their analysis especially in the 1930s. See below, pp.14-15.

<sup>30</sup> Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, p.281.

<sup>31</sup> Huxley, J, *Africa View*, p.388.

<sup>32</sup> Elliot Smith, G, in *Race and Culture*, p.6.



Haddon's acceptance that there was 'some validity' in 'race' thinking, should be seen as important departures from more extreme 'race' views.<sup>33</sup>

These tentative uncertainties about the significance of 'race' were very different from the firm and dogmatic assertions of more conservative 'race' thinkers. Many remained convinced that understanding 'race' and highlighting its importance was crucial to the progress and well being of the nation. A constant theme amongst these writers was the supposed 'racial' attributes of the Englishman set in contrast to the perceived abilities of 'inferior' 'races'. Crew, in his 1927 text, attributed psychological traits to various 'racial' groups. Jews were 'clever and intuitive [but had] no capacity to form a political state'.<sup>34</sup> The Negro, Crew concluded, 'lives dangerously...lacking creative power, imagination, and ambition'.<sup>35</sup> That the author believed these traits to be inherent and 'racial' is evident in his overall conclusion:

The main characteristics – the characteristics of the species, of every race, of the family, and of the individual – of every living thing are unalterably fixed by organic inheritance...All men are not created free and equal, but handicapped and unequal. This is the doctrine of the biologist.<sup>36</sup>

These opinions remained prominent in many scientific communities during the interwar period. Eugenicist and doctor K.B. Aikman was confident enough in 'race' theory to argue in 1935: 'So great are the differences between these three primary races that they are comparable to the differences between the species of the zoologist rather than to those between the varieties'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Gates maintained throughout this period that the Northern European was a different animal to inferior 'races' which were 'in the stone age, so far as their culture is concerned'.<sup>38</sup> Gates added that it could not 'be expected that their mentality has advanced beyond that

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<sup>33</sup> Barkan has argued that it was not until after 1938 that the scientific majority came down firmly on the side of anti-racism. It is pertinent to note that the change did not occur before this time, though this study will argue that perhaps even the date chosen by Barkan is too early. See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.280.

<sup>34</sup> Crew, F.A.E., *Organic Inheritance in Man*, pp.133-134.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p.174.

<sup>37</sup> Aikman, K.B., 'Race Mixture', *Eugenics Review*, Vols: 25/6, 1935, pp.151-166.

<sup>38</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.225.

period'.<sup>39</sup> As late as the 1940s Gates sustained this adamant position concerning the mental difference between all white and Black people. He argued: 'the differences both mental and physical are too obvious to be gainsaid'.<sup>40</sup> The distance between this sort of analysis and reformist thought can be found in Gates' response to a 1942 text, which questioned the certainty of 'race' difference in a similar way to British reformers. Gates' personal notes reveal a fury and exasperation with the challenge to traditional 'racial' analysis.

Very extreme rubbish. Attacks Keith. A gross diatribe on race. Dreadful rubbish by a man devoid of biological knowledge. His stuff is beneath contempt. Lowest level of biological ignorance...He asks that men 'suspend judgement until genetics can offer a more complete body of knowledge'. Complete ignorance of the knowledge we already have.<sup>41</sup>

Whilst hard line scholars were increasingly in the minority amongst British scientists as the 1930s progressed, they were by no means marginal figures.<sup>42</sup> Keith especially remained arguably the nation's most famous interwar scientist and never lost his belief in 'man's unconscious urge to race building'.<sup>43</sup>

In the same way that conservative scientists were more confident in asserting the 'racial' mental differences between different ethnic groups, they were also far more dogmatic than reformist scholars on the subject of 'miscegenation'. Again, those scientists who were moving away from 'racial' thinking in this period were not yet inclined to dismiss firmly the 'harmful' effects of inter-'racial' reproduction. They were, however, much more ambivalent and calm regarding the prospect than more conservative analysts. Huxley and Haddon gave consideration in *We Europeans* to the 'question of the biological results of wide crosses'; recording that it was

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<sup>39</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.225.

<sup>40</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/41, Gates' notes (undated) on Klineberg, O, (ed.), *Characteristics of the American Negro*, Harper and Bros, New York and London, 1944.

<sup>41</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/41, Gates' notes (undated) on Locke, A, and Stern, B, *When People Meet: a Study in Race and Culture Contacts*, Hinds, Hayden and Eldredge, New York, 1946.

<sup>42</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p. 209.

<sup>43</sup> Keith, A, 'The Evolution of the Human Races', in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol: 58, 1925, p. 320.

'extremely difficult to come to any firm conclusion'.<sup>44</sup> The scholars entertained the idea that 'very wide crosses may give biologically "disharmonic" results in later generations, by producing ill-assorted combinations of characters'.<sup>45</sup> Whilst asserting that issues of 'race' mixture were not primarily about 'race' but 'nationality, class or social status', Huxley and Haddon were still unwilling to argue that there was nothing wrong with 'miscegenation'. In fact they concluded that whilst some positive results could come from mixing, there was 'a limit to the amount of foreign stock which can be taken up by a nation in a given time' and that "racial crossing" may be inadvisable, but chiefly because the ethnic groups involved happen to be in different national worlds or different cultural levels'.<sup>46</sup> Keen to offer another side to the argument, Huxley and Haddon balanced their case by noting the political motives for anti-'miscegenation' feelings. They asserted that 'biological reasoning [was used as] a cloak to fling over obscure, perhaps unconscious feelings' and that the issue was primarily a cultural one.<sup>47</sup> 'The biologist and the eugenicist have here a negligible or at best a minor role to play as advisors'.<sup>48</sup>

That there was a significant change of attitude by reformist scientists such as Huxley and Haddon can again only be really understood set against the contrasting views of conservative 'race' thinkers regarding 'racial' mixing. To these scientists the avoidance of 'miscegenation' was an absolute priority and there was no scope for the ambivalence of reformist thinkers. Teacher, writer and eugenicist, Charles Wicksteed Armstrong argued that for Britain, 'racial' mixing was 'throwing away her most precious heritage, more precious by far than empire or art or literature – the purity of her blood'.<sup>49</sup> Whilst Armstrong was in many ways a marginal thinker in terms of the extremism of some of his views on 'race', similar attitudes towards 'miscegenation' resonated through many British scientific communities. The most famous opponents of 'miscegenation' were, unsurprisingly, Gates and Keith. Gates

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<sup>44</sup> Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, p.280. It is worth noting that even the use of this language showed a degree of sympathy to traditional 'racial' arguments. It seems that 'wide crosses' was a euphemism for 'Black/white' crosses. These reformist scholars still considered that the differences between the genetic makeup of people was necessarily 'wide' if they had different colour skin.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p.283.

<sup>46</sup> Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 283.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Armstrong, C.W., *The Survival of the Unfittest*, C.W. Daniel, London, 1927, p. 9.

sustained the belief throughout this period that mixing between human 'races' would lead to both mental and physical disabilities in the offspring. With the caveat that mixing with a 'race' very similar to ones own could produce hybrid 'vigour', he concluded:

A hybridised people will tend to be restless, dissatisfied, and ineffective; the high death rate in middle life may be due to bodily maladjustments, and much of the crime and insanity to the inheritance of badly adjusted mental and temporal differences.<sup>50</sup>

Gregory concurred that 'miscegenation' would lead to a 'chaotic constitution' in children.<sup>51</sup> 'The result', he concluded, would be 'invariably a bad one'.<sup>52</sup> Similar views on the physical ill effects of 'racial' mixing were expressed by Crew, Ludovici and Aikman amongst others.<sup>53</sup> The *Eugenics Society* championed these concerns into the 1930s through its publication, *Eugenics Review*. In this journal Aikman argued that 'the best opinion of eugenics...[was]...definitely against it [miscegenation]', whilst Ludovici argued:

The chief effects of miscegenation on the constitution are: firstly, degeneracy, by the reversion that is induced; secondly, dysfunction and disease owing to the production of individuals whose bodies are discordant jumbles of parts from various unlike stocks; and thirdly, increasing morbidity.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, concerns about 'miscegenation' remained central within the scholarship of most eugenicists and other 'racial' scientists during this period.

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<sup>50</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p. 236. In Gates' thinking, Britons could mix with other Northern European peoples even with a benevolent effect, p.223.

<sup>51</sup> Gregory, J.W., *The Menace of Colour*, pp. 323-327.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Crew argued: 'The problem of interracial marriages is not that which concerns the marriage of the original parents of the hybrid stock, but is that of the hybrids themselves. Races can differ in respect of so great a multitude of hereditary factors that in the second hybrid generation and thereafter there is to be expected a veritable epidemic of variants. This in itself is sufficient to render many interracial mixtures undesirable' in Crew, F.A.E., *Organic Inheritance in Man*, p.105.

<sup>54</sup> Aikman, K.B., 'Race Mixture' and Ludovici, A, 'Eugenics and Consanguineous Marriages', *Eugenics Review*, Vols: 25-6, 1935, pp.151-166.

Whilst the wider effects of these scientific opinions will be assessed later in this chapter, the significant point to note at this stage is that even the measured challenge to 'racial' ideas offered by reformist scientists in the interwar years should be considered as a significant step in the direction of the deconstruction of scientific 'racial' theory. However, it is also important to recognise that scientific challenges to 'race' thinking in the interwar period were not limited only to dealing with 'racial' issues in less certain and dogmatic terms. In some ways (especially in the late 1930s), reformist scientists began to offer more substantial ideological challenges to traditional 'racial' thinking.<sup>55</sup>

Changes in scientific methodology contributed in these years to the decline of 'racial' thinking. Notably, the conflict between biometricians and geneticists should be seen as an important moment in this context. This is not because either of the two schools of thought promoted an egalitarian non-'racial' analysis. In fact, generally speaking, neither did.<sup>56</sup> However, interwar debates between biometricians and geneticists facilitated the acceptance of new methodological ground rules of population analysis that later contributed significantly to the reform and deconstruction of 'racial' thinking. The argument raged between these two schools of thought concerning the 'passing on' of hereditary characteristics over generations, which formed part of a larger debate concerning the relationship between heredity and evolution. The biometricians asserted that inheritance could be understood in terms of continuous variations (analysed by statistics) whilst the new study of genetics, built around the re-discovered theory of Mendel, argued that inheritance occurred through discontinuous characters which were unpredictable and could only be explained by the nascent science of genetics.<sup>57</sup>

The minutia of the debate is not crucial to this study. What is significant is that both these new approaches created a level of sophistication to population studies

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<sup>55</sup> See Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, p.114, or Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.228-276.

<sup>56</sup> For example, perhaps the most intransigent of 'race' thinkers in this period, Reginald Ruggles Gates, was a firm believer in genetics, ultimately moulding genetic theory around his own racist views by proposing a new discipline of 'racial' genetics (see chapter three). Also see Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.140.

<sup>57</sup> For a thorough explanation of this debate see Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.111-137, Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.137-143 or Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp. 109-116.

which undermined traditional 'racial' typologies. Both Stepan and Rich have cited the importance of biometrics in this context.<sup>58</sup> Biometricians challenged the method of physical anthropology by arguing that only statistics from large groups could highlight physical or psychological trends in any population and that these trends could only be observed as a matter of averages.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the ascendancy of genetics with its complex explanations of indirect inheritance further undermined the accuracy of traditional 'racial' typologies.<sup>60</sup> As Barkan has concluded, despite the decline of biometrics both approaches combined to fundamentally alter approaches to 'race': 'Whilst the biometricians' rejection of genetics as metaphysical was generally disputed within a decade, their position that variation and heredity were not contradictory but mutually reinforcing functions, turned out to be an important contribution to the later synthesis'.<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, the analysis of geneticists like Julian Huxley betray the influence of biometrical data analysis:

...mental differences must be expected to be like the physical in being mere matters of general averages and proportions of types – there will be in every social class or ethnic group a great quantitative range and great qualitative diversity of mental characters, and different groups will very largely overlap with each other.<sup>62</sup>

Huxley's ideas of 'averages' and 'overlapping' could have come from any biometrician of the time. J.B.S. Haldane, who was in this period Professor of Biometrics at University College London, expressed similar views as he argued: 'As

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<sup>58</sup> Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.119-121 & 137 and Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, p. 109.

<sup>59</sup> See Pearson's challenge to the Anthropometric Standards Committee cited in Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, p.109.

<sup>60</sup> The emancipatory use of genetics can be seen in *We Europeans*: 'after a cross the resulting population will not tend to a mere average between the two original ingredients, but will, in the absence of social or natural selection, continue to produce a great diversity of types, generation after generation'. Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, p. 266. Also see Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.140.

<sup>61</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.140.

<sup>62</sup> Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, p.92. It is possible to attribute this analysis to Huxley specifically as it corresponds almost identically to the scholar's argument in *Africa View*. Describing 'racial' differences, Huxley argued that '...the difference between the racial averages will be small; and that they will only be an affair of averages, and that the great majority of the two populations will overlap as regards their innate intellectual capacities' in Huxley, J, *Africa View*, p.389.

for intelligence, it is certain that races overlap, for clever Negroes are cleverer than stupid Englishmen, and musical Englishmen are more musical than unmusical Negroes'.<sup>63</sup>

Whilst science provided a methodological basis for changes to 'race' thinking, it is revealing that some scientists utilised the new approaches for this purpose (like Huxley and Haldane) and some (like Gates and Pearson) did not. Ultimately, new scientific methods facilitated new emancipatory approaches to 'race', but also left staunch, conservative thinkers plenty of room to manoeuvre. Barkan has rightly concluded: 'Population genetics and the new evolutionary synthesis could lend credibility to either a racist or an egalitarian interpretation'.<sup>64</sup>

Science left scientists with the scope to pursue various interpretations within new modes of thinking, enabling political leanings to be all important in setting the direction and tone of 1930s scientific analysis. This chapter has already noted that reformist scientists questioned theory regarding notions of 'race' and nation, 'racial' purity and mental 'racial' difference. However, as the 1930s progressed, prominent liberal and left wing scholars such as Huxley, Haddon and Haldane utilised the new scientific approaches to produce more substantial rejections of 'race' thinking as a concept, rejections that need to be understood in the context of their dislike of Nazism and colonialism.

In some places reformist scholars for the first time began to proffer the idea that 'race' was an indefinable, invisible concept, which was unusable in scientific analysis. The conclusions of sociologist Charles Singer (whose influence on *We Europeans* has already been noted) are revealing of this tendency. Singer argued that 'race' as a concept was no more than socially constructed, a view he expressed forcefully in his correspondence with Jewish 'race' thinker, Redcliffe Salaman. Singer criticised Salaman for presenting Zionism as 'an impulse of persons with a particular type of nose...to huddle together'.<sup>65</sup> He dismissed Salaman's 'racial'

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<sup>63</sup> Haldane, J.B.S., *Science and Everyday Life*, p.180.

<sup>64</sup> Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, p.140.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Singer MSS, Wellcome Archive, Wellcome Institute, London, (File E1), Singer to Salaman, 2/11/43. Singer's correspondence with doctor and eugenicist Frederick Parkes Weber further illuminates Singer's views on the need for the deconstruction of 'racial' thinking on Jewry. Singer

assessment that Jewish nationalism was a natural 'urge'. The only thing that could lead Jews to form a nation, Singer argued, was 'a common error as to their origin and a common dislike of their neighbours'. Zionism, he concluded, could only be built from the 'excessively debased remains' of other nations.<sup>66</sup> This idea, that 'race' was not a physical reality but a social and psychological construct, was entertained at length in *We Europeans*.

'Race' was defined in *We Europeans* as 'a pseudo-scientific rather than a scientific term...[with]...no precise and definable meaning'.<sup>67</sup> 'Racialism', the study concluded, was 'a myth, and a dangerous myth at that'.<sup>68</sup> In the place of 'race', the authors argued that culture was the crucial factor in shaping the behaviour and sophistication of different population groups.<sup>69</sup> This view had also been expressed at the 'Race and Culture' conference in 1934, where Raymond Firth had argued that 'race' was 'a cultural product not an innate disposition'.<sup>70</sup> *We Europeans* advised that the reader should 'avoid mistaking cultural for innate differences' and argued that:

It will generally be found that the distinctive qualities upon which stress is laid are cultural rather than physical, and that when physical they are often influenced by climatic and cultural conditions.<sup>71</sup>

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wrote to Parkes Weber, criticising the doctor and citing the intellectual bankruptcy of 'racial' Jewish analysis in a tone suspiciously similar to that adopted in *We Europeans*. 'Passing over the term "race", which seems to me to be biologically untenable in the racial group known as Jews and passing over the point that you treat the "Jewish nose" as a Mendelian dominant for which there is no evidence and against which there is much evidence – you make the oddly contradictory point that as Jewish "blood" gets more and more lost in the general population so jealousy of Jews grows more and more'. Parkes Weber MSS, Wellcome Institute, London, PP/FPW/C10, 6/10/43.

<sup>66</sup> Charles Singer MSS, (File E1), Singer to Salaman, 2/11/43.

<sup>67</sup> Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, p.262.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p.287.

<sup>69</sup> This analysis perhaps betrays the influence of the other possible shadow writer of *We Europeans*, Charles Seligman. Seligman argued in an undated paper (presumably from the late 1930s): 'Jews being human beings have every human characteristic; some may be more pronounced than others on account of their cultural history'. Charles Seligman MSS, London School of Economics, (File 11/1/2), (Undated).

<sup>70</sup> *Race and Culture*, p.19. Firth was Professor of Anthropology at the LSE. Views of this kind would perhaps have been more prevalent at the conference had not a ban on Jewish participation (on the spurious grounds that Jews could not be objective on this matter) prevented the attendance of Morris Ginsberg amongst others.

<sup>71</sup> Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans*, pp.124 & 27.



These challenges need to be seen as a product of the ambiguity about 'race' thinking that existed amongst reformist thinkers in this period. It is fair to argue that these texts (especially *We Europeans*) represented the tentative beginnings of a decline in 'racial' thinking that would gain pace during and after the Second World War. Notably, the realisation amongst some academics that 'race' difference was far better explained as 'cultural' difference was crucial to the ultimate dismissal of 'race' by mainstream science and to the recognition that 'race' was in fact a socially constructed phenomenon, which needed the attention of social scientists not biologists. Post-war scholars would still address questions of 'difference' but would, ostensibly at least, tackle these questions using the language of 'culture' and 'ethnicity' and not of 'race'.<sup>72</sup> Crucially, though, this study has argued that whilst the roots of the post-war approach were evident in the analysis of some 1930s scholars, the interwar period did not witness the death of British 'race' thinking. Scientific opinion in these years was divided and confused and whilst more egalitarian approaches were seemingly gaining the upper hand in the late 1930s, the pace and prevalence of reform should not be over-emphasised.

However, in order to really understand the sustained importance of 'race' thinking in interwar British society and especially the importance of reform, this chapter needs to turn its attention away from scientific communities and assess wider British attitudes to 'race' in this period. The chapter will now focus its analysis on the two minority British communities under consideration in this thesis. By analysing the effects of scientific 'race' thinking on perspectives and policy in wider British society and especially by gauging how changes and continuity in thinking of this kind affected Jewish and Black British communities, a clearer picture of attitudes towards 'race' in interwar Britain will be illuminated.

## b) The Prevalence of 'Racial' Discourses: Jews and Blacks as 'Racial' Types in British Thinking

Traditional British scientific approaches to the study of Blacks and Jews had promoted the impression that these communities could be considered as distinct

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<sup>72</sup> Notably see analysis of the 1950 and 1952 UNESCO statements on 'race' in chapter three.

'racial' types in terms of both physical appearance and psychology. Investigations by numerous thinkers (notably Knox, Beddoe and Galton) had made the study of 'race' and 'racial' difference a well-established terrain within British academia, enabling later scholars to continue such studies armed with a precedent or pre-supposition that there was a validity in looking at Jews or Blacks as 'racial' communities.<sup>73</sup>

The writings of Knox highlight this belief in the unalterable character of Jews and Blacks. Knox argued that the Jew had not changed, displaying a constant 'type' since 'the earliest recorded period'.<sup>74</sup> '...Losing sight of his origin for a moment, he dresses himself up as the flash man about town; but never to be mistaken for a moment - never to be confounded with any other race'.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, Knox was confident that 'the darker races of man' could be assessed by the scientist as one category of human.<sup>76</sup> The Jewish type was, to Knox, a parasitic subversive who mercilessly exploited the people he lived amongst for the exclusive benefit of other Jews. The Black type was 'racially' a primitive who could not compete with more advanced white people and was thus 'marked' by 'destiny...for destruction'.<sup>77</sup> Both these models remained prominent in other nineteenth and twentieth century 'race' thinking.<sup>78</sup> Writing in 1904 Gates showed his adherence to the idea of the permanence of Jewish type (and of inherent Jewish perfidy) in a cursory historical note on Jewry: 'Jews practised human sacrifice...Practised idolatry, sold their children into slavery...Hatred of everything non-Jewish. In every country where domicile[d] they betrayed it'.<sup>79</sup> Again, this time commenting on the egalitarian writings of theorist M. Jacobs, Gates highlighted his belief in Jewish type: 'He decries race in the usual Jewish way....He imagines that Jewish mannerisms, temperament and char[aracteristic] peculiarity because they are not giv[e]n parity in economic, social

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<sup>73</sup> See, Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, Beddoe, J, *The Races of Britain*, or Galton, F, *Hereditary Genius*.

<sup>74</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.194.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p.193-4.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* p. 217.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Many scholars have highlighted the prevalence of this image of the Black primitive. Black people, McClintock has argued, 'do not inhabit history proper but exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency – the living embodiment of the archaic "primitive"', in McClintock, A, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Routledge, London, 1995, p.30. Also see Hoch, P, *White Hero, Black Beast*, pp.43-46. For repeated themes within Semitic discourse see Cheyette, B, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society*, Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, or Ragussis, M, *Figures of Conversion, The Jewish Question and English National Identity*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1995.

<sup>79</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/5, File (Jews), Notes, 1904.

and educ[atational] opportunities. Yet Jews with highest education show same char[aracteristic] Mentality'.<sup>80</sup>

Gates also concurred with Knox regarding the ultimate inferiority of all Black people. He described all 'Negroes' as having 'a primitive mentality with less control of the impulses and emotions and less ability to deal with the abstract or the symbolic'.<sup>81</sup>

Importantly, 'race' thinkers such as Gates were adamant that being Jewish or Black was very much a 'racial' matter and, as such, that Jews and Blacks were inherently un-British and unsuitable as British citizens. Commenting again on the ideas of a rival scholar (who had argued that Jews could be assimilated into wider society) Gates noted tersely: 'This programme impossible, Jew cannot change his nature'.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, Gates concluded (regarding the developing Black population) that instead of attempting assimilation it was 'surely best to recognise racial differences than to pretend that the Negro has mental qualities that the evidence shows he does not possess'.<sup>83</sup>

Not only hostile thinkers perceived Jews and Blacks as distinct 'racial' groups. Even many Jewish and Black theorists (whose contribution to 'race' thinking will be assessed later in the chapter) were adamant believers in the reality of 'racial' difference. In a 1920 address, Jewish scientist Redcliffe Salaman told the Jewish Historical Society of England that since ancient times; the Jews 'facial type has changed no more than his habits'.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, Marcus Garvey was still confident enough of Black 'racial' homogeneity to address all Black people as a 'racial' nation with a united 'racial' agenda.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/5, File (Jews), (Undated).

<sup>81</sup> Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.235.

<sup>82</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/5, File (Jews), (Undated).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Section 11/41, File (Jews), (Undated).

<sup>84</sup> Salaman, R, MSS, Box 19, Salaman to the Jewish Historical Society, 14/12/20.

<sup>85</sup> Although Garvey was clearly at his most politically significant whilst living in the U.S.A. he will be considered in this British study both because his writings were often published in Britain and because he lived the majority of his life under British control. This is not to undermine Garvey's international political persona which reflected both his ideology and the lives of numerous Pan-Africanists from this period.

We are either on the way to a higher racial existence or racial extermination. This much is known and realized by every thoughtful race and nation; hence, we have the death struggle of the different races of Europe and Asia in the scramble of the survival of the fittest race.<sup>86</sup>

Just as many scientists and other writers were convinced of the existence of a Jewish and Black 'racial' type, there was some conformity concerning the behaviour that was perceived as 'racially' characteristic of Jewish and Black people. However, 'racial' behavioural discourses were subjective, malleable and contested and this analysis will be wary of presenting ideas of this kind as monolithic or static.<sup>87</sup> Nonetheless some images were so prevalent within Semitic and anti-Black discourses that they can be considered as repeated themes of 'racial' thinking, and this chapter will now consider in detail some of the most prominent 'racial' images that were tagged to Jewish and Black minorities. This will facilitate an analysis of the relationship between 'race' theory and wider society and enable an exploration of how the potency of 'racial' thinking translated into policy and prejudice. In this context four aspects of anti-Black/Semitic discourse have been selected for analysis, considering perceptions of Blacks and Jews as cowards, criminals, sexual deviants and disease carriers. These were by no means the only 'racial' images that were attached to Jews and Blacks in the interwar period but have been chosen for discussion because they were amongst the most prominent of 'racial' characterisations and because they facilitate (by highlighting similarities and differences) a comparative analysis of the histories of these two minority communities in Britain.

### **i) 'Thoroughly Troublesome, Evading Every Duty': Jewish and Black Cowardice and Unreliability Under Fire**

Well in advance of the Great War, 'race' thinkers had articulated the idea that both Blacks and Jews were cowards by nature. Both groups, theorists had argued,

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<sup>86</sup> Garvey, A.J., (ed.), *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, Universal Publishing House, New York, 1923, p.63.

<sup>87</sup> For analysis of the inconstant nature of discourse see Foucault, M, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1, An Introduction*, Allen Lane, London, 1979, p.33.

were inherently incapable of being as brave as 'Englishmen', lacking the calmness, valour and inclination needed to be a soldier. Anecdotal experience provided the bulk of the 'evidence' behind this case. Baden Powell, in his 1896 recollection of imperial service *The Downfall of Prempah*, dismissed the 'natives' he encountered as totally lacking any qualities of bravery. 'One good point about these warriors was their cowardice; the least hint of an intention of backing up an order with force ensured its prompt obedience'.<sup>88</sup> Powell reiterated this opinion in *Yarns for Boy Scouts* in 1909: 'These natives are not possessed of the same ideas and minds as white men; they have no idea of chivalry'.<sup>89</sup> This perception of the Black man was prominent among 'race' thinkers and was the implicit assumption in Knox's contention that 'with one thousand white men all the blacks of St Domingo could be defeated in a single action'.<sup>90</sup> Whilst a certain ambivalence existed about the physical qualities of the 'Negro', with some writers citing physical, animal like prowess as a Black quality, there was widespread consensus that the Black man (even if strong) lacked the character to be a reliable soldier.<sup>91</sup> Knox's conclusion characterises this position: 'Individual acts of bravery they have often performed, but combined they can never meet successfully the European'.<sup>92</sup>

Likewise, *fin de siècle* writers often dismissed the Jew as a 'racial' coward, totally untouched by the concepts of chivalry and valour. Arnold White argued that if a conflict occurred in a country where Jews were resident, they would 'bring dishonour upon their race in times of war for the sake of gain'.<sup>93</sup> White based this slur on his analysis of Jewish behaviour in the Boer War: 'The foreign Jew in smart society did not go to the war', he recorded.<sup>94</sup> In White's opinion the Jew was wholly

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<sup>88</sup> Rosenthal, M, *The Character Factory*, p.256.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* p.264.

<sup>90</sup> Knox, R, *The Races Of Men*, pp.243-4.

<sup>91</sup> The writing of doctor and eugenicist Robert Rentoul provides a good example of the tendency to characterise Black masculinity as animal like in terms of raw strength. See Rentoul, R, *Race Culture or Race Suicide (A Plea for the Unborn)*, Walter Scott, New York, 1906, pp.30-32. The tendency to consider Black men as 'super masculine' remains prevalent and has been cited by many scholars. See Hoch, P, *White Hero, Black Beast*, pp.48-62 and Doane, M.A., *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film, Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1991, p.224.

<sup>92</sup> Knox, R, *The Races of Men*, p.242.

<sup>93</sup> White, A *The Modern Jew*, p.176.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p.79.

mercenary and totally bereft of the concept of patriotic bravery.<sup>95</sup> With ugly characterisation of supposedly Jewish dialect, White recorded the Jewish reaction to British reverses in the Boer War, as he perceived it:

I like dis news; it vill gif a goot shake out to shtocks – dat iss healthy”. While the bodies of Anglo-Saxon and of Celt were lying unburied on the veldt under the African sun, this Teuton Semite philosopher could see no other aspect of the reverse to our arms than it would ‘give a good shake out to stocks’.<sup>96</sup>

In the wake of the First World War, the characterisation of Blacks and Jews as cowards became a *leitmotif* of ‘restrictionist’, anti-alien politics and agitation. As these immigrant groups sought a place in interwar British society, one of the biggest barriers to acceptance was the popular belief that Jews and Blacks had shied away from ‘doing their duty’ in the Great War.<sup>97</sup>

The relationship between ‘race’ theory and society was, as recorded in the introduction, a symbiotic one. Theory posited that Blacks were stupid, unreliable and cowardly. This prejudice impacted on the government decision not to conspicuously employ Black servicemen in the Armed Forces. Whilst allowing Black people to serve in discrete avenues of warfare (notably in the navy), a deliberate effort was made to prevent any obvious Black presence in the military. Black troops were not allowed to fight at the Western Front, nor were they allowed to take part in the Victory Parade at the end of the war.<sup>98</sup> Thus earlier prejudices were perpetuated and entrenched as Black soldiers were not widely seen within the war effort. Post-bellum feelings about the war conduct of Blacks caused considerable resentment, fuelled both by the legacy of earlier prejudices and by the ‘experience’ of the war.

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<sup>95</sup> These characterisations were closely linked to the well-trodden ‘racial’ analysis which held that Jewish men were more feminine in terms of their reaction to physical danger than British men were. See Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, p.63.

<sup>96</sup> White, A, *Efficiency and Empire*, pp.79-80.

<sup>97</sup> (For Jews): Holmes, C, ‘Public Opinion in England and the Jews 1914-18’, *Michael 10*, Tel Aviv, 1986, pp.76-95 or Kadish, S, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community and the Russian Revolution*, Frank Cass, London, 1992, pp.10-36. (For Blacks): Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.290-298 or Rogers, S, “‘There were no Parades for Us’: British Soldiers from the Empire”, *The Guardian*, 6/11/02.

<sup>98</sup> Murphy, A, *From the Empire to the Rialto, Racism and Reaction in Liverpool, 1918-48*, Liver Press, Birkenhead, 1995, p.51, or Rogers, S, “‘There were no Parades for Us’”.

Returning British servicemen challenged the right of Black people to work and live alongside them, making the case that Black men had not 'done their share' for the country during the war. Analysis of the 1919 'race' riots has highlighted the importance of these feelings in the development of resentment against Black people. Evans' account of the South Wales riots has recorded the views of several ex-servicemen, expressed in local newspaper reports in the wake of the disturbances. These interviews with rioters clearly show that they resented that they fought for their country whilst their new Black neighbours had not.

We went to France, and when we came back we found these foreigners have got our jobs, our businesses and our houses, and we can't get rid of them. It's very hard for my wife and children. This is what one gets for fighting for the country.<sup>99</sup>

I did it for the benefit of the seamen, of whom I am one, and cannot get a job because of these niggers being here. We have tried other ways; we now intend to take the law into our own hands.<sup>100</sup>

A post-riot report from the Chief Constable of Liverpool highlighted the same feelings and prejudices as seemingly justifying the behaviour of the white rioters. 'They took greater risks in the war than most of the coloured men, many of who I previously observed, stopped ashore to avoid the submarine menace'.<sup>101</sup>

Attitudes towards Jewish conduct in the war seem to confirm the centrality of 'race' theory in setting British perceptions of the minority groups under consideration. Jews served in significant numbers in all avenues of the conflict. Kadish has argued that whilst 11.5% of the nation at large went to the war, 14% of British Jews saw active service.<sup>102</sup> This service, however, did little to moderate the

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<sup>99</sup> *South Wales News*, 13/6/19 cited in Evans, N, 'The South Wales Race Riots of 1919', *Llafer*, Vol: 3, 1983, p.13.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 3/7/19. For similar analysis of riots see Jenkinson, J, 'The Black Community of Salford and Hull 1919-21', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol: 7, No: 2, 1988, pp.166-181.

<sup>101</sup> PRO, CO323/848, Report from Chief Constable to Colonial Office, 1/1/20.

<sup>102</sup> Whilst this figure does not take account of the disproportionately young age of the British Jewish community, it does highlight a substantial Jewish contribution to the war effort. See Kadish, S,

widespread allegations of poor conduct levelled against British Jewry both during and after the war. The prominence of eugenicists in the criticism of the community suggests the importance of 'race' theory in the evolution of wider public thinking regarding Jewish cowardice. Karl Pearson, in the introduction to his famous investigation into the intelligence of refugee Jewish children, criticised the cowardice of Jews who hid in underground train stations during air raids. Whilst acknowledging that 'some' Jews behaved bravely in the war, Pearson commented:

Those of us who had occasion to travel during air raids on London will not lightly forget the sights and sounds we encountered among the Yiddish speaking population who sought refuge in the tube stations.<sup>103</sup>

More extreme eugenicist and anti-Semite G.P. Mudge, writing in *Eugenics Review*, criticised Jewry in general on similar lines, yet with added virulence and anger.

Our race played the game while these immigrants fattened in safety and under a double protection. In their frenzied efforts during the air raids to preserve their own skins, they frantically pushed through women and children, severely crushing them and even trampling upon them if they fell. These fine specimens of immigrant manhood cared not who sank so long as they reached shelter first.<sup>104</sup>

Eugenicist and medical practitioner Frederick Parkes Weber kept case notes on soldiers and civilians that he had treated during the First World War. His analysis of meetings with some Jewish patients similarly seems to betray the influence of Semitic 'cowardice' discourse. Parkes Weber recorded two cases of soldiers 'of Hebrew origin' suffering from shell-shock. In both cases, he clearly felt that the men were lying about their condition in order to evade service.

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*Bolsheviks and British Jews*, p.51. Also see Levene, M, 'Going Against the Grain: Two Jewish Memoirs of War and Anti-War 1914-18', *Jewish History and Culture*, Vol: 2, No: 2, (Winter 1999), pp.66-95 & Cesarani, D, 'An Embattled Minority: The Jews in Britain During the First World War', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol: 8, 1989, pp.61-81.

<sup>103</sup> Pearson, K, and Moul, M, in *Annals of Eugenics*, Vol: 1, 1925-6, p.199.

<sup>104</sup> *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 11, 1919-20, p.211.



After the war the condition improved. Once I met the patient's wife and asked about her husband, and she told me that he had so greatly improved that recently he had run off with another woman.<sup>105</sup>

He understands that if he does not improve, he will be sent to another hospital – perhaps to an infirmary (which he will not like)...The house-physician suspects that patient had some interest (to avoid military service or something of the kind?) in making himself appear worse than he was.<sup>106</sup>

Views on Jewish cowardice were far from the preserve of eugenicists and were in fact commonplace in wider British society. For example, the alleged absence of Jews from the war effort became a *cause célèbre* for the Tory diehard and frequently anti-Semitic newspaper, *The Morning Post*. Their criticism, like much of that above, apparently stemmed not from statistical analysis but from their writers' ability to observe 'racial' Jewish 'types' during the war.

The Russian Jew made no effort at all to rally to the help either of his old Fatherland or of the new country which had given him hospitality. He was thoroughly troublesome, evading every duty, seeking to dodge every restriction, and setting an evil example of panic at every hint of danger.<sup>107</sup>

Holmes has argued that perceptions of poor Jewish war conduct made significant inroads into public opinion, which 'was seriously inflamed at an early date over the conscription issue'.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the perception of Jewry avoiding war service became so prominent and powerful as to lead the war government into legislation aimed at forcing active service on more Jewish immigrants. The Anglo-Russian

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<sup>105</sup> Parkes Weber MSS, PP/FPW/B163/1, 'Possible pitfalls in Life Assurance Examination and Remarks on Malingering', (for the Assurance Medical Society), 1918.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Notes on a patient with shell shock, 1/3/18.

<sup>107</sup> *The Morning Post*, 10/3/19. Also: 'The only young men out of uniform to be seen in London during the war were these young Jews, conducting themselves with a complacent insolence which is not forgotten', *The Morning Post*, 11/3/19.

<sup>108</sup> Holmes, C, 'Public Opinion in England and the Jews 1914-18', p.103.

Military Service Agreement of July 1917 ordered immigrant Jews to choose between fighting for the British or returning to fight with the Russian army.<sup>109</sup> This legislation reveals the influence of 'racial' thinking in shaping governmental attitudes towards Jewry. The immigrant Jews in question were recent refugees of often savage Russian persecution but instead of perceiving them as victims in this way, it seems that the government were convinced instead by Semitic characterisations of Jews as cowards and 'draft-dodgers'.<sup>110</sup> In this context, no allowance was made in recognition that it may have been difficult for refugees to fight on the side of the country which had so recently robbed them of their homes and communities. As 'race' theory prevailed, the government presented the refugees with a stark choice. Fight on the same side as your persecutors or go and fight with them.<sup>111</sup>

Betraying the influence of 'race' theory, both Jewish and Black men were often popularly portrayed as less masculine than their British counter parts. Whether through Baden Powell's image of bullying Black 'warriors' into obedience, or Mudge's image of Jewish men trampling women and children to gain access to shelters, both Jews and Blacks were repeatedly feminised and emasculated within 'race' theory.<sup>112</sup> Members of these persecuted communities did not ignore these jibes against their 'manhood' and responded with robust rebuttals to 'racial' allegations of cowardice. Jewish and Black interest publications in the period repeatedly defended

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<sup>109</sup> For further analysis see Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?: Immigrants, Refugees and Minorities in Britain*, Faber and Faber, London, p.27.

<sup>110</sup> It is significant that this legislation was carried through parliament by Herbert Samuel. The role of Samuel as a British Jew in creating the legislation serves as an indication that established British Jewish community was both wary of allegations of Jewish 'draft-dodging' and affected by the prevalent 'racial' thinking concerning new Jewish Russian immigrants. For analysis, see Kadish, S, *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, pp.51-69.

<sup>111</sup> The attitude of the British government and the dilemma faced by Jewry has been well expressed by Levene. He has described the Anglo-Russian Military Service agreement as a governmental 'not very subtle way of saying good riddance' to Jewish immigrants. Levene has described the dilemma facing Jewry (being compelled to fight for the Russians or the British) as being caught 'between the devil and the deep blue sea' in Levene, M, 'Going Against the Grain', p.73. Author, Louis Golding, highlighted the plight of refugee Jews and their reasons for wanting to avoid military service in Golding, L, *Magnolia Street*, Gainsborough Press, St Albans, 1932, pp.284-5.

<sup>112</sup> McClintock has highlighted the British habit of viewing Black men as feminised in *Imperial Leather*, p.22. Similarly, other analysts have recorded how perceptions of Indians and other colonial subject peoples were shaped in this way. See Sinha, M, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995, Ballhatchet, K, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics 1793-1905*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1980, Mosse, G, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1998 or for an alternative perspective see Boyarin, D, *Unheroic Conduct: the Rise of Sexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, University of California Press, Berkeley and London, 1997.

the service records of their respective communities. *The Jewish Chronicle* met the accusations head on in a 1919 editorial:

The East End was a veritable hive of sustained war effort during the whole of the hostilities. Nor was it only a matter of munition making. Thousands of the children of Polish and Russian Jews fought manfully with the colours and gave their quota, alas! To the casualty lists.<sup>113</sup>

Similar defences were presented in *The African Telegraph* and in a retrospective analysis of the conduct of Black seamen in *The Keys*: 'They were jolly brave those coloured sailors. They brought food to Cardiff at the greatest risk of their lives'.<sup>114</sup>

A crucial aspect of 'racial' cowardice discourse was the notion that Jews and Blacks were unwilling and naturally less able to work for the common national good than other Britons. The idea that these 'racially' different subjects would let down the nation when it was in danger was based on wider racist notions that Black and Jewish communities could not be trusted as British subjects. Alongside allegations of poor war conduct, Jewish and Black newcomers to Britain were susceptible to broader allegations of criminality and subversion, fuelled by Semitic and anti-Black 'racial' discourses.

## ii) Keeping Foreigners at an Arm's Length: Blacks and Jews as Security Threats, Criminals and Subversives

Anti-Black and anti-Semitic paranoia overlapped in this period, as both communities were often seen as dangerous, subversive and criminal. However, key differences between Black and Semitic 'racial' discourses facilitated differing representations concerning the exact nature of perceived Black and Jewish 'threats'. As with the cowardice discourse, prominent 'racial' representations from the nineteenth century were influential in the evolution of interwar attitudes towards both

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<sup>113</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 21/2/19.

<sup>114</sup> *The Keys*, Vol: 3, No: 1, July-Sept 1935, p.4.

Blacks and Jews and scientific 'race' theory seems again to have influenced wider societal thinking on Black and Jewish criminality.<sup>115</sup>

There was no shortage of scientists in this period who were prepared to assert the inherent criminality of Black and Jewish people. The lack of Black integrity was a repeated theme in 'race' theory. In *The Menace of Colour*, Gregory argued that Black labour was difficult to utilise as Black workers were generally 'thieves', an idea proposed by Gates and Salaman amongst others.<sup>116</sup> Nineteenth century 'race' theory had provided an academic grounding for these interwar perceptions. Psychologist Franz Fanon recorded the prevalent representation of Africans in Colonial 'race' discourse: 'The North African is a criminal; his predatory instinct is well known; his intense aggressivity is visible to the naked eye. [The African is impulsive and ] this impulsiveness is largely aggressive and generally homicidal'.<sup>117</sup> The image of Black criminality mingled with the notion of the Black man as primitive to create a powerful stereotype in the interwar period where Blackness was often perceived as a signifier of unpredictable aggression and danger.

Likewise, Semitic 'criminality' discourse was a common theme in British 'race' writing both before and during this period. Whilst both Jews and Blacks were perceived as 'criminals', traditional 'racial' discourses ensured that different types of crimes were considered as natural to the two different groups. International conspiracy, fraud and other 'money' deceptions were considered more often as Jewish offences, whilst Black criminality was usually perceived as a direct physical threat to white persons and property. Many 'race' thinkers addressed the theme of Jewish criminal activity. Eugenicist, G.P. Mudge, claimed that Jewish criminality showed

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<sup>115</sup> Numerous analysts have stressed the continuity of Semitic and anti-Black images from pre-scientific 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century representations through to images in the period under consideration. Notably, Paul Gilroy has argued: 'It is important to recognise that, as with the Negro..., representations of the Jew have a lengthy history and that modern inventions, elaborations, and projections of that figure were reworked from ample materials inherited from a previous time in which the cosmos, the global, and the divine were quite differently configured', Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.259. Also see, Hasian Jr, M, *The Rhetoric of Eugenics*, pp.5-31 and Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.83.

<sup>116</sup> Gregory, J, *The Menace of Colour*, p.81, Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, pp.247-8 and Salaman, R, *Palestine Reclaimed: Letters from a Jewish Officer in Palestine*, Routledge, London, p.119.

<sup>117</sup> Fanon, F, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.242.

itself in the over-representation of Jews in prison and in the workhouse.<sup>118</sup> Parkes Weber and Gates amongst others expressed views concerning 'conspiratorial' Jewish criminality whilst Armstrong dramatically concluded (concerning the aims of Russian Jewish refugees in Europe): 'Unless the Western nations can unite in face of the common peril, the result may be, in the near future, such slaughter as will pale the Great War into mere child's play, and throw back human evolution a thousand years'.<sup>119</sup>

In the insecure climate of the interwar period, these 'racial' images of Jewry fuelled thinking concerning Jewish conspiracy against Britain. Popular allegations held that Jews were responsible for international problems (usually Bolshevism and German militarism), and that Jews had profited out of the war whilst the rest of the nation had suffered. It is possible to see the translation of this 'racial' thinking into state policy as views of Jewish war gain resonated around the Houses of Parliament during the 1919 debate on the Aliens Restriction Act. A rhetorical question in the Commons from Conservative MP Sir John Butcher asked if it was good for the country to tolerate 'alien' communities:

...to interfere with our own people, to set up the same system of intrigue in our midst, the same system of interference with British Labour, the same system of undermining British business that we had before the war?<sup>120</sup>

Another member argued that these immigrants had 'always been traitors to the British workers as well as traitors to the British cause...Bolshevism, [was] of course...introduced in England almost entirely by aliens'.<sup>121</sup> Clearly, many MPs also believed that Jewish immigrants had higher criminal tendencies than indigenous Britons. Extreme anti-Semite Ernst Wild told the House: 'You cannot be in the criminal courts without realising what an enormous amount of the work of our courts

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<sup>118</sup> Mudge, G.P., 'The Menace to the English Race and to its Traditions of Present Day Immigration and Emigration', *Eugenics Review*, Vol:11, Apr 1919 – Jan 1920, p.206.

<sup>119</sup> Armstrong, C.W., *The Survival of the Unfittest*, p.92. See Parkes Weber MSS, PP/FPW/C10, pp.90-104 and Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, p.232.

<sup>120</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 114, Col: 2767, 15/4/19.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* Vol: 114, Col: 2799/2801, 15/4/19.

is caused by the aliens and their crimes'.<sup>122</sup> Parliamentary debate surrounding the 1919 Aliens legislation went so far in portraying the Jew as an undesirable and criminal element that the *Jewish Chronicle* recorded that it 'could not recall any parliamentary discussion which set forth in such naked language the proposition that a foreigner is such an undesirable person, to be kept at arms length from these islands'.<sup>123</sup>

Likewise, hostility towards Black Britons was often grounded in beliefs concerning the 'racial' criminality of the Black community. In nearly every case the 1919 'race' riots occurred as white mobs threatened and attacked nascent Black communities in the UK.<sup>124</sup> However, the media and the justice system repeatedly blamed Black aggressive and criminal tendencies for the violence. The following newspaper report on disturbances in Glasgow, in June 1919, typically highlights this ingrained prejudice. 'The quiet, apparently inoffensive nigger becomes a demon when armed with a revolver or razor caring for nothing except the safety of his own skin and the speediest method of overcoming his opponent'.<sup>125</sup> Rioting in Liverpool triggered the arrest *en masse* of the male Black community.<sup>126</sup> Whilst authorities recorded that this action was taken for the protection of the men involved, the coercive nature of the policy revealed the perception of Black culpability for rioting. Again, newspaper reports of Liverpool disturbances asserted that it was the Black victims of rioting that were the aggressors. 'Several of the Negroes brandished knives, razors and daggers, and threatened hostile crowds of white people'.<sup>127</sup> Another report concluded: 'The Negroes are all armed and fired on the slightest provocation'.<sup>128</sup> Reports often saw no need to justify their prejudiced attitudes, arguing that the criminality of the Black man was visible to any observer.

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<sup>122</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 114, Col: 2777, 15/4/19.

<sup>123</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 11/7/19.

<sup>124</sup> For accounts see Jenkinson, J, 'The Glasgow Race Disturbances of 1919', in Lunn, K, (ed.), *Race and Labour in Twentieth Century Britain*, Frank Cass, London, 1985, pp.43-67, Jenkinson, J, 'The Black Community of Salford and Hull 1919-21', Evans, N, 'The South Wales Race Riots of 1919', or Murphy, A, *From the Empire to the Rialto*.

<sup>125</sup> *Glasgow Evening News*, 18/6/19.

<sup>126</sup> Murphy, A, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, pp. 29-35.

<sup>127</sup> *The Daily Sketch*, 11/6/19.

<sup>128</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 14/6/19.

You glimpse Black figures beneath the gas lamps, and somehow you think of pimps, and bullies and women,...as now and again you notice a certain watchful callousness that seems to hint of nefarious trades and drunkenness in dark rooms.<sup>129</sup>

'Racial' perceptions ensured that new Black communities would be regarded as the instigators of violence in 1919. Indeed, the failure of the media to present Blacks as victims should be seen as reflecting a societal failure to respond to events without reference to prevalent 'racial' characterisations. The imprisonment of Liverpool's male Black community and the widespread arrest of Black people during the rioting indicates that 'racial' discourses influenced the behaviour of the State towards Britain's small and vulnerable new Black communities.<sup>130</sup> Analysis of the Seaman's Orders of 1920 and 1925 highlight the influence of 'racial' thinking on government action and policy.<sup>131</sup> Whilst these Orders will be discussed in detail below, it is important to note at this stage that seemingly the main government strategy for dealing with 'racial' problems in Britain was to attempt to prevent the growth of the Black community at all costs.<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, the image of Jewish subversion and criminality was significant in shaping the government's reaction towards Jewish refugees from Nazism.<sup>133</sup> Amid substantial Semitic discourse regarding Jewish poor social behaviour, Jews were often not perceived as victims and instead blamed for inciting 'racial' violence.<sup>134</sup> Ultimately, 'racial' thinking regarding criminality permeated much of British society and was significant in preventing Jews and Blacks alike from being recognised as victims of 'racial' hostility as instead these communities were blamed for criminal and subversive behaviour, or at least tendencies, according to their ascribed 'racial' characteristics.

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<sup>129</sup> Murphy, A, *The Empire to the Rialto*, p.23.

<sup>130</sup> For the governmental desire to remove the Black community in the wake of the riots see Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp.108-111.

<sup>131</sup> See 'Aliens Order', 25/3/20, the 'Special Restriction Order' 18/3/25, and analysis here, pp.43-44.

<sup>132</sup> See Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?*, p.36.

<sup>133</sup> See analysis later in this chapter, pp.46-49.

<sup>134</sup> See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in British Society During the Second World War*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1989, p.88 or Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, p.144.

Within prevalent 'racial' discourses during the interwar period, some crimes were considered as natural to both Jewish and Black people. Notably, both sets of newcomers were often labelled as sexual corrupters and polluters. These sexual discourses require consideration in their own right as hostility of this nature touches the very core of 'racial' thinking.<sup>135</sup> If 'racial' thinkers perceived that significant differences existed between Jewish and Black communities and 'Britons', then sexual contact was the medium by which these 'alien' and different qualities could enter, and fundamentally alter, British society.<sup>136</sup> In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that the sexual habits of Jewish and Black minorities in Britain (and the issue of 'miscegenation' with these groups) became significant focal points of 'race' thinking in wider British society during the interwar period.

### **iii) 'Fierce Passions Hot Within Them': Jews and Blacks, Sexuality, Sexual Contact and 'Miscegenation'**

'Racial' discourses ensured differences in the perceived peril of Jewish and Black sex in the British imagination. Whilst men from both communities were sometimes portrayed as sexual predators, Black men were most commonly feared as animalistic and violent sexual aggressors whilst Jewish men were more often perceived as engineers of the sex industry and sly manipulators of women.<sup>137</sup> Doctor and eugenicist Robert Rentoul outlined his views regarding the atavistic urges of Black sexuality: 'The Negro is seldom content with sexual intercourse with the white woman, but culminates his sexual *furor* by killing the woman, sometimes taking out her womb and eating it'.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> For analysis of the importance of sexual discourses especially with regards to Jewish and Black immigrants see Hoch, P, *White Hero Black Beast*, pp.43-64, Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.196-199, Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, pp.110-125, Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, pp.112-118 or Foucault, M, *The History of Sexuality, Vol: 1*, pp.39 and 103.

<sup>136</sup> See Hoch, P, *White Hero Black Beast*, p.47.

<sup>137</sup> It is clear that wider 'racial' discourses were significant in shaping the nature of the sexual image. Some analysts of anti-Semitism have highlighted this tendency within Semitic discourses. Gilman, for example, has cited the 'racial' tendency of considering Jews to have a 'sexualised' relationship with capital, whilst Memmi has highlighted the importance of circumcision within perceptions of Jewish sexual deviance and promiscuity. See Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, pp.122-125 and Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, p.116.

<sup>138</sup> Rentoul, R, *Race Culture or Race Suicide*, p.31.



Whilst Rentoul's analysis represents the extreme end of opinion among eugenicists, Black sex was a repeated theme in 'race' analysis and popular prejudice.<sup>139</sup> Newspaper and police reporting on the 1919 'race' disturbances were quick to highlight the sexual grievances of the white rioters. With remarkable consistency, the reasons given for the unrest were white fury at alleged sexual relations between white women and the newly arrived Black immigrants. *The Daily Sketch* gave the following explanation for the rioting in South Wales: 'At Cardiff and Barry the outbreaks appear to be due to resentment at the association of coloured men and white girls'.<sup>140</sup> *The Daily Mail* reported, concerning the origins of London rioting: 'The riot arose on a report being spread that some white girls had been seen to enter the house [of black residents]'.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, the reporter at the Liverpool riots for the liberal *Manchester Guardian* explained: 'The Negroes would not have been touched but for their relations with white women. This has caused the entire trouble'.<sup>142</sup> Where local police produced reports about the rioting, they also cited sexual jealousy as the primary cause of disturbances. Jenkinson has cited evidence from the Liverpool Watch Committee minute book, which recorded the views of the local Chief Constable on the heightened 'racial' tension:

This feeling has probably been endangered by the arrogant and overbearing conduct of the Negro population towards the white, and by the white women who live or cohabit with the black men, boasting to the other women of the superior qualities of the Negroes as compared with those of the white men.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> See, Morel, E.D., *Horror on the Rhine* for images of Black uncontrollable predatory behaviour or Armstrong, C.W., *The Survival of the Unfittest*, p.111 for the view that 'Anglo-Saxon' progress over primitive people was rooted in sexual self-discipline. Literary images of Black super-masculinity were also not uncommon. See Golding, L, *Magnolia Street*, p.283.

<sup>140</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 13/6/19.

<sup>141</sup> *Daily Mail*, 16/6/19.

<sup>142</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 12/6/19. Sexual jealousy was also cited as the main reason for inter-'racial' hostility in Liverpool in the Fletcher Report of 1930, (See below, pp.31-32).

<sup>143</sup> Jenkinson, J, 'The 1919 Race Riots' in Panayi, P, *Racial Violence in Britain*, Leicester University Press, Exeter, 1993, p.98.

A report from the Chief Constable of Salford (who wrote to the Home Secretary explaining the local 'racial' tension) highlighted similar conclusions regarding the causes of the rioting.<sup>144</sup>

Belief in the Black man as a sexual predator did not only resonate from the right wing of British society. Labour MP E.D. Morel published his opinion that the Black man was an uncontrollable sexual predator in the notorious 1920 work *Horror on the Rhine*. In this book, Morel expressed his fury at the French use of Black Colonial troops to police conquered German land. These troops, Morel argued, were unlike European soldiers and were incapable of restraining themselves sexually from committing abuses against the local female population.

In ones and twos, sometimes in parties, big, stalwart men from warmer climes, armed with sword-bayonets or knives, sometimes with revolvers, living unnatural lives of restraint, their fierce passions hot within them, roam the countryside.<sup>145</sup>

The hostility towards 'miscegenation', which was implicit within Morel's concerns, can be seen in other responses to mixed 'race' communities in interwar Britain. Whilst sizeable Black settlement was limited to a few port cities in this period, considerable opposition was still recorded to instances of mixed 'race' relationships and especially towards mixed 'race' children. This opposition was rooted both in the prevalent scientific and eugenic fears about 'racial' mixing (cited above) and in wider fears concerning Black sexual activity. In 1930, the Fletcher Report provided a welfare analysis of 'Half-Caste' children in Liverpool.<sup>146</sup> The terms of reference of this enquiry (to investigate 'into the colour problem in Liverpool and other ports') indicated from the beginning that its attitude towards the mixed 'race' children under investigation would not be positive. From the very outset the Fletcher

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<sup>144</sup> Jenkinson, J, 'The Black Community of Salford and Hull 1919-21', pp.169-170.

<sup>145</sup> Morel, E.D., *Horror on the Rhine*, p.13.

<sup>146</sup> The Fletcher Report was written by Muriel Fletcher, a social scientist trained at the Liverpool School of Social Science, on behalf of the *Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste Children*. It is retained in Liverpool Central Archive, (File H325 26 FLE).

Report cited the dangers of 'miscegenation' which, it was argued in the foreword, was an 'evil' which could not remain 'unchecked'.<sup>147</sup>

Fletcher's investigation emphasised the sexual differences of Black men whom she presented as ultimately promiscuous and deviant. She argued that:

In Liverpool there is evidence to show that the negro tends to be promiscuous in his relations with white women. The women say that they are approached by other men if their husband's [sic] are away, in many cases the man who comes being the husband's best friend.<sup>148</sup>

Fletcher emphasised that not only was the Black man promiscuous, but he lacked all notions of sexual decency, even trying to pay women to 'consort with their daughters'.<sup>149</sup> The report produced an image of a super-sexual Black masculinity with passions that could not be sated in British society: '...their [Black men's] sexual demands impose a continual strain on white women'.<sup>150</sup>

This analysis led to the corresponding allegation that no 'normal' white woman would partner a Black man. Once a woman did so, she effectively abandoned ordinary sexual practice and became a part of the debauched Black sexual world.<sup>151</sup> 'Once a woman has lived with a coloured man, the house appears to become a sort of club for any coloured men in port. A white woman who has once mixed with coloured men is unable to break away and is never safe in a house if her husband is away for any length of time'.<sup>152</sup> It was seemingly inconceivable to Fletcher that an

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<sup>147</sup> 'Fletcher Report', foreword by Prof. M. Roxby, Professor of Anthropology at Liverpool University.

<sup>148</sup> 'Fletcher Report', pp.19-20.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. p.23.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p.21.

<sup>151</sup> The prevalence within 'racial' discourse of dismissing white women who chose Black partners as deviant has been recorded by some analysts. See Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, p.77: 'White women who choose interracial relationships are presented as sexually "loose", sexually unsuccessful, or (at the least negative) sexually radical'.

<sup>152</sup> 'Fletcher Report', p.23.

inter-'racial' relationship could be based on love or respect. She saw these unions as purely being about sex.<sup>153</sup>

Fletcher saw the children of mixed-'race' relationships as degenerate in line with the mainstream scientific 'racial' opinion. 'The children seemed to have frequent colds, many were also ricketty, and several cases were reported in which there was a bad family history for tuberculosis'.<sup>154</sup> Not only did the unions produce physical disharmonies, but the report alleged that the children were also mentally inferior and infected with the sexual lack of morality of their parents.<sup>155</sup> Whilst Fletcher was a social scientist working at grass roots level with Black communities, these ideas concerning the degenerative effects of 'racial' mixing betray the influence of prominent scientific authorities of the period such as Davenport and Gates.<sup>156</sup>

'Racial' theory concerning the impact of 'miscegenation' with Jews and about Semitic sexual deviance was more ambivalent than thinking regarding the perceived Black sexual influence. Some 'race' thinkers, highlighting the ambiguity of 'racial' discourses, totally dismissed the notion of the Jew as a sexual deviant. Notably, Rentoul, who painted such a graphic and horrific picture of 'Black' nature, saw Jewish society as the very epitome of sexual health. 'The great Jewish religion is largely a religion of health' Rentoul argued.<sup>157</sup> Presenting Jewish sexual habits as a model eugenic paradigm, he concluded:

No race has been so scrupulously particular as has the Hebrew in prohibiting the inter marriage of those of their own race with the Gentiles. And with what result? That this race has for 5000 years retained all their racial features, racial qualities, and racial ambitions –

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<sup>153</sup> 'There is little harmony between the parents, the coloured men in general despise the women with whom they consort, while the majority of women have little affection for the men...all the circumstances of their lives tend to give undue prominence to sex', 'Fletcher Report', p. 26.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p.15.

<sup>155</sup> 'Fletcher Report', pp.33-35. This attitude to mixed 'race' unions was far from isolated. One Wesleyan minister in Bute Town, Cardiff, even refused to marry mixed 'race' couples. See *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 12, Jan 1920-Jan 1921, p.69.

<sup>156</sup> Fletcher's thinking on physical and mental 'disharmony' match Gates' text book on the subject nearly word for word in places. See Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, pp.231-247.

<sup>157</sup> Rentoul, R, *Race Culture or Race Suicide*, p.xiii.

all keen and supreme, although they have lived amongst all kinds of nationalities.<sup>158</sup>

Whilst Cheyette has argued that sexual deviance was also 'a long standing Semitic representation', it is clear that Jews were generally not perceived as 'super-Masculine' in the same manner as Black immigrants were, or as sexually uncontrollable in the same way.<sup>159</sup> However, Jewish men were sometimes labelled by 'race' theorists as sex traders, pimps and sly seducers, whose interest in women stemmed not from a natural impulse but from a more calculated awareness of an opportunity to corrupt, gain and defile. One of the most vociferous exponents of the corruption of Jewish sexuality was the ferocious anti-Semitic agitator, Joseph Banister. In his book, *England Under the Jews*, Banister outlined his belief that Jews controlled an international sex trade and delighted in the corruption of Christian girls.

The introduction of foreign women for immoral purposes is carried on, as is the white slave traffic everywhere, chiefly, if not entirely, by Jews.<sup>160</sup>

No Jew is more of a hero among his fellow tribesmen than the one who can boast of having accomplished the ruin of some friendless, unprotected Christian girl.<sup>161</sup>

Whilst Banister represented a voice of unparalleled venom regarding Jews, the ideas which he expressed were far from isolated.<sup>162</sup> Novelist and eugenicist Austen Freeman outlined similar convictions in his 1921 book, namely that Jews controlled the businesses of 'procuration and "White slave" traffic'.<sup>163</sup> Jews, Freeman argued, were totally lacking in any form of sexual morality: 'Of the younger women an

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<sup>158</sup> Rentoul, R, *Race Culture or Race Suicide*, p.5. The belief that Jews had come closer than other 'races' to a eugenically wise attitude to reproduction was relatively common amongst interwar 'race' thinkers. See Ludovici, A, *The Quest of Human Quality: How to Rear Leaders*, Rider and Co., London, 1952, p.162 and Parkes Weber MSS, PP/FPW/C.8/2, Note on the Effect of the War on the Jewish Race, 1940.

<sup>159</sup> Cheyette, B, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society*, p.140.

<sup>160</sup> Banister, J, *England Under the Jews*, pp.36-37.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p.39.

<sup>162</sup> The prevalence of Jewish sexual discourse has been noted in Gilman, S, *The Jew's Body*, pp.63-127.

<sup>163</sup> Freeman, R.A., *Social Decay and Regeneration*, p.267.

appreciable portion were prostitutes and made no secret of the fact', he recorded.<sup>164</sup> This 'race' thinker did not seem to see Jewish deviance as different to the behaviour that he expected from Black people. Jews, Freeman asserted, similar to the 'far inferior' Negro race, were 'animal like in habits [behaving] like a monkey might do'.<sup>165</sup> Views of Jewish sexual depravity did not only resonate amongst some 'race' thinkers but influenced wider representations of Jews in British culture and more significantly parliamentary discussion concerning the restriction of immigration.<sup>166</sup> This was notable in the debate on the second reading of the Aliens Restriction Act of 1919 where Anti-Semitic Conservative MP Ernst Wilde described the Jewish sexual threat to Britain in graphic detail.<sup>167</sup>

The 'psychological' nature of Jewish sexual discourse facilitated the sexual demonisation of the Jewess as well as the Jewish male more than was the case in anti-Black sexual thinking.<sup>168</sup> Jewish author Louis Golding seems to have played with these discourses in his character of Bella Winberg in *Magnolia Street*. Golding paints Winberg as a caricature of Jewish 'oriental' exoticism.

...the ethnologically minded observer would always have suspected that she would have looked most completely at home in the baggy breeches, silken headwear and voluminous over-gowns of the Oriental Jewess.<sup>169</sup>

Even the anti-Semitic 'Derricks' family males could not resist Bella's special Jewish sexual lure. 'Semitic as her charms were, the boys could not withstand them'.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Freeman, R.A., *Social Decay and Regeneration*, p.266.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Cheyette has analysed the sexual demonisation of Jews in British literature notably surrounding du Maurier's 'Svengali' character in Cheyette, B, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society*, pp.140 and 6.

<sup>167</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 114, Col: 2778. Wilde told the House: 'Vice! Why they are at the bottom of one-half, at least, of the vice of this Metropolis and of this country. The white slave traffic, unnatural vice, the exploitation of English girls whom they marry, and then live upon the proceeds of their prostitution... – that is the sort of atmosphere that has been introduced into this country by these people', 15/4/19.

<sup>168</sup> Memmi has argued: 'Everyone has heard of the exciting and scandalous picture of the Jewess' in Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, p.116.

<sup>169</sup> Golding, L, *Magnolia Street*, p.57.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. p.186. Linked to the 'exotic' image of the Jewess was the idea that Jewish women were less chaste than their Christian counterparts were. Allegations of sexual impropriety and prostitution were

Despite these views, negative portrayals of the sexual morality of Jews were rarely as central to the formulation and articulation of anti-Semitism as they were within anti-Black discourses. Sexual deviance was simply another face of the Semitic 'monster', whose primary crime would always be his treachery and the manipulation of Gentile society. It is also noteworthy that public hostility towards 'miscegenation' with Jews never came anywhere near to matching the obsessive fears about Black/white mixing epitomised in the Fletcher Report.<sup>171</sup> However, it is significant that hostility towards Black and Jewish immigration was expressed in both cases in allegations of sexual impropriety. Fears concerning 'racial' corruption through 'miscegenation' with Jews and Blacks seem to have manifested themselves in discourse surrounding the sex act itself and immigrant sexual behaviour. Thus portrayals of sexual deviance permeated societal thinking as an overt indication of deeper 'racial' difference. Similarly, social and sexual mixing with Jewish and Black immigrants was widely considered undesirable amid 'racial' discourses concerning immigrant disease and dirtiness.

#### **iv) Spreading 'Loathsome and Unmentionable Diseases': Jews and Blacks as Diseased and Dirty**

Heavily linked to the idea that Blacks and Jews were essentially sexually different to Britons was the belief that these groups carried disease and were hygienically unsuitable as mates and even neighbours. As with sexual discourses, the diseases ascribed as prevalent among Black and Jewish groups were concomitant with their differing 'racial' characterisations. Whilst both communities were labelled as dirty and unhygienic (emphasising the general superiority of British habits) the Black community was particularly labelled as being sexually infectious. Jews were also seen as spreaders of sexual disease but were additionally often accused of suffering the effects of inbreeding and of spreading diseases to which they were themselves

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sometimes levelled at Jewish refugees from Nazism. See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.109-110.

<sup>171</sup> In fact, many theorists believed that Gentile/Jewish intermarriage would be mutually beneficial. See Parkes Weber MSS, PP/FPW/C10. Weber to Hirschkopf: Calls for a 'gradual mixing of the races', 9/8/43.

mysteriously immune.<sup>172</sup> Rich has cited research into the Liverpool Black community in the late 1920s as evidence that Black people were blamed for the spread of sexual diseases. John Harris (from the anti-slavery society) in response to Fletcher's infamous report on the dangers of an established Black community, claimed that 90% of venereal disease in Liverpool was caused by the Black community.<sup>173</sup> It was widely argued in 'race' thinking circles that mixing with Black people would inevitably lead to disease. Correspondence between the Eugenics Society and J.G. Bates (a minister and eugenicist who worked closely with the Liverpool Black community) on this subject, led Bates to respond: 'Anglo-Negro offsprings are generally TB'.<sup>174</sup>

Jewish immigrants were similarly often characterised as being dangerously diseased. Sometimes, analysts used allegations of hereditary proneness to disease as proof of the inferiority of the Jewish 'type'. Pearson and Moul's 1925 study of Jewish intelligence set itself the explicit goal of assessing the quality of immigrants in order to discover if their presence would have positive or negative effects on the general quality of the population.<sup>175</sup> The report argued that Jews were physically inferior on average to Gentiles, both in term of their proneness to serious maladies such as heart disease and in other less dramatic ways, notably having inferior eyesight. It concluded: 'The welfare of our own country is bound up with the maintenance and improvement of its stock, and our researches do not indicate that this will follow the unrestricted admission of either Jewish or any other type of immigrant'.<sup>176</sup>

The notion of Jewish proneness to illness also fed into wider characterisations of Jews as defilers and corrupters of other peoples, as disease was presented as another weapon in the Jewish armoury to undermine the Gentile world. These perceptions were evident in pro-restriction agitation around the turn of the century. In

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<sup>172</sup> See Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, p.168.

<sup>173</sup> Harris, J, cited in Rich, P, 'Philanthropic Racism in Britain, The Liverpool University Settlement, the Anti-Slavery Society and the Issue of "Half Caste" Children, 1919-51', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol: 3, No:1, March 1984, p.75.

<sup>174</sup> Eugenics Society MSS, Box 39, D179, Bates to Hodson, 8/10/27.

<sup>175</sup> The report outlines this agenda, noting in its introduction: 'What purpose would there be in endeavouring to legislate for a superior breed of men, if at any moment it could be swamped by the influx of immigrants of an inferior race, hastening to profit by the higher civilisation of an improved humanity', *Annals of Eugenics*, Vol: 1, 1925-6, p.7.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* p.127.



1902 Dr Francis Tyrell informed the Royal Commission on alien immigration that Jews were uniquely susceptible to chronic granular ophthalmia and that Jews would spread this disease among the indigenous population.<sup>177</sup> Similarly, MP Evans Gordon told the Commons in 1905 that smallpox, scarlet fever, trachoma and favus had undoubtedly been introduced by aliens.<sup>178</sup> Evans Gordon described his contact with arriving aliens in graphic terms.

We found some of them suffering from loathsome and unmentionable diseases, the importation of which into this country might and does lead to very serious results, and we found most of them verminous.<sup>179</sup>

In the interwar period, Parkes Weber asserted that Jewish families had 'special tendencies to certain metabolic (notably obesity and diabetes mellitus) and neurological (including psycho-neurotic) diseases'.<sup>180</sup>

Thinking on Jewish deviousness and treachery also convinced some theorists that Jews retained a special immunity to various diseases. Gates certainly believed that Jews had special powers to protect themselves both from disease and attack. His notes on the subject are revealing: '[Jews are]...Not affected by great epidemics of Mid[dle] Ages in Europe. Immune to many illnesses (Plague, typhus)...Throve under persecution which would exterminate any other people'.<sup>181</sup> Memmi's conclusion has emphasised the ambiguity of Semitic discourse regarding the spread of disease: The Jew was presented as 'an easy prey to certain maladies, slyly immune to others'.<sup>182</sup>

So far, this chapter has analysed the changing tone of 'racial' thinking in the interwar period and the nature and prevalence of some influential 'racial' images of Jews and Blacks. The chapter will now move on to closely assess the impact of

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<sup>177</sup> For analysis see Gainer, B, *Alien Invasion*, pp.144-198.

<sup>178</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 145, Col: 711, 2/5/05.

<sup>179</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 145, Col: 722, 2/5/05. Also see Evans Gordon, W, *The Alien Immigrant*, William Heinemann, London, 1903.

<sup>180</sup> Parkes Weber MSS, PP/FPW/C10, Weber to Hirschkopf, 9/8/43.

<sup>181</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/5, File: Jews (Undated).

<sup>182</sup> Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, p.170.

Semitic and anti-Black discourses on government policy and attitudes towards Jewish and Black immigration and settlement in this period.

### c) 'Race' Thinking, Policy and Attitudes towards Jewish and Black Minorities in Britain

A contributor to *Eugenics Review* in 1919 made a case that was prominent in the analysis of many 'race' thinkers of this period. He argued that being English was a 'racial' matter and that the possession of British nationality was not the same as really being 'English'.<sup>183</sup> The contributor questioned: When a Russian becomes a naturalized English citizen 'are we to believe that he is an Englishman?...The legal basis for definition asks us to believe that a man born in a stable has thereby become a horse'.<sup>184</sup> This attitude is evident in the response of much of British society to Jewish and Black immigration as opinions were conditioned by 'racial' beliefs, namely that Blacks and Jews could never truly be British and that nationality, in the form of legal documentation, was a secondary matter to 'racial' origin.<sup>185</sup>

Legislation aiming to limit immigration to Britain was promulgated in 1919 in the form of the Aliens Restriction Amendment Act. Measures originally taken in 1914, designed to maintain security during the Great War, were entrenched within

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<sup>183</sup> These opinions can be seen in the analysis of Ruggles Gates, Arthur Keith, and Anthony Ludovici amongst others.

<sup>184</sup> Mudge, G.P., cited in *Eugenics Review*, Vol: 11, Apr 1919-Jan 1920, pp.209-210.

<sup>185</sup> In literature, these views were prevalent. In 1939, Douglas Reed argued that the difference between Britons and immigrants was 'deep, eternal, ineradicable' in Reed, D, *Disgrace Abounding*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1939, p.230. Whilst Reed was an extreme anti-Semite, similar views were posited by other writers such as Louis Golding. At many levels in his writing Golding showed a desire to deconstruct 'racial' difference. He described that, to his character Mr Emmanuel, the words 'Aryan, non-Aryan' sounded like the 'gibberish of a jungle tribe', Golding, L, *Mr Emmanuel*, Hutchinson and Co., London, 1939, p.39. Mr Emmanuel dreamt of merging the Jewish and Gentile sides of Magnolia Street, of a time 'when all races and peoples will go hand in hand together along the road of universal love', *Magnolia Street*, p.473. However, Golding still believed in the existence of inherent 'racial' differences between Jews and Gentiles. Judaism, to Golding, was a 'racial' urge and legacy. 'A Jew knows', he argued, 'even if he is blind, which way lie the dawn and Jerusalem', *Mr Emmanuel*, p.268. Indeed, when Mr Emmanuel was captured in Nazi Germany the character despaired that his 'Englishness' wasn't real enough to save him. He was 'a fine sort of Englishman, a foreigner from a Russian village, he has signed a paper and paid a few shillings, and he thinks he is an Englishman like Lord Derby', *Mr Emmanuel*, p.233. Ultimately he was saved by the inherent 'Jewishness' of a Nazi woman. Although this woman had no ties to her faith, she was 'racially' Jewish and Golding argued that 'as for race, she could no more detach herself from her father and mother, her grandfather and grandmothers, her great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers, than she could put on some other body and start walking about in it', *Mr Emmanuel*, p.251. Also see Golding, L, *In the Steps of Moses the Law Giver, A Record of Travel in Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula*, Corvinus Press, June 1938, p. 27.

this legislation.<sup>186</sup> This Act was the second significant attempt by a British government to restrict immigration by legislative means after the Aliens Act, 1905.<sup>187</sup> Looking at the debate that surrounded and informed these pieces of legislation, the importance of 'race' thinking and eugenics on parliamentary opinion becomes evident.<sup>188</sup> Both Acts were littered with 'racial' characterisations and arguments rooted in 'race' theory.<sup>189</sup> The 'racial' agenda of the 1905 legislation was indeed summed up the Prime Minister himself at the end of the second reading of the Bill. Whilst Balfour criticised the inflammatory racist comments of some members as a 'disgrace', he himself concluded that legislation was necessary to preserve British 'racial' qualities:

If there were a substitution of Poles for Britons, for example, though the Briton of the future may have the same laws, the same institutions and constitution, and the same historical traditions learned in the elementary schools. Though all these things might be in the possession of the new nationality, that nationality would not be the same, and would not be the nationality we should desire to be our heirs through the ages yet to come.<sup>190</sup>

The 1919 legislation was designed to tighten the earlier law by further restricting alien rights to enter the UK. It also restricted alien rights to own property, land and businesses in Britain.<sup>191</sup> The debate revealed a belief amongst many parliamentarians that allowing the entry of foreigners would damage the 'racial' fibre of the nation.<sup>192</sup> Conservative anti-immigrant MP Stanton argued that allowing any aliens to remain in Britain would be 'a stain upon our British stock', whilst Pemberton

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<sup>186</sup> For Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act 1919, see *The General Public Acts*, 1919, Chapter 92, pp.427-435.

<sup>187</sup> For 1905 Act see *Hansard*, Vol: 151, Col: 547 (for third reading).

<sup>188</sup> For analysis of the 1905 Act see Porter, B, *The Refugee Question in Mid Victorian Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, p.218. For the 1919 Act, see Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept?', pp.37-39.

<sup>189</sup> See Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept?', pp.12-14.

<sup>190</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 145, Col: 796, 2/5/05.

<sup>191</sup> Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act 1919, Articles 10 and 11.

<sup>192</sup> Foot has cited the extent of 'racial' parliamentary opinion in Foot, P, *Immigration and 'Race' in British Politics*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965, pp.94-110. Although Foot's analysis is polemical and emotive, it provides some interesting details about post-war anti-alien debates. For a more balanced analysis see Kushner, T, and Knox, K, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century*, Frank Cass, London, 1999, pp. 43-99.

Billing told the House that Britain risked becoming 'an asylum for the ne'er-do-wells and parasites of the world'.<sup>193</sup> In a later debate, the comments of another Member reveal the prevalence of ingrained 'racial' thinking within parliamentary argument:

These four limbs of the race – Saxon, Norman, Dane and Celt – have given the nation the power that it is today by the mingling of their strength. I am content to maintain our stock as nearly as possible from these four races.<sup>194</sup>

The detail of the 1919 Act suggests that the framers of this legislation bought heavily into prevalent Semitic and anti-Black 'racial' discourses. The new law prohibited immigrants from changing their names whilst living in Britain and outlined provisions to deport any immigrant who was suspected of inciting industrial or political disorder.<sup>195</sup> These restrictions, combined with the already mentioned prohibition of immigrant ownership of British business and land, seem to fit neatly into the prevalent 'racial' Semitic discourses already outlined in this thesis. Specifically, the law seems to have been designed in order to counter the craftiness and treachery of the Jew; to prevent his slipping unnoticed into British society by changing his foreign name and checking his natural desires to take over British business and industry. The characterisation of the Jew as a revolutionary Bolshevik may also explain the tough, draconian provisions for the imprisonment of 'seditious' aliens for up to 10 years.<sup>196</sup>

Analysis of this Act also provides insight into government perceptions about the superiority of white over Black labour. Whilst Article 5 of the legislation prohibited the employment of foreign seamen at lower rates of pay than British sailors, the same article made a revealing 'racial' exception. Lower rates could be paid to aliens who were chosen to work 'in any capacity or in any climate for which

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<sup>193</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 114, Cols: 2785 & 2799, 15/4/19.

<sup>194</sup> 1923 Speech by Charles Crook, Conservative MP for East Ham. Cited in Foot, P, *Immigration and Race in British Politics*, p.110. These comments match almost to the word the ideas of Reginald Ruggles Gates. See Gates, R.R., *Heredity and Eugenics*, pp.237-239.

<sup>195</sup> Aliens Restriction Amendment Act, 1919. Article 7 prohibited alien name changes, Article 11 prohibited any alien ownership of land or business for 3 years, whilst Article 3 dealt with punishments for aliens attempting to cause 'sedition or disaffection'.

<sup>196</sup> This characterisation of Jewishness is highlighted by Kadish, S, in *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, pp.10-73.

they are specially fitted' provided that this rate was the same as 'standard rates for British subjects of that race'.<sup>197</sup> Allowing ourselves the presumption that it was Black sailors who were perceived as 'specially fitted' for certain climates, the implication is clear. One rate of pay existed for British and alien white workers, another for British and alien Blacks. This serves as an example of 'race' being perceived by the government as a more important and accurate divider of men than nationality.

Measures taken by successive British governments in the interwar period reveal a reluctance to recognise the British citizenship of Black British people. The Aliens Order of 1920 and the Special Restriction Order of 1925 (better known as the Coloured Alien Seamen Order) provided the police with the *de facto* authority to register Black Britons as aliens.<sup>198</sup> It is evident that these powers were utilised to just this effect. The 1920 Act gave authorities the right to examine or detain anyone who was 'reasonably supposed to be an alien'.<sup>199</sup> The 1925 order cemented this right by forcing 'coloured alien seamen' to register with the police, who then had the responsibility of monitoring and supervising their whereabouts.<sup>200</sup> In principle, neither of these Acts should have affected the lives of British Black seaman. However, within a 'racial' classification of Britishness, it is clear that being Black was in itself considered 'reasonable suspicion' of being an alien.<sup>201</sup> After the 1925 Order, hundreds of British Blacks were cajoled into registering themselves as aliens, in what must surely be perceived as a covert attempt to disrupt the establishment of British Black communities by the state and the police authorities.<sup>202</sup> The *Journal of the League of Coloured Peoples* recorded how this legislation was utilised against the British Black community. As late as 1935, a report from Cardiff noted how British Blacks were 'forced by fraud to register as aliens'.<sup>203</sup> A further article by the same author concluded:

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<sup>197</sup> Aliens Restriction Amendment Act, 1919, Article 5/2.

<sup>198</sup> For analysis of these Orders see Tabili, L, 'The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth Century Britain: The Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925', *Journal of British Studies*, January, 1994, pp.54-156, Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp.122-130 or Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?*, p.36.

<sup>199</sup> Aliens Order, 25/3/20.

<sup>200</sup> Special Restriction Order, 18/3/25.

<sup>201</sup> See the retrospective analysis of the impact of the legislation on Black seamen, in *The Keys: The Journal of the League of Coloured Peoples*, Vol 3: Nos: 1 & 2, 1935, pp.4-22.

<sup>202</sup> See Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.298-312.

<sup>203</sup> *The Keys*, Vol: 3, No: 1, July-Sept 1935, p.4.

The interpretation placed upon these legislative measures is that they automatically made every coloured seaman in Cardiff an alien, irrespective of the fact that he was born a British subject and had documentary evidence of his nationality.<sup>204</sup>

Most disturbingly, this report claimed that 'threats' and 'coercion' by the police had forced Black Britons to register as aliens and thus to surrender their rights as British citizens.<sup>205</sup>

Looking at other aspects of British government policy it is possible to see that similar 'racial' thinking impacted directly on decision making. The proceedings of the 1921 Aliens and Nationality Committee seem to corroborate the case that the government perceived 'race' as the primary designator of British nationality. The committee discussed the possibility of restricting access to the British mainland to 'British born subjects of European race'.<sup>206</sup> This idea was rejected in the committee as too controversial, but it goes some way to show the will of some members of the government. The conclusions of the committee are perhaps more revealing. Whilst deciding that it was prudent 'to avoid any suggestion that the validity of the passport varies according to the origin - racial or otherwise- of the holder', the committee adopted another path to ensure that 'race' restrictions still operated.<sup>207</sup> In keeping with British immigration policy they concluded that an existing passport clause would suffice to keep out unwanted groups. This prevented the need for a high profile change of policy, which would perhaps have damaged the self styled image of 'liberal' Empire (which will come under further scrutiny later in this chapter).<sup>208</sup>

Further evidence supports the contention that the 'Aliens and Nationality Committee' placed the importance of 'race' over that of citizenship. A memorandum from the Department of Overseas Trade to the committee argued that the treatment of foreigners in Britain should depend not on their nationality but on their 'racial' origin.

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<sup>204</sup> *The Keys*, Vol: 3, No: 2, Oct-Dec 1935, p.19.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* Vol: 3, No: 2, Oct-Dec 1935, p.16.

<sup>206</sup> PRO, ADM 1/8696/40, Meeting of Aliens and Nationality Committee, 5/8/21.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> The existing regulation in the Consular instructions read: 'The possession of a passport does not exempt the holder from compliance with any local immigration restrictions'.

A very large proportion of naturalized British subjects described as of Austrian origin are in fact by race Czechs, Poles, Polish Jews or Slavs of some kind, and in such places there would appear to be no reason for regarding the persons in question differently from any naturalized British subject of friendly origin.<sup>209</sup>

'Race' and not nationality was perceived as answering the question of a person's real abilities and loyalties, and treatment of groups in Britain would depend on their 'racial' origin above anything else. In the wake of the 1919 Aliens Restriction Act, the *Jewish Chronicle* critiqued the government's response to minorities in Britain in exactly these terms. 'The anti-alien craze will not be satisfied at national differentiation. It is really racial differences that it would mark, perpetuate and penalise'.<sup>210</sup>

In a similar manner to Black British citizens, British Jews were often perceived as an alien community.<sup>211</sup> Again, 'racial' difference was seen as a more accurate divider of men than the 'artificial' notion of nationality. Since their readmittance to Britain Jewish assimilation had been widely hampered by the belief that they comprised an irreconcilably foreign element, both threatening and permanently different to the 'indigenous' population.<sup>212</sup> Oxford historian Goldwin Smith outlined this view in a famous and influential article, 'Can Jews be Patriots?' in 1878, where he concluded:

The ruling motives of the Jewish community are not exclusively those which actuate a patriotic Englishman, but specifically Jewish and plutopolitan...The rest of mankind are to him not merely people holding a different creed, but aliens in blood.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> PRO, HO 73/112, Department of Overseas Trade Memorandum, 20/5/19.

<sup>210</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 11/7/19.

<sup>211</sup> See Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept', pp.28-47.

<sup>212</sup> See Endelman, T, *The Jews of Britain 1656-2000*, or Feldman, D, (ed.), *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994.

<sup>213</sup> Goldwin Smith, A, 'Can Jews be Patriots?', pp.875-876.

In his 1899 study, social commentator and aspiring politician Arnold White recorded similar reservations about the possibility of Jews ever becoming truly British when he noted:

No race or fragment of a race can be deemed English when their diet is foreign, their origin, oriental, when their ties with alien co-religionists in other lands are closer than with Britons, and when, for successive generations, they have proudly declined to inter marry with the people of their adopted country.<sup>214</sup>

As Jews continued to immigrate into Britain in the twentieth century it is clear that views of this nature remained mainstream within the political spectrum of anti-alienism. As Kadish has pertinently concluded: 'Anti-alienists found it difficult to distinguish between native, naturalised and immigrant Jews. Indeed, the distinction came to be regarded as academic'.<sup>215</sup>

Britain perceived herself as the most enlightened of world powers. It was indeed in this assessment that the justification for the domination of the British Empire had been rooted.<sup>216</sup> The idea of Britain as the ultimate 'liberal' nation sat uncomfortably with the rejection of Black and Jewish immigrants and led, in both cases, to a muffled and often apologetic façade to exclusionary politics. The political desire to prevent Black Britons from other parts of the Empire residing in the UK highlighted graphically the contradictions between Empire ideology and reality. Likewise, the refusal to allow the entry of fleeing European Jews had the potential to shatter the image which Britain had created for herself as a refuge for those who suffered religious or political persecution. As Garrard has noted, these ideas were 'part of the Victorian ark of the covenant during the revolution, reaction and restoration cycles of the mid nineteenth century'.<sup>217</sup> However, in the cases of both Jewish and Black immigration, the desire to restrict the settlement of 'racial' undesirables ultimately superseded any loyalty to Empire ideology. The contradiction

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<sup>214</sup> White, A, *The Modern Jew*, p.325.

<sup>215</sup> Kadish, S, *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, p.117.

<sup>216</sup> See MacKenzie, J, *Propaganda and Empire*, pp.2-7, Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp.6-7 and Jones, G, *Social Darwinism and English Thought*, pp.1-10.

<sup>217</sup> Garrard, J, *The English and Immigration: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Influx 1880-1910*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, p.67.



ensured, though, that exclusion was always dressed in the language of necessity and moderation, with intentions thinly concealed (as Glass noted of the post Second World War period) 'behind a parade of polite phrases and manners'.<sup>218</sup>

Successive British governments argued that the restriction of immigration was vital to prevent an exacerbation of existing 'racial' tensions. This 'restriction to prevent racism' approach moved the blame for exclusion away from the political classes by highlighting wider public resentment as the demanding force behind immigration control. More often than not ultimate blame was thereby placed on the immigrants themselves, whose behaviour was cited as having caused public hostility in the first place.<sup>219</sup> Government and media responses to the 1919 'race' riots certainly attributed blame in this way. As has been shown, across the nation there was a near total inability to view Black Britons as victims in the riots. A report to the Colonial Office from the Chief Constable in Liverpool highlighted this tendency. 'In nearly all cases where disturbances take place between white and coloured men the latter are almost always the aggressors'.<sup>220</sup> As already noted, the Liverpool anti-Black rioting led to the *en masse* imprisonment of the entire male Black community. Murphy has concluded:

Any black man on the streets who became the target of white aggression was likely to find himself beaten up by the mob or, if he resisted, jailed by the police, ostensibly for his own protection. If he was unwilling to be 'protected' he would be arrested for resisting arrest, a catch 22 situation.<sup>221</sup>

This tendency of arresting Black people was repeated across Britain during the riots. Jenkinson, in her analysis of rioting in Salford and Hull, has confirmed that there was a 'well established pattern of arresting the black victims of the violence'.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers: The West Indians In London*, Centre for Urban Studies & George Allen and Unwin, London, 1960, pp.153 and also 225. Similarly Glass argued: 'Those who shut doors to them [Black immigrants] often do so with a smile and an apology', p. 109.

<sup>219</sup> On Jews, see Kushner's argument: 'Until 1938 at least, many in Britain partly blamed German Jews for their own misfortune', in Kushner, T, and Knox, K, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, p.146.

<sup>220</sup> PRO, CO323/848, Chief Constable's Report on Rioting, 1/1/20.

<sup>221</sup> Murphy, A, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, p.29.

<sup>222</sup> Jenkinson, J, 'The Black Community of Salford and Hull' 1919-21', p.176.

Ultimately, the actions of the government revealed their sympathy with the theory of Black culpability for 'racial' disturbances. By providing funding and encouragement for repatriation, and enacting the Alien Seamen Orders of 1920 and 1925, the governmental stance (that the best way to deal with 'racial' tension was to remove or at least restrain the growth of the Black community) became clear.

Lingering racist animosity tempered sympathies towards European Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. British anti-Semitism ensured that whilst there was some sympathy for refugee Jews, especially as Nazi persecution increased, this sympathy was checked by the belief that Jews were partly to blame for the persecution which they attracted.<sup>223</sup> There was a widespread conviction in some governmental and parliamentary circles that Jews were guilty of many of the charges that were levelled against them by Germany and other countries.<sup>224</sup> It was, therefore, only Hitler's excessively violent response which was deemed worthy of criticism. To a certain extent Neville Chamberlain can be seen to have subscribed to this 'racial' thinking. He responded in 1939, to a journalist's question regarding alleged Nazi atrocities, that 'he was surprised that such an experienced journalist was susceptible to Jewish/Communist propaganda'.<sup>225</sup> Beliefs in Semitic discourses permeated much of Britain's intelligentsia, and were nowhere more prevalent than amongst appeasers of Germany who increasingly viewed Jewish refugees as standing between British and German friendship.

An analysis of the *Truth* magazine provides a good example of high-level, pro-German anti-Semitic hostility.<sup>226</sup> In 1936, Lord Luke of Pavenham purchased

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<sup>223</sup> See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.78-106 and Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p.273.

<sup>224</sup> For example, see the diary of Conservative MP, Henry 'Chips' Channon, who believed that Chamberlain had to (and would) stand firm against the machinations of international Jewish conspiracy: 'The bars and lobbies of the League's buildings are full of Russians and Jews who intrigue with and dominate the press, and spend their time spreading rumours of approaching war, but I don't believe them. Not with Neville at the helm' in James, R, (ed.), *Chips: The Diary of Sir Henry Channon*, 12/9/38, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1967, p.164.

<sup>225</sup> Margach, J, *The Anatomy of Power: An Enquiry into the Personality of Leadership*, W.H. Allen, London, 1979, p.53. The Prime Minister notoriously informed his sister on the subject of Jews: 'I don't care about them myself'. See Crowson, N, *Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and the European Dictators 1935-40*, Routledge, London, 1997, p.31.

<sup>226</sup> See Cockett, R, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement and the Manipulation of the Press*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1989, and Kushner, T, 'Clubland, Cricket Tests and Alien Internment 1939-1940', in Kushner, T, and Cesarani, D, (eds.), *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.81-97.

*Truth*, though the force behind this purchase was Joseph Ball.<sup>227</sup> Ball had been recruited by MI5 after having served as the Director of the Conservative Research Department and he was, in ideological terms, a staunch supporter of Chamberlain. His role in directing the reporting in *Truth* only emerged in 1941, following a report by Robert Vansittart into the journal.<sup>228</sup> Ball used *Truth* to promote Chamberlain, represent his views and discredit his enemies. The magazine therefore became, Cockett has noted, 'stridently anti-Churchill, anti-Semitic, anti-American and pacifist and as such accurately reflected the real state of Ball's and Chamberlain's minds from 1939 onwards'.<sup>229</sup>

*Truth* firmly asserted the idea that war with Germany was unnecessary and was only a worthwhile venture for international Jewry who were trying to manipulate Britain into joining the struggle. A *Truth* editorial argued, in July 1939, that 'if we set aside the ideal passions of Mr Gollancz and his tribe in the tents of Bloomsbury, the truth is that no appreciable section of British public opinion desires to re-conquer Berlin for the Jews'.<sup>230</sup> Ernst Tennant of the Anglo-German Fellowship expressed similar views on the Nazi persecution of Jews. Whilst noting that Hitler's extremism with regard to Jews had been a mistake, Tennant commented: 'That he was justified in reducing Jewish control in certain trades and professions even the best Jews in Germany themselves admit'.<sup>231</sup>

The anti-Semitic agenda of *Truth* became clearest during its virulent attacks directed at Leslie Hore-Belisha around the time of the minister's resignation in January 1940. *Truth* printed poems discrediting and mocking Belisha with titles such as 'Exodus from Whitehall' and 'Belisha is no loss'.<sup>232</sup> The journal also accused Belisha of business irregularities, a charge rooted in Semitic discourse. The minister

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<sup>227</sup> Ball's role has been revealed by Collin Brooks (the magazine's editor from November 1940). See Crowson, N, (ed.), *Fleet Street, Press Barons and Politics: The Journals of Collin Brooks 1932-40*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp.275-277.

<sup>228</sup> Cockett, R, *Twilight of Truth*, pp.10-11. Cockett also argues that a letter from Chamberlain to his sisters further indicated Prime Ministerial complicity in the use of *Truth*.

<sup>229</sup> Cockett, R, *Twilight of Truth*, p.11.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.* p.163. Gollancz was a left wing Jewish publisher.

<sup>231</sup> Mount Temple MSS, Hartley Archive, University of Southampton, BR81/13, 5/9/34.

<sup>232</sup> Crowson, N, 'The British Conservative Party and the Jews during the late 1930s', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol: 29, No: 2, 1995, p.23.

resigned, having been told by Chamberlain, 'there is prejudice against you'.<sup>233</sup> Though hostility towards Belisha did not exclusively resonate from *Truth*, it is notable that the main channel of the prejudice seems to have come from this most reliable 'source close to the Prime Minister'. Vansittart's report concluded as much in 1941, stating that *Truth* had attacked the minister in 'a deliberate effort to kill Belisha once and for all as a political force'.<sup>234</sup>

Whilst it would be an exaggeration based on the evidence here to conclude that the entire British establishment was influenced by 'racial' discourses, the examples considered do suggest that these ideas were prevalent if not dominant within significant sections of British politics and media.<sup>235</sup> London's conclusion (regarding attitudes towards Jewish immigration) is also relevant to the experience of the Black community in interwar Britain:

British stereotypes of Jews were significant in marking them out as members of a group that was difficult, even dangerous, to help. Such prejudices helped to cast the image of the Jewish refugee in a problematic mould and thus to strengthen support for policies of restriction.<sup>236</sup>

The British establishment generally failed to perceive that Black and Jewish people were innocent victims of 'racial' violence. Instead, 'racial' characterisations of these communities were invoked as explanations and mitigation for the violent treatment meted out against them. Within this mind frame (of thinking that Jews and Blacks were at least partly responsible for the hostility they engendered) the government increasingly fell back on the position that allowing further Black and Jewish immigration would inherently increase 'racial' hostility.<sup>237</sup> The logic here held that if

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<sup>233</sup> See Trythall, A.J., 'The Downfall of Leslie Hore-Belisha', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol: 16, No: 3, July 1981, pp.391-408.

<sup>234</sup> Cockett, R, *Twilight of Truth*, p.169.

<sup>235</sup> See Kushner, T, 'Clubland, Cricket Tests and Alien Internment', pp.89-94 or Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country*, p.37.

<sup>236</sup> London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.277.

<sup>237</sup> See Kushner, T, 'Clubland, Cricket Tests and Alien Internment', p.90: 'Such is the story of immigration restriction and control of aliens in twentieth century Britain; the state attempting to limit the forces of intolerance by taking intolerant measures'.

immigrant behaviour caused 'racial' tension and violence, the more immigrants that were allowed to enter the UK, the more tension there would be.

This 'restriction to prevent racism' approach was clearly used by some agitators as an excuse to prevent more refugee Jews from entering Britain. However, the power of Semitic discourses in this period becomes clear amid an understanding that there was a genuine belief among many protagonists within the immigration debate, that allowing the settlement of more Jews really would produce a dangerous explosion of 'racial' tension. In the immediate wake of the First World War and before the ascent of Nazism, government policy towards immigration was already grounded in the 'restriction to prevent racism' principle. The Aliens and Nationality Committee had indeed outlined government policies of Black and Jewish exclusion in these terms. In 1921, the recorded minutes of this committee recommended that the government refuse citizenship to the families of Russian immigrants already in Britain 'in view of the opportunities which this situation would afford for anti-Semitic agitation and in the interest of the people themselves'.<sup>238</sup> Committee minutes justified the 1925 Coloured Alien Seamen Order in the same terms, to prevent 'serious discontent among British sailors'.<sup>239</sup>

The same reasoning went on to underpin responses to Jewish refugees fleeing from Nazism. The British government consistently attempted to avoid any substantial intake of Jewish refugees, claiming that further Jewish immigration would be potentially perilous to 'race' relations in Britain.<sup>240</sup> From the earliest days of the Third Reich, Britain attempted to avoid the issue of providing asylum for Jews.<sup>241</sup> As the international community began to address the problem in 1933, Britain's representative in the League of Nations was instructed not to be drawn into taking any responsibility for any refugees. Relaying these sentiments back to civil servant

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<sup>238</sup> PRO, ADM 1/8696/40, Meeting of Aliens and Nationality Committee, 13/11/25.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> See the wartime comments of the Home Secretary to Eleanor Rathbone: 'I do not think that it would be in the interests of refugees themselves who are at present in this country to allow a further influx of refugees from territory under enemy jurisdiction. There is already considerable uneasiness about the number of aliens in this country, and fresh admissions would add to the public uneasiness and might do much to prejudice the position of refugees already here'. Rathbone MSS, University of Liverpool Archive, File IX, 2.17, 6/3/40.

<sup>241</sup> See Kushner, T, and Knox, K, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, p.154 or Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-45*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, p.38.

Douglas Hacking in London, Holderness noted: 'Your own minute on Home Office papers was "the less we get involved in this matter the better"'.<sup>242</sup> This position was sustained as the situation worsened and set the tone of Britain's attitude towards international efforts to ameliorate the lot of Jewish refugees. Lord Winterton (representative of the British government at the crucial Evian Conference for Refugees in 1938) informed Otto Schiff (the Chairman of the German Jewish Aid Committee) that the British government would not entertain the prospect of admitting more Jewish refugees for fear of 'stirring up anti-Alien and anti-Semitic feeling in the UK'.<sup>243</sup>

In order to avoid public resentment, the British government consistently refused to pay for the maintenance of any of the Jewish refugees who were granted temporary residence in Britain. The 'guarantee' provided by Britain's Jewish community in 1933 (taking financial responsibility for the welfare of all refugees resident in the UK) thus became a cornerstone of British policy in the period.<sup>244</sup> Even after the outbreak of war a great fear existed (both inside and outside the Jewish community) that any government refugee funding could cause a dangerous backlash from anti-Semitic agitators, so that when the state finally assumed some belated financial responsibility for the refugees in 1939 it did so in secret.<sup>245</sup> This secrecy surely indicates that there was a genuine fear of generating public anti-Semitic anger in government circles.

After the *Anschluss*, the Home Secretary Samuel Hoare revived the visa system for Germans and Austrians wishing to enter Britain. London has argued that this action was fuelled by an M15 report 'suggesting that the Germans were anxious to inundate this country with Jews, with a view to creating a Jewish problem in the UK'.<sup>246</sup> It seems that Hoare really believed that unchecked Jewish immigration could be so dangerous that Germany would deliberately use refugees as a weapon to

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<sup>242</sup> PRO, HO 45/15882, Holderness to Hacking, 29/9/33.

<sup>243</sup> PRO, HO213/1636, Winterton to Schiff, 25/10/38.

<sup>244</sup> See London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.54.

<sup>245</sup> MP, Alexander Maxwell, informed Otto Schiff regarding this matter: 'I am so afraid that this will stimulate an anti-alien movement'. PRO, HO 213/1655, Maxwell to Schiff, 31/10/39.

<sup>246</sup> London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.55.

undermine the nation.<sup>247</sup> Even where the government allowed Jews to come to Britain, careful vetting was carried out to ensure that 'harmful' Jews would be excluded. Apparently, the harmfulness of the Jew could be measured by assessing their level of 'Jewishness', so that only if Jewish qualities could be significantly removed from the immigrant (or were not prominent in the first place) was absorption seen as possible.<sup>248</sup> It is in this way that London has explained the *Kindertransport* policy, which allowed Jewish children to come to Britain: 'To admit children was regarded as less onerous....The children would be Anglicised, growing up speaking English and thus less likely than adults to arouse xenophobia'.<sup>249</sup>

Semitic discourses were so entrenched that even when faced with the humanitarian imperatives brought about by Nazi atrocity, the British establishment could not shake off ingrained 'racial' images of Jews. Whether restrictionist policy was rooted in genuine fears or merely in excuses, reaction to Jewish refugees could not escape traditional 'racial' thinking. Even as European Jewry floundered in the horror of the Holocaust, attitudes towards Jews altered little. London has cited the response of senior Foreign Office civil servant Maurice Hankey to a programme proposed by the United States for the transmission of foreign exchange to save seventy thousand Romanian Jews from Hitler's 'Final Solution' in 1943. Hankey could not escape from the idea that Jews were in some way attempting to profit from the international situation and that they were not as vulnerable as they seemed: 'I suspect the real object of the scheme is financial – Jews in Europe getting into dollars while there is still time'.<sup>250</sup> 'Restriction to prevent racism' policy reflected a sustained attitude towards Jewry, which was shaken but not eradicated by the Holocaust. In this context, the British government restricted Jewish immigration out of genuine fear of what the Jews may do to Britain and what Britain in retaliation would do to its Jews. As Kushner has concluded: 'Ironically, Nazi persecution of the Jews was viewed as essentially unEnglish, but it was native forms of anti-Semitism that led to Britain's

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<sup>247</sup> This idea was rooted in Semitic discourse and was expressed in various anti-refugee publications. Notably, *Truth* described the threat of the 'refuspy'. See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.117-119.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.* p.197.

<sup>249</sup> London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.121.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* p.276.

failure to come to terms with the first stages of the Final Solution'.<sup>251</sup> Having explored the impact of 'racial' discourses on policy and attitudes towards Jewish and Black minorities, this chapter will now finally consider Jewish and Black thinking on 'race' in the interwar period.

#### d) Jews, Blacks and Living Inside 'Racial' Discourses

It is important to realise that Jews and Blacks in the interwar period did not live outside the lure of 'racial' discourses. Both communities were susceptible to 'race' thinking and indeed produced some of the more extreme and notable 'race' thinkers from amongst their number.

Jews were far from immune to the feelings which produced 'restriction to avoid racism' politics. In fact, interwar responses of British Jews towards their refugee co-religionists were often conditioned by the fear that the entry of more Jews to Britain could jeopardise the safety of established Jewry by heightening anti-Semitic sentiment. However, Jewish hostility and 'coolness' towards immigrants was not exclusively the product of fear, but also caused by genuine 'racial' distaste for some of the Jewish communities which were seeking asylum in Britain.<sup>252</sup> Having resided in Britain for some generations, established Jews were often affected by similar prejudices to those that affected non-Jewish Britons. Whilst bonds of identity with international Jewry were never completely severed, foreign Jews were frequently not considered so much as brothers but as embarrassing distant relations.<sup>253</sup>

Feldman has argued that the leaders of British Jewry consistently attempted to prevent more Jewish immigrants from settling in the UK in the latter parts of the nineteenth century. He has contended that the Jewish Board of Guardians were responsible for sending twenty four thousand Jews back to continental Europe between 1881 and 1906. Feldman has concluded: 'It should be clear that the policies

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<sup>251</sup> Kushner, T, 'Beyond the Pale? British Reaction to Nazi Anti-Semitism 1933-9', in Kushner, T, and Lunn, K, (eds.), *Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, Frank Cass, London, 1990, p.156.

<sup>252</sup> Feldman, D, (ed.), *Englishmen and Jews*, pp.302-306.

<sup>253</sup> See Endelman, T, 'Native Jews and Foreign Jews in London 1870-1914' in Berger, D, *The Legacy of Jewish Migration*, Social Science Monographs, New York, 1983.



of the Jewish Board of Guardians shared the assumptions of the propertied classes concerning the provision of poor relief, the organisation of charity and the consequences of unlimited immigration'.<sup>254</sup>

Even into the 1920s and 1930s there was a clear reluctance amongst sections of the British Jewish community to act on behalf of foreign Jews. Having spent generations attempting to gain acceptance in the UK some Jews were daunted by the prospect of the arrival of more immigrants. Settled Jews often wanted to be perceived as English and as such felt it was inappropriate to be seen to agitate on behalf of refugees merely because they were Jewish. This attitude is evident in Sebag Montefiore's opinion that the Board of Deputies should not defend Russian Jews who had fled to Britain illegally after the First World War. Minutes of a Board meeting in July 1920 have recorded that Sebag Montefiore:

...deprecates the board taking up applications of this nature in spite of the hardships they involve. In his opinion they are merely cases of Jews who have broken the law by entering the country without leave and they are punished in the same way as other law breakers.<sup>255</sup>

Jewish groups responded with ambivalence to the 1919 Aliens Restriction Act. Although all of the main Jewish bodies were hostile to aspects of the legislation, most also recognised and confirmed the right of the government to create laws to restrict immigration. This ambiguity can be seen in a *Jewish Guardian* article from April 1920. The newspaper criticised the prospect of the government taking more powers to deport aliens (noting that it was 'difficult to conceive a greater violation of the general principles of English law') but concluded that 'no exception can be taken to several of the conditions specifically imposed seeing that they are concerned with the mental, physical and moral qualifications of the applicant'.<sup>256</sup> This response from the *Jewish Guardian* highlights that many Jews themselves were convinced of the need

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<sup>254</sup> Feldman, D, (ed.), *Englishmen and Jews*, p.306. Also see Black, E, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1988, pp.288-327.

<sup>255</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Aliens Committee Minutes, ACC3121, 21/7/20. Herbert Samuel's promulgation of the Anglo-Russian Military Service Agreement of 1917 (discussed above, p.26) provides another example of an established British Jew working to ensure that no special allowances were made for new refugee Jews.

<sup>256</sup> *The Jewish Guardian*, 30/4/20.

for a 'eugenic' immigration policy, even if this meant the denial of entry to some alien Jews. Leonard Cohen (retiring from the Board of Deputies in 1920) argued for the restriction of unsuitable immigrants, claiming that 'nobody, however, at any rate in the present day, would challenge the view that it is the duty of the state to safeguard the interests of the country by the regulation of the admission of aliens'.<sup>257</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these attitudes on the parts of British Jews were conditioned by insecurity or whether they mark a 'racial' rejection of foreign Jews. Certainly, some Jews wanted the British community to stand alone as a distinct group and not be drawn into issues of international Jewish solidarity. In 1920 the *Jewish Guardian* urged the British Chief Rabbi to adopt this isolationist view: 'The Chief Rabbi is competent, we believe, to erect a ring fence of British Judaism from one end of the Empire to the other, which shall be strong to keep in and to keep out'.<sup>258</sup> Whilst remaining generally sympathetic to the plight of foreign Jews the *Jewish Guardian* maintained the view that Eastern European Jews were an essentially 'foreign' liability, not necessarily suitable for absorption into the 'racial' stream of the UK.<sup>259</sup>

Conflicts were rife within the Jewish community in the interwar period and no issue produced as much bad feeling as this question, regarding the stance that Britain's Jews should take towards international Jewry. Some responses within this debate highlight the susceptibility of Jews to believing in and disseminating 'racial' Semitic discourses. On occasions, British Jews were not beyond being convinced that the widespread allegations of Jewish conscription avoidance, war gain and sedition were at least partly true. A letter from the Chief Rabbi, printed in the *Manchester Weekly Times* in 1916, highlights this tendency. The Rabbi 'felt that the sacrifices of these hundreds of thousands in Russia and the twenty five thousand in England would count as nought because two or three thousand Jews were laggards'.<sup>260</sup> A Board of Deputies debate in 1919, considering whether to ban 'money lenders' from assuming leadership roles in the Jewish community, must also be seen in this context. The idea

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<sup>257</sup> *The Jewish Guardian*, 2/4/20.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* 20/2/20.

<sup>259</sup> The newspaper criticised parliamentarians who 'would burden our ancient faith with the crimes of the scum of Europe', *Jewish Guardian*, 30/7/20.

<sup>260</sup> *Manchester Weekly News*, 14/10/16.

was finally rejected as Dr Daiches, one of the Deputies, pointed out to the Board the extent to which they were the victims of anti-Semitic thinking in even discussing the idea. Why was the bill necessary, Daiches argued, when 'he had not been a money lender; he had no relatives who were money lenders, and so far as he knew none of his ancestors had been money lenders'.<sup>261</sup>

The attitude of the *Jewish Guardian* and of the Board of British Jews towards the issue of Jews and Bolshevism led to real hostility amongst other sections of the community.<sup>262</sup> This schism was most evident after leading members of the Board of British Jews published a letter in the *Morning Post* in April 1919, criticising Israel Zangwill for attending a communist meeting. The letter requested that the public should recognise the difference between good British Jews (such as themselves) and those who practised Bolshevism. The *Jewish Chronicle* responded by accusing the letter writers of trying to create 'a division of our community into those who came here yesterday, and those who came here the day before', suggesting that the writers were trying to draw a line between immigrants (who were often portrayed in the *Post* as Bolshevik) and established British Jewry.<sup>263</sup> The virulence of the response from the *Chronicle* was rooted in their belief that the letter writers (and with them the Board of British Jews and the *Jewish Guardian*) had abandoned their 'race' in favour of the British. They were furious that Zangwill's 'own flesh and blood', as they perceived it, 'should libel him to the enemies of his people, for motives that are best unworthy and at worst deplorable'.<sup>264</sup> *The Zionist Review* similarly attacked the letter writers concluding that, to the Board of British Jews, 'cowardice is a greater God than logic'.<sup>265</sup>

Whilst British Jews were sometimes affected by ideas of 'racial' difference, London has accurately concluded that Jewish compliance with government policy on immigrant restriction in the 1930s was rooted more in fear than in agreement.<sup>266</sup> In

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<sup>261</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 17/1/19.

<sup>262</sup> The Board of British Jews had been established to provide more patriotic representation for British Jewry. Expressed through the *Jewish Guardian*, the Board of British Jews criticised the Board of Deputies on the grounds that it did 'not always think imperially', *Jewish Guardian*, 27/2/20.

<sup>263</sup> *Jewish Chronicle*, 9/5/19.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *The Zionist Review*, Vol: 3, No: 2, June 1919.

<sup>266</sup> London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, pp.6-8.

the face of extreme anti-Semitism in Germany, the already insecure British Jewish community was reluctant to challenge government positions regarding the limitation of refugee numbers and the 'guarantee' of Jewish funding for the refugees who were allowed to enter. Otto Schiff was so frightened of exacerbating British anti-Semitism that he repeatedly counselled the Home Office to exercise caution regarding the number of Jews that were permitted to enter the country. Home Office minutes have recorded Schiff's opinion:

...to admit many more refugees might evoke strong public feeling against refugees generally....Mr Schiff concluded by expressing the view that, generally speaking, the Home Office were admitting too many refugees.<sup>267</sup>

A 1937 letter by James Parkes (a Christian academic and minister who dedicated much of his career to studying Jewish affairs) captured the atmosphere of terror that governed the responses of the Jewish community towards refugees from Nazism. Parkes noted that even 'the well established Jews are terrified for their own skins, and hate the other group, as the potential cause of anti-Semitism'.<sup>268</sup>

The idea that Jews were an 'enemy within' was so prevalent within the contemporary Semitic discourse that Britain's Jews were often too frightened to express any opinions which may have betrayed an agenda that could be perceived as divergent from that of British society at large.<sup>269</sup> A 1936 Board of Deputies memorandum, on how to combat Fascist candidates, highlights the impact of these fears on Jewish behaviour.

As a community, we have a bounden duty to remain politically neutral and never water down this obligation, however great the provocation. Neutrality implies a rigid avoidance of anything which savours of a Jewish vote or a Jewish party or a Jewish attitude to any political

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<sup>267</sup> PRO, HO 213/1636, Record of Schiff's statement to Home Office, 29/10/38.

<sup>268</sup> Redcliffe Salaman MSS, Cambridge Central Library, (ADD 8171), Box 14, Parkes to Brotman, 1/2/37.

<sup>269</sup> See Alderman, G, on the attitude of Jewish political leadership in *The Jewish Community and British Politics*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1983: 'Any idea of a Jewish vote in the Britain of the 1930s was officially and actively discouraged', p.121.

problem, and, quite clearly, our safety as Jews and citizens depends on the strict observance of these conditions.<sup>270</sup>

Even if the main motive of the British Jewish community for not offering substantial opposition to restrictions on immigration was fear regarding their own security and status, the impact of Semitic discourses on Jews themselves is still noticeable. The acceptance amongst British Jewry of the notion that more Jews would inherently cause more prejudice in itself indicates the impact of anti-Semitic 'racial' thinking on Jews. This, however, is only one example of how 'racial' thinking influenced the behaviour and beliefs of minority groups in the interwar period for, just as beliefs in 'racial' discourses could persuade a community into attacks against themselves, so immigrant groups also attacked each other armed with 'racial' theories. Whilst these tendencies can partly be explained as attempts by minorities to gain acceptance at the expense of other rival immigrants, they must also be understood in terms of sincerely felt 'racial' thinking.

These beliefs are evident in the anti-Semitic analysis of post-war social problems, recorded in the *African Telegraph*. In April 1919 the newspaper offered a remarkable conspiracy theory to explain British 'race' rioting:

The British working man is being used as a tool by alien agitators. There are in this country dangerous foreigners well supplied with money, and they are plotting the break-up and the downfall of the British Empire. To do that they are trying to sow dissension between the British working man and black Britishers. They are appealing to class hatred and to race prejudice. They believe that if only they can stir up British men by showing up in the most disgusting fashion the intercourse between black men and white women, then they will be on the fair road to accomplishing their object.<sup>271</sup>

Although Jews were not specifically named as the culprits in this article, it is clear who the *Telegraph* were blaming when they spoke of 'aliens' in this context. It seems

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<sup>270</sup> Salaman MSS, Box 14, Percy Cohen on behalf of the Board of Deputies, 23/11/36.

<sup>271</sup> *The African Telegraph*, May-June 1919, p.227.

reasonable to argue that the newspaper was attempting to entrench Black British status within the nation by emphasising the 'Britishness' of Black immigrants in contrast to the Jewish 'foreigners' who were also newcomers in the UK.<sup>272</sup> However, the nature of allegations made against aliens in this article also indicates the importance of Semitic discourse within Black thinking and it seems likely that the writers here believed what they wrote about the threat of (Jewish) immigrants.

Some prominent Jews played a role in the 1919 anti-Black 'race' riots. The leader of the British Seafarers Union, which was at the forefront of Glasgow anti-Black rioting, was Jewish immigrant (and later Labour MP), Emmanuel (Mannie) Shinwell.<sup>273</sup> Jewish leaders were not above buying into the prevalent anti-Black discourses. L.G. Montefiore expressed fear that his son's trip to Nigeria may lead to him being 'devoured by cannibals'.<sup>274</sup> This is of no special significance except to cement the point already made above, namely that members of minority communities were often incapable of perceiving the plight of the other during their attempt to entrench their own positions in Britain, and were as vulnerable as other people to theories of 'racial' difference.

Citing the work of Olaudah Equiano and Phillis Wheatley amongst others, Gilroy has argued that Black thinkers utilised positive theories of 'racial' difference as essential weapons in the struggle for 'racial' emancipation.<sup>275</sup> Similarly, Cesarani has highlighted how 'race' theory was utilised by the British Jewish press to present their community in positive terms. The *Jewish Chronicle*, he has recorded, worked tirelessly to emphasise the 'utility, industry and law abiding character of the Jewish aliens'.<sup>276</sup> Gilroy has concluded: 'Even voices of dissent from imperial misconduct and colonial expansionism had to engage the same anthropological ideas of 'race',

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<sup>272</sup> Similarly, Murphy has recorded the over-representation of Irish immigrants amongst the white agitators in Liverpool's anti-Black riots. Arguably, this Irish participation can be seen as another attempt by a vulnerable, maligned community to 'pull up the ladder' into Britain and protect their own status against newer immigrants. Murphy has utilised police records to argue that those arrested in the riots 'were mostly Irish or of Irish descent' in Murphy, A, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, p.31.

<sup>273</sup> Jenkinson has recorded that Shinwell instructed his members 'to take effective steps to prevent the employment of Chinese labour on British ships' in 'The Glasgow Race Disturbances of 1919', pp.55-56.

<sup>274</sup> Charles Singer MSS, File E1, Montefiore to Singer, 3/9/55.

<sup>275</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.108-138.

<sup>276</sup> Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept?', p.33.

nation and culture which had applauded imperial power'.<sup>277</sup> Although minority groups undoubtedly utilised 'race' theory in this way, it must be emphasised that Blacks and Jews were as likely to believe such theories as anyone else. The analyst must be wary of thinking that these persecuted minorities retained the prescience to utilise 'race' theory merely as a tool for emancipation. Often both Black and Jewish thinkers genuinely believed in the 'racial' uniqueness of their respective communities and were as convinced and absorbed by theories of 'racial' differences as their persecutors were.

An analysis of the ideology of Marcus Garvey, and especially of his attitude towards Jews, Blacks and 'race', provides a good example in this context. Garvey's Pan-Africanism was a deeply 'racial' ethos, to the extent that he was convinced of the 'racial' intelligence of Hitler in the 1930s.<sup>278</sup> He described the new German leader in 1934 as 'a wonderful personality' and argued for the 'Black race' to copy the Fuhrer's 'racial' policies. 'Such a man must be regarded with respect... The Negro will be wise if he reads a few chapters of the Hitler text book'.<sup>279</sup> Hitler's 'racial' purity views very much appealed to Garvey, who strove to protect the Black 'race' (as he perceived it) and return them to Africa. His stance on this issue, and his choice of language and tone, confirm Garvey as an extreme 'race' thinker.<sup>280</sup>

We are either on the way to a higher racial existence or racial extermination. This much is known and realized by every thoughtful race and nation; hence, we have the death struggle of the different

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<sup>277</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.138.

<sup>278</sup> Garvey's relationship with segregationist whites provides a good example of how deeply he believed in 'race' difference. Levine is correct to argue: 'It would be a mistake to see Garvey's attitude towards the clan as an aberration. They were deeply representative of Garvey's racial views and his abiding pessimism concerning the future of blacks in the United States'. See Levine, L, 'Marcus Garvey and the Politics of Revitalization', in Franklin, J.H., and Meier, A, (eds.), *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, University of Illinois Press, U.S.A., 1982, pp.105-139.

<sup>279</sup> Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association MSS, Vol: 7, Garvey's Editorial in the *Black Man*, March, 1934.

<sup>280</sup> Some writers have explained the racism of Garvey as an attempt to use the language and ideologies of wider American society for Black emancipation. See Campbell, H, *Rasta and Resistance, From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney*, Hansib, London, 1985, p.62: 'The struggle against racism was fought on the rules established by the racists'. There is clearly some truth in this analysis, though it surely cannot provide the whole explanation for Garvey's own brand of racism.

racess of Europe and Asia in the scramble of the survival of the fittest race.<sup>281</sup>

Whilst it is true that Garvey wielded his 'race' thinking in the face of horrendous Black oppression in the US, his rejection of, and fierce hostility towards, anti-'racial' opponents of American racism reveals further his own convictions concerning 'race'. He described the *National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People* as 'the race enemy organisation' and accused them of 'seeking to build up a mongrel America' and of being 'either crazy or positively immoral'.<sup>282</sup>

Garvey's attitude towards Jews reveals his deep-seated adherence to Semitic 'racial' discourses. His belief in international Jewish power prevented him, like so many others, from understanding the nature of Nazi persecution. Despite citing sympathy for Jewish suffering, Garvey noted:

Hitler is only making a fool of himself. Sooner or later the Jews will destroy Germany as they destroyed Russia. They did not so much destroy Russia from within as from without, and Hitler is driving the Jews to a more perfect organisation from without Germany. Jewish finance is a powerful world factor. It can destroy men, organisations and nations. When the Jewish capitalists get together they will strike back at Germany and the fire of Communism will be lighted and Hitler and his gang will disappear as they have disappeared in Russia. We are in sympathy with the Jews, just as with any other oppressed minority group.<sup>283</sup>

Garvey's belief in the need for Black 'racial' unity was actually bolstered by his prejudiced understanding of Jewish international 'racial' solidarity. Garvey wrote: 'Today the Jew is working out a wonderful programme throughout the world...it is a program of quiet and peaceful penetration that has put the Jew in the foremost rank of

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<sup>281</sup> Garvey, M, in *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, p.63.

<sup>282</sup> Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association MSS, Vol: 7, Garvey to Cox, 10/6/25.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid. Garvey writing in the *Black Man*, London, July, 1935.



commerce and industry and made of him today one of the great powers of the world'.<sup>284</sup>

Similarly, there were Jewish thinkers who believed and disseminated ideas rooted in anti-Black 'racial' discourses. The writings of scientist and intellectual Redcliffe Salaman serve as a good example of this tendency. Not only was Salaman convinced of the superiority of certain types of Jews, but he was equally sure of the inferiority of 'darker' skinned humans.<sup>285</sup> During his career Salaman sustained a belief in the primitive nature of Black people, most often revealed through his disdain for Sephardi Jews. Only the Ashkenazim, he argued, were 'pure' Jewish types whereas Sephardim were Jews who had lost the qualities of Jewish superiority by 'mixing' with Black people.<sup>286</sup> Salaman argued that Ashkenazi Jews should not mix with the Sephardim for this reason.

I should most undoubtedly feel the same with regard to a prospective son in law of the Falasha or the Cochin China origin, as I should to the hypothetical Negro: it is doubtless very wrong, but I am afraid it is very true.<sup>287</sup>

Salaman believed that Western Jews, such as himself, were (whilst slightly different) more similar to the British 'racial' type than they were to 'Black' Jews who, as Blacks, represented a completely different category of humanity.

.....there are presumably more differences between a Jew and an Anglo-Saxon than between two Jews, but I very much doubt- in fact I am sure- that there is not as much difference between these than there is between, let us say, one such as ourselves and a Bokharan Jew.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association MSS, Vol: 6, Speech in New York, 16/11/25.

<sup>285</sup> The belief that ability related to 'negritude' was a common assumption within British 'race' thinking. See Beddoe and Fleure amongst others in chapter one, pp.24-26.

<sup>286</sup> Salaman argued regarding Sephardi Jews: 'They have intermarried with the black natives around them and these black natives have been dominant'. Salaman MSS, Box 19, undated lecture, 1911.

<sup>287</sup> Salaman MSS, Box 1, Letter to Dr Mattuck, 10/5/33.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid. Box 1, Letter to Clement Salaman, 4/4/35.

These views highlight both Salaman's belief in 'racial' type and his determination that British Jews should be classified as 'racial' Europeans, suited to British living and 'racially' similar to indigenous Britons.

Whilst Salaman was a passionate believer in 'race', the beneficial implications of this 'racial' classification of British Jewry should not be viewed as coincidental. His theories aimed to emancipate his own community from suffering 'racial' animosity whilst condemning Black people, Jew and Gentile alike, to the negative characterisations implicit in the same 'race' theory. Salaman's work can be viewed at its most overtly political as he dismissed the rights of Arabs in Palestine and championed the aspirations of the Jewish settlers of the *Yishuv*, based on his 'racial' evaluation of these two peoples.<sup>289</sup> The Jewish colonists, he recorded '...are top hole – well grown, well behaved, almost uniformly good-looking, and fairly robust'.<sup>290</sup> The Arab, on the other hand 'is a very poor creature...more or less savage, and born thieves one and all'.<sup>291</sup>

Ultimately, however, Salaman was a 'race' theorist who passionately believed in the existence of 'racial' differences. Early in his career, he had concluded that Jews were 'a race – an inbreeding race – with defined physical and mental characteristics', and this was a view which Salaman never abandoned.<sup>292</sup> There were times when he realised that his ideas were in fact unhelpful in the battle for Jewish emancipation. When asked (during the early years of the Third Reich) to write an article condemning Nazi 'race' theory, his response revealed the primacy of his belief in 'race'. He replied that he could not help with this project because he was 'doubtful' as to whether his views 'might not be just those which you would least desire to see expressed'.<sup>293</sup> Even after the Holocaust, Salaman could not surrender his belief in 'racial' difference. Like Gates, he withdrew in this period into quiet criticism of post-war egalitarian theory:

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<sup>289</sup> The term *Yishuv* describes the pre-Israel Jewish community in Palestine, bolstered by late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigration.

<sup>290</sup> Salaman, R, *Palestine Reclaimed*, p.128.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* p.171.

<sup>292</sup> Salaman MSS, Box 13, Speech to the 'Maccabees', 26/10/13.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* Box 1, Salaman to Mrs Montagu, 29/1/34.

I find it rather humiliating to watch the frantic appeal to scientist and journalist alike to help them prove that they [racial differences] have no distinctive corporeal existence. Any evidence which might support this theory is welcomed. The only testimony refused is that of their own mirror.<sup>294</sup>

As a Jew, Salaman was far from alone in holding the belief that Jews were 'racially' different to other people. In the interwar period both Jews and Blacks developed their own theories of 'racial' difference, usually concluding that their respective communities had special 'gifts' and a special calling in the world. In this way immigrants were no different from other Europeans, promoting 'racial' differences as a justification for their nationalist agendas. British Jewish and Black 'racial' thinking was primarily emancipatory due to the vulnerable positions of Jewish and Black people in Britain. These self-perceived 'racial' communities often expressed beliefs in special world roles and especially in the respective 'home building' aspirations of Zionism and Pan-Africanism.

Zionist and Pan-Africanist political movements were fuelled by the idea that there were special 'racial' bonds that united all Jews, and all Blacks, together and by the belief that Jews and Blacks were following paths towards respective 'racial' destinies. A 1919 article in the *Zionist Review* highlights the emphasis placed on the ideas of Jewish 'racial' unity and a distinct Jewish 'type' within British Zionist aspirations:

The anti-Zionists have said that there is no Jewish people: there is a Jewish religion, but no Jewish race. The only bond that unites Jews of various nationalities (they say) is the bond of a common religion. The physical and mental distinctiveness of the Jew prevents us from believing this statement. It is a doctrine dictated by desire rather than by facts. It is contradicted by the universal opinion of the non-Jewish world and by common observation.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Salaman MSS, Box 22, Loose Files 25/6, Paper to Anglo-Jewish Association, 19/12/50.

<sup>295</sup> *Zionist Review*, Vol: 3, No: 3, July 1919.

Contributing to the *Review* in 1920, even the anti-racist and progressive Jewish leader Sydney Silverman defined Zionism in 'racial' terms.

That is what Zionism means when it regards Jews, no matter their abode, as a single racial group whose unity and essential separateness not two thousand years of dispersion has ever affected, should ever affect, can ever affect.<sup>296</sup>

Pan-Africanist ideology similarly contended that members of the 'Negro' 'race' needed to be re-united in their African 'racial' homeland.<sup>297</sup> Perhaps the best examples of these views (from thinkers who spent significant parts of their careers in Britain) have been expressed in the writings of Ras Makonnen and Marcus Garvey. Writing retrospectively, at the end of his career as a businessman and active Pan-Africanist, Makonnen noted of Black people: '[We had] peculiar racial characteristics, and we could not therefore run away from our common heredity'.<sup>298</sup> Commenting on the similarities between African Blacks and those in the 'Diaspora', he argued: 'Four hundred years has in no way impaired our sense of oneness with each other'.<sup>299</sup> Likewise, Garvey's perception of Black people as one 'race' was central to his call for a 'Negro' return to Africa:

There are hundreds of millions of us black men who are proud of our skins and to us the African Empire will not be a utopia, neither will it be dangerous nor fail to serve our best interests, because we realise that like the leopard we cannot change our skins.<sup>300</sup>

Interestingly, Jewish and Zionist ideology had a significant impact on both the formation and the articulation of Pan-African ideas. In the Jewish community Black leaders found an example of a 'people' who had managed to retain, through

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<sup>296</sup> *Zionist Review*, Vol: 4, No: 1, May 1920.

<sup>297</sup> For a thorough analysis of Pan-African ideology, see Geiss, I, *The Pan-African Movement*, (translated by Ann Keep), Methuen and Co, London, 1974 or Ackah, W, *Pan-Africanism. Exploring the Contradictions: Politics, Identity and Development in Africa and the African Diaspora*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1999.

<sup>298</sup> Makonnen, R, *Pan Africanism from Within*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, p.83.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.* p.83.

<sup>300</sup> Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association MSS, Vol: 6, In *Negro World*, 6/6/25.

considerable adversity and persecution, a distinct identity. Not only had Jews managed to maintain common ties despite long term geographical division, but the Jewish experience of 'racial' suffering and concepts of Zionist and messianic redemption struck a chord with many Black leaders and thinkers. Black singer and thinker Paul Robeson recorded the influence of Judaism in comments about the Black popularity of the 137<sup>th</sup> psalm.<sup>301</sup> 'From ancient Judea these words of the 137<sup>th</sup> psalm had crossed the vast reaches of time and distance to stir the hearts of Negro slaves in our own Southland'.<sup>302</sup> Appiah has cited the similar sentiments of Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, expressed in autobiographical recollections of his inaugural address in 1952.

I pointed out that it was providence that had preserved the Negroes during their years of trial in exile in the United States of America and the West Indies; that it was the same providence which took care of Moses and the Israelites in Egypt centuries before.<sup>303</sup>

As Zionist plans became a living reality in the form of the pre-state *Yishuv*, Black groups wondered if they could not achieve a similar goal in Africa by returning and working the land (whilst organising their own defence organisations) as Zionists were doing. Makonnen recorded: 'So the Jewish experience was formidable. We felt the particularity of the Africans, our Africanness, just like Jewishness. And later we wondered when we saw a handful of Jews in the Haganah movement gaining independence militarily for Palestine, whether we could do the same'.<sup>304</sup> Perhaps the most famous advocate of the 'return to Africa', Marcus Garvey, argued that the Jewish and Black experiences of persecution in America united these peoples as allies in a common goal of national emancipation:

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<sup>301</sup> The 137<sup>th</sup> psalm reads: 'By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and we wept as we remembered Zion'.

<sup>302</sup> Foner, P, (ed.), *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writing, Speeches and Interviews, 1918-74*, Citadel Press, New York, 1978, p.392.

<sup>303</sup> Appiah, K.A., *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p.19.

<sup>304</sup> Makonnen, R, *Pan Africanism from Within*, p.166. The *Haganah* was the largest of the Jewish defence forces in Palestine.

He [the Jew] at least has been kicked around like us; he is looked upon as a threat to society in the south. He is not allowed either in certain colleges. So the two of us should get together. We are both hated by the Anglo-Saxon. We have both been alienated from our homeland and for centuries like Gypsies the Jews have wandered all over the world. We must have an alliance with these people who have suffered equally.<sup>305</sup>

This idea was prominent amongst Black intellectuals working in Britain. Robeson sang Jewish songs, claiming that he had a special affinity to the 'Hebrew' experience of rejection and suffering.<sup>306</sup> 'Racial' persecution, he argued, tied Jew to Black, and enabled him to understand 'racially' Jewish music where he could not understand the songs of other peoples:

I will not do anything that I do not understand. I do not understand the psychology or philosophy of the Frenchman, German or Italian. Their history has nothing in common with the history of my slave ancestors. So I will not sing their music or the songs of their ancestors....But I know the wail of the Hebrew and I feel the plaint of the Russian....I feel that both have much in common with the traditions of my own race.<sup>307</sup>

Makonnen also argued that a shared struggle existed between Jews and Blacks in this period. In his autobiography he recorded that he and George Padmore (Britain's leading Pan-Africanist) worked to rescue Jews trapped in Nazi Germany and how bonds between these two communities 'lasted down to the present time'.<sup>308</sup> Whilst this was an exaggeration, and whilst both Makonnen and Garvey were prone sporadically to blending philo-Semitic views with quite strong anti-Semitism (Garvey

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<sup>305</sup> Makonnen, R, *Pan Africanism from Within*, p.70. Garvey repeatedly cited the Zionists as an example to the Black 'race'. In a 1937 speech, he commented: 'One day the call will come for us to return as the Jews are now returning to Palestine. As the Jews are now returning to meet the crowning glory of God our time will come'. Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association MSS, Vol: 7, Speech in Toronto, 29/8/37.

<sup>306</sup> Foner, P, (ed.), *Paul Robeson Speaks*, pp.80-85.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* p.85.

<sup>308</sup> Makonnen, R, *Pan-Africanism from Within*, (on helping Jewish refugees), p.144, (ideas on Black/Jewish unity), p.70.



more so than Makonnen), these comments nonetheless reveal that some Black leaders perceived 'racial' rejection as the starting point for the Jewish as well as the Black struggle for emancipation. Within the 'racial' imagination of the interwar period Jews and Blacks could sometimes identify each other as communities in a similar predicament within British society. In this context their responses were often similar and even borrowed from each other.

It is inappropriate to present Black and Jewish communities merely as recipients of 'racial' abuse in the interwar period and important to realise that thinking in 'racial' terms was as prominent a tendency amongst minorities as it was in the rest of British society. Nevertheless, Blacks and Jews did often harness 'racial' theories in order to serve an emancipatory agenda and personal and communal security fears were significant in driving members of these communities towards accepting 'race' theory and its consequences, especially in terms of immigration restriction. This chapter has argued that British Jews and Blacks were often lured by 'racial' thinking and impressed by the scientific validity of ideas of 'racial' difference, just as other British people were. Sometimes the power and popularity of these discourses led to self-hatred as Jews and Blacks became persuaded of the validity of their own negative characterisations. More often, however, (as the records of Jewish and Black 'race' thinkers have demonstrated), these minority communities championed theories outlining their own 'racial' significance and uniqueness, similar to so many other national and ethnic groups during this period.

Ultimately, whilst Jewish and Black people in Britain were not only victims of 'race' thinking, they were victims none the less. Lingering and expanding 'racial' characterisations of Jews and Blacks and 'racial' perceptions of 'Britishness' ensured that interwar immigrants, and Jewish and Black communities in general, received an often hostile reception in the United Kingdom. Traditional nineteenth and early twentieth century discourses evolved and blended with difficult economic and social problems to create this environment. The changes in science (and in pockets of society) that began to challenge 'race' thinking later in the period did not make a significant impact on the entrenched racism which was ingrained in the minds of many Britons. Whilst it seems that popular thinking on 'race' was informed by traditional scientific racism, the newest scientific trends of 'reformist' thinking were

not generally reflected within public opinion, which lagged behind the cutting edge of science.

Where popular voices did critique 'racial' thinking political stance seems to have been the main inspiration. Anti-colonialism and pro-refugee politics often led protagonists into a critical stance towards traditional 'racial' theory. However, despite some challenges, Britain ultimately proved a society where the nascent Black community did not receive adequate support and protection against mob violence and racism, and where Jewish escapees from Nazism were largely prevented from finding a refuge from the 'Final Solution'. Although British self-perceptions of liberalism prevented overt state hostility towards these communities it also facilitated the growth of a covert 'racial' agenda that remained prominent in wartime and post-war British society. Despite 'racial' hostility and restriction both Jewish and Black communities consolidated their numbers in Britain in these years and continued striving to establish their places within the British 'racial' imagination.



## Chapter Three

### Under Fire: 'Race' Thinking and Jewish and Black Communities in Wartime Britain

There is general agreement amongst historians that the majority of British 'race' scientists viewed the policies and principles of Nazi Germany with displeasure and distaste.<sup>1</sup> It is argued that even though many British 'race' scientists had been keen to see some eugenic ordering on a state level, few if any mainstream British thinkers condoned the coercion and oppression that was visible inside Nazi Germany, especially as war approached.<sup>2</sup> As was noted in the previous chapter, the 1930s saw the growth of an emerging critique of 'race' theory, partly fuelled by this scientific hostility towards Nazism. This chapter will assess whether scientific thinking on 'race' changed during the war years and will investigate further the impact of the conflict with Nazism on British 'race' theory. Bearing in mind that the language of 'race' was only firmly removed from international scientific respectability in the post-war period, it is especially interesting to assess the moves towards non-racialism which occurred during the war itself.<sup>3</sup>

Using Black and Jewish minorities in Britain as examples, this chapter will consider the role of 'race' thinking in determining British wartime policy and especially British responses towards Jewish refugees from Nazism and Black servicemen from the Empire and the United States. Unlike the previous chapter, Jewish and Black experiences will be considered separately for this period in order to avoid any simplistic comparisons between these two communities in wartime Britain. It must be recognised that Jewish and Black people entered Britain for different

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<sup>1</sup> See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.279-341, Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.141-147, and Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp.117-119.

<sup>2</sup> For example see Rich: 'The outbreak of war in 1939 acted as a shock wave on many British anthropologists, who began to ask why no greater stand had been made in the 1930s against the use of anthropology in racist and Nazi ideologies', Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, p.117.

<sup>3</sup> This thesis argues in the following chapter that various UNESCO post-war statements finally created a scientific environment where 'race' was no longer used as a signifier of mental difference. Difference was instead articulated in terms of 'culture' and 'ethnicity' (see chapter three). The previous chapter contends that the scientific discomfort with the term 'race' had its origins in the mid 1930s, epitomised in the publication of *We Europeans* (see chapter one).

reasons, at different times and were received in different ways.<sup>4</sup> However, as separate considerations are given to these two groups, questions of similarities and differences in terms of 'racial' acceptance and rejection will be considered.

#### a) British 'Race' Science: A Decisive Turn Towards Non-Racialism?

The previous chapter recorded the importance of political stance in setting scientific attitudes on 'race' in the interwar period. Importantly, it argued that a left/liberal political agenda and a hostility to Hitler's Germany led many British scientists to adopt a reformist stance concerning 'racial' theory and articulate difference in terms of culture and ethnicity and not 'race'.<sup>5</sup> These reformist scientists continued to criticise 'racial' theory in the war years.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, most wartime scientific studies on 'race' betray a clear political agenda as challenging Nazi 'racial' theory became, for most mainstream scholars, a part of their contribution to the battle against Hitler and the Third Reich.<sup>7</sup> It can thus be argued that the Second World War crystallised the existing scientific opposition to 'race' thinking and was a catalyst for further scientific critiques of 'racial' theory.

However, this point must not be overstated or developed into an oversimplified paradigm. The ambiguities and uncertainties concerning the existence of 'racial' differences that had been so prominent in interwar reformist writings were often still prevalent in the wartime contributions of these scholars.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, those British 'race' thinkers who had been reluctant to abandon 'race' thinking before the

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<sup>4</sup> The war led to a massive increase in the number of Black people in Britain especially after the arrival of American Black servicemen but also due to the presence of war volunteers from the Empire and increased numbers of Black maritime workers. Reynolds has argued that there were only 8000 Black people in Britain in 1939 and that by D-Day there were 130,000. See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations, The American Occupation of Britain 1942-1945*, HarperCollins, London, 1995, pp. 216-240. In contrast, very few Jewish refugees arrived in Britain after the war had started. Refugees from Nazism had been trickling into Britain since 1933 but mainly entered in 1938 and 1939 as the government loosened its regulations over their entry. By the beginning of the war there were 80,000 Jewish refugees in Britain. See London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, pp.126-150.

<sup>5</sup> See Huxley, J, and Haddon, A.C., *We Europeans or Race and Culture*, the published proceedings of the conference held by the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Institute of Sociology in 1934. Also, see Haldane, J.B.S., *Science and Everyday Life*.

<sup>6</sup> Some of the writing that will be considered here as 'wartime' scholarship was actually published in the wake of the war. It is considered in this chapter where the authors stated that writing took place during the war itself.

<sup>7</sup> See Huxley, J, *Argument of Blood*, Macmillan, London, 1941, or Hogben, L, *Dangerous Thoughts*.

<sup>8</sup> Notably, Huxley, J, *The Uniqueness of Man*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1941 and Haldane, J.B.S., *Science Advances*.

war often remained reluctant to do so during it.<sup>9</sup> Whilst the horrors of Hitler's Reich did have an impact even on the writings of some of the most staunch 'race' theorists, it did not wholly eradicate long held British scientific beliefs in theories of 'racial' difference. Simply, the war moved the scientific 'race' debate on but it did not end it.<sup>10</sup>

Some British scientists did offer comprehensive refutations of 'race' theory in wartime publications. Importantly, reformist writing which targeted a large general audience tended to display a confidence and clarity in terms of non-racialism, not always shown by the same scholars in more academically targeted contributions to the debate. A political agenda can be seen in many of the wartime scientific contributions of Haldane, Hogben and Huxley amongst others. Haldane, for example, recorded his thoughts on the political importance of his writing in the period: 'At the present time we are fighting Hitlerism with bombs and depth charges. We should be doing so in the realms of ideas also'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Huxley and Hogben ideologically confronted the Third Reich in their wartime publications. In Huxley's 1939 pamphlet, *Race in Europe*, he reproduced some of the more anti-'racial' sections of *We Europeans*.<sup>12</sup> In his 1941 publication, *Argument of Blood*, Huxley further attacked German 'racialism' as a 'pseudo-science' and warned of the terrible consequences of Nazi victory: 'Our whole civilisation will be brought down by a world catastrophe and will be forgotten in a new Dark Age'.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Lancelot Hogben was unambiguous in his rejection of 'race' as a signifier of intelligence or cultural achievement.

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<sup>9</sup> See Gates, R.R., *Human Genetics*, Macmillan, New York, 1946 or Keith, A, *Essays on Human Evolution*.

<sup>10</sup> See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp. 279-280. Whilst Barkan recognises that the abandonment of racism during the war 'was not a forgone conclusion', he still argues that from 1938 the scientific community 'declared itself against racism'. This thesis will contend that Barkan has oversimplified this change, which occurred more slowly and was not complete until after the Second World War. Rich has offered a more cautious analysis in Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp.118-119. Also see Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.141.

<sup>11</sup> Haldane, J.B.S., *Science Advances*, pp.235-236. Haldane's wartime writing, targeted at a general audience, was thus suitably unequivocal concerning 'race' difference. He cited the poet Andrew Marvell to highlight the lack of validity in 'racial' thinking: 'The world in all doth but two nations bear/ The good, the bad, and these mixed everywhere', in Haldane, J.B.S., *Science and Everyday Life*, p.180.

<sup>12</sup> Huxley, J, *'Race' in Europe*, Oxford Pamphlet on World Affairs, No. 5, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1939.

<sup>13</sup> Huxley, J, *Argument of Blood*, pp.40-48. Also see Huxley, J, *Democracy Marches*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1941.

With full responsibility for my words as a professional biologist, I do not hesitate to say that all existing and genuine scientific knowledge about the way in which the physical characteristics of human communities are related to their cultural capabilities can be written out on the back of a postage stamp.<sup>14</sup>

However, the true position of reformist scientists regarding 'racial' difference was more complex and ambiguous than is suggested by their popular wartime publications. An investigation into views concerning less contentious political issues (notably the 'racial' differences between Black and white people) reveals lingering beliefs amongst the reformists in 'racial' difference. Even though many of these scientists were anti-imperialists, opposition to British Empire building did not necessarily mean that reformist scholars believed the Black man to be the equal of the white.<sup>15</sup> Despite the reformist tendency of substituting the term 'race' with the seemingly less essentialist notions of culture and ethnicity, these scholars often still ultimately articulated difference in 'racial' terms. Huxley argued: 'I regard it as wholly probable that true Negroes have a slightly lower average intelligence than the whites or yellows' and that there were 'genetic differences of temperament' between Black and white.<sup>16</sup> Haldane similarly contended that it was vital to 'appreciate the truth that each of the various races of man has its own mode of life and thought'.<sup>17</sup> Although Haldane's argument here was not overtly 'hierarchical', the superiority of the white European still lurked implicitly within the analysis. Most reformist scientists did not see a contradiction between their challenges to 'race' theory and their recognition of Black difference and inferiority. As was noted in the previous chapter, their progressiveness was not rooted in the complete abandonment of 'race' thinking but in the reformist prioritisation of environmental and cultural

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<sup>14</sup> Hogben, L, *Dangerous Thoughts*, p.47.

<sup>15</sup> See Haldane, J.B.S., *Science and Everyday Life*, p.178 or Hogben, L, *Dangerous Thoughts*, pp.45-50. Huxley was an exception to this rule, believing throughout this period in the 'liberal' British imperial mission. 'I have been in Central Africa, and can vouch for the fact that in general British colonial administration reaches a remarkably high standard of fairness and justice and paternal benevolence', Huxley, J, *Democracy Marches*, p.91.

<sup>16</sup> Huxley, J, *Democracy Marches*, pp.53 & 73.

<sup>17</sup> Haldane, J.B.S., *Science Advances*, p.233.

factors in explaining human behaviour and in their often stated uncertainty about what 'racial' difference meant.<sup>18</sup>

The case of Lancelot Hogben requires special consideration for its uniqueness. More than the other reformers, Hogben realised the irrelevance of 'race' and proffered the non-'racial' thinking which would become mainstream in the post-war period. Discussing Black and white difference, he asserted the illogical nature of ideas based on 'the presence or absence of melanin in the deeper layers of the skin', argued that there was no reason to oppose mixed 'race' marriages and that eugenics was 'in open contradiction to historical truth'.<sup>19</sup> Despite Hogben's earlier role in the eugenics movement, his views by the time of the war stand out for their clarity on heredity and 'race'.<sup>20</sup>

If the war sharpened the reformist criticism of 'race' thinking which had been emerging in the 1930s, then what effect did it have on those theorists who had been firm 'race' thinkers in the interwar period? Whilst none of these scholars expressed open enthusiasm for Nazi Germany during the war, it is noteworthy that the conflict did not lead these scientists to substantial backtracking from their pre-war stance on 'race'. Indeed, the views of Arthur Keith, Gates, Ludovici and similar thinkers emerged from the war relatively unaltered. In Keith's *Essays on Human Evolution* (which he worked on during the war and published just after it), he restated the main tenets of his pre-war 'race' theories. Keith argued that nations formed into 'races' over periods of isolation and that this process was both natural and beneficial: 'If crossing gives men of high capacity, why had England to wait five centuries to get her Shakespearian period', Keith asked his readers.<sup>21</sup> Within Keith's mind frame, the behaviour of Germany was understandable if disagreeable and Hitler was merely an

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<sup>18</sup> Huxley argued: 'To sum up, in the practical handling of every so called racial problem, the error seems invariably to have been made of confusing genetic with cultural factors', Huxley, J, *The Uniqueness of Man*, p.51.

<sup>19</sup> Hogben, L, *Dangerous Thoughts*, pp.45-48. Barkan has also highlighted the special contribution of Hogben in Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.229-235.

<sup>20</sup> The significant distance between Hogben and other reformers is most noticeable over this refutation of eugenics and the dismissal of Black/white difference. Huxley, for example, still asserted during this period that 'self government' was a 'remote goal' for Black colonies and that a progressive eugenic policy would be good for Britain. See Huxley, J, *Democracy Marches*, p.95 and *The Uniqueness of Man*, p.126. Barkan has highlighted Haldane's sustained ambivalence towards eugenics in Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.255-259.

<sup>21</sup> Keith, A, *Essays on Human Evolution*, p.90.

'uncompromising evolutionist' who had declared war as a means to obtain 'racial security'.<sup>22</sup> Even Hitler's anti-Semitism needed to be understood as 'a reversion to evolutionary behaviour'.<sup>23</sup> Keith did criticise Nazi treatment of the Jews on several occasions in this publication.<sup>24</sup> It is significant to note however, that although Nazism led reformist scholars to reconsider the consequences of 'racial' thinking, both the Reich and the conflict merely reinforced Keith's belief in the importance of 'race' as a concept. He concluded: 'I hold that, if mankind is to be vigorous in mind and progressive in spirit, its division into nation and races must be maintained'.<sup>25</sup>

The scholarship of Keith serves to demonstrate that the war against Nazism did not necessarily lead British scientists towards one conclusion regarding 'race'.<sup>26</sup> Other British theorists similarly managed to maintain their 'racial' thinking during and after the war. In his 1946 study, Reginald Ruggles Gates still referred throughout to 'races' including 'Jews' and 'Negroes' and had no hesitation in asserting that 'mental development is clearly not even among the racial groups'.<sup>27</sup> Unlike Keith, Gates did not engage with the issue of Nazi racism or attempt to criticise anti-Semitism. Indeed, his wartime writing indicates that he was seemingly unmoved by Nazism as a phenomena.<sup>28</sup> Gates heavily criticised other wartime writers who attempted to attack 'racial' theory. Describing one American text he argued: 'The whole book, and many other recent books like it, bear heavily on the idea that all human races must be fundamentally alike, no matter what the evidence to the contrary'.<sup>29</sup> Gates clearly felt that the war was obscuring the importance of 'race' as

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<sup>22</sup> Keith, A, *Essays on Human Evolution*, pp.11 and 140.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p.91.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* Keith argued: 'Ethically the Hitlerian treatment of the Jews stands condemned out of hand', p.11.

<sup>25</sup> Keith, A, *Essays on Human Evolution*, p.175.

<sup>26</sup> The writings of scholars such as Keith do not fit easily into the analysis of Paul Gilroy who has argued that the war left 'race' 'beyond the bounds of respectability' in Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.138. Barkan has made a case similar to Gilroy in Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.279-280.

<sup>27</sup> Gates, R.R., *Human Genetics*, Vol: 2, p.1161.

<sup>28</sup> Gates moved to America in 1942 and the distance between himself and Nazi Germany perhaps explains his lack of inclination to intellectually engage with the Reich as an issue. Barkan has argued that Gates was increasingly isolated as an intellectual figure after the war in Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp.168-175.

<sup>29</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/41. Gates' review is of Klineberg, O, (ed.), *Characteristics of an American Negro* from 1944. Other 'race' thinkers were similarly unsympathetic to the fate of the Jews in Europe. Parkes Weber argued in 1943: 'This vast Jewish racial population of the world is unfortunately, but of necessity, a chief cause of the world's present war troubles'. Parkes Weber MSS, PP/FPW/C10, Notes, 9/8/43. Anthony Ludovici's attitude towards 'race' and Jews also remained unshaken by the war. See

an issue and leading to inaccurate assertions of non-racialism. He commented on another author: 'He fails to accept the plain facts because they show that his thesis of mental equality is mistaken'.<sup>30</sup>

Unlike Gates, most staunch 'race' thinkers were moved and troubled by the war. Importantly though, this often led to a defence of 'race' as a valuable concept that had been twisted by Hitler and not to the abandonment of 'race' theory. A typical example of this tendency can be seen in a post-war report submitted by the *Eugenics Society* to the Royal Commission on Population. Describing the ideology of Galton, the Society argued:

...whilst he believed that the different branches of the human race were unequally equipped with the inborn characters that produce and sustain highly organised civilisations, it was no part of his outlook that biologically inferior races should be persecuted or suppressed.<sup>31</sup>

Ultimately, those who had passionately believed in 'race' before the conflict still tended to do so during it, though their actions were increasingly conditioned by an awareness that 'racial' views required a defence and needed to be perceived as moderate and distinct from the extremism of the Third Reich. By 1945, even *Eugenics Review* conceded that expressions of 'race' thinking were increasingly perceived as unacceptable in wider society.<sup>32</sup> The war did not kill theories of 'racial' difference, but it did affect the respectability of this kind of thinking and attached a new stigma to 'race' as an idea. The extent of the rehabilitation of 'race' in the post-war period will be considered in the final chapter of this thesis, but it is certain that the balance of scientific opinion did swing decisively in favour of avoiding 'race' as a political term (and as a hierarchical measure of cultural achievement) during the war years.

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Ludovici, A, *The Four Pillars of Health: A Contribution to Post War Planning*, Heath Cranton, London, 1945.

<sup>30</sup> Gates MSS, Section 11/41, Gates commenting on Locke and Stern's, *When People Meet*.

<sup>31</sup> Report printed in *Eugenics Review*, Vol:37, No:3, October 1945, p.94.

<sup>32</sup> The *Review* argued: 'The word "eugenics" needs to be rehabilitated'. *Ibid.* p.94.

However, the fact that scientific opinion increasingly condemned 'racial' thinking did not necessarily mean that society in general immediately concurred or followed suit.<sup>33</sup> It is important to investigate whether changes within the reformist scientific majority improved or altered the prevailing public mood towards minorities and Jews and Blacks in particular; whether scientific change itself reflected corresponding changes in popular thinking or whether reformist scientists should be seen as an enlightened periphery attempting to re-set public attitudes. In the remainder of this chapter, the actions and attitudes of British politicians and wider society towards Jews and Blacks in wartime Britain will be considered in depth. The chapter will investigate the histories of these two communities and will assess their reception and absorption in Britain in the context of changing scientific attitudes towards 'racial' theory.

#### b) 'Race' and the Jewish Community in Wartime Britain

This section will concentrate on two important aspects of Jewish experience in Britain during the war years. It will investigate the internment of Jewish refugees as 'enemy aliens' in 1939 and 1940 and the reluctance of the British government to admit more Jewish people to Britain throughout the war or to provide direct assistance to European Jews trapped in Nazi Europe. No attempt will be made here to revisit the adequately covered histories of Jewish internment or wartime refugees in Britain, although some important details of these issues need to be outlined at this stage in order to provide a context for this study.

Britain had an experience of interning 'enemy aliens' in the First World War. During this conflict, thirty thousand Germans living in Britain were interned and ten thousand more were forced to leave the country.<sup>34</sup> This war experience formulated a precedent concerning how to handle 'enemy aliens' in Britain in the event of another

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<sup>33</sup> For analysis of the relationship between science and society in this period see Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, pp.140-147 or Hasian Jr, M, *The Rhetoric of Eugenics*, pp.5-31.

<sup>34</sup> For details see Panayi, P, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War*, Berg, Oxford, 1991, or Gillman, P & L, *'Collar the Lot!' – How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees*, Quartet Books, London, 1980, pp.8-21.



conflict.<sup>35</sup> As the Second World War began, there was limited pressure for a policy of internment. However, a general recognition existed that most 'enemy' nationals living in Britain were people who had fled the Hitler regime and were not likely to pose a threat to the state.<sup>36</sup> The Home Office, who had primary responsibility for internment strategy, was not inclined to pursue any policy resembling general internment.<sup>37</sup> However, local tribunals were set up across the country, charged with assessing the loyalties of local 'aliens' and with registering them according to the risk they posed to British security.<sup>38</sup> Despite the classification of the great majority of 'aliens' in the lowest security category, confusion about the process and local prejudices led to the misclassification (and thus to the internment) of many 'friendly aliens'.<sup>39</sup>

As the war continued, attitudes towards internment changed drastically. The dramatic Nazi invasions of Norway, Holland, Belgium and France created a fear that German success had been fuelled by 'fifth column' activities in invaded countries. This belief resonated through much of the press and through many government agencies, creating a corresponding pressure to intern all enemy nationals in Britain.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The experience of World War One internment led to 'aliens' legislation in 1914, 1919 and 1920, measures which gave the Home Secretary unlimited powers over who remained in Britain and who was interned. Approaching the Second World War, a widespread feeling existed that internees in future required more careful vetting to prevent unnecessary hardships (a government committee was established in March 1938 to work on the future classification of 'aliens'). Additionally, World War One experience led to a governmental preference, though not in the event possible to achieve, that no substantial numbers of enemy 'aliens' should remain in Britain during any future conflict. See Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page? The Internment of "His Majesty's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens"*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1980, pp.18-22. Also see Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept?', pp.38-39.

<sup>36</sup> Analysts have recorded that a majority of the government were initially ambivalent or hostile towards calls for indiscriminate internment until the May Crisis of 1940. See Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page*, pp.23-29, Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.144 or Gillman, L & P, *Collar the Lot!*, pp.100-110.

<sup>37</sup> The Home Office under John Anderson sustained this view even through May 1940. See Gillman, P & L, *Collar the Lot!*, p.112.

<sup>38</sup> For details see Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1940, pp.62-65 or Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.30-42.

<sup>39</sup> Whilst this group contained some overt supporters of Nazism, other initial internees were refugee Jews and other anti-Nazi unfortunates who had been given an 'A' or 'B' risk classification. In fact, some scholars have argued that the majority of initial internees were anti-Nazis. See Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.34-41 or Kochan, M, *Britain's Internees in the Second World War*, Macmillan, London and Basingstoke, 1983, pp.9-13.

<sup>40</sup> Some analysts have cited the primacy of elements of the press in creating an anti-'alien' frenzy. See Kushner, T, 'Beyond the Pale', p.155 or Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.167-171. Stent has cited *Daily Mail* reporter, G Ward Price, as playing a unique role in the creation of pro-internment feeling. See Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, p.47. There is general agreement that various individuals in government circles played a crucial role. Most notably, British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Neville Bland, pushed a hysterical report after the Nazi invasion of Holland entitled 'The Fifth

Whilst the Home Office remained reluctant to adopt a policy of general internment, other agencies, notably the War Office and various security committees, demanded mass internment.<sup>41</sup> As a result, between May and June 1940, over twenty five thousand 'aliens' (of which the great majority were Jewish refugees from Nazism) were placed in internment camps around the UK.<sup>42</sup> Some attempts were made to transfer 'enemy aliens' to other Commonwealth countries.<sup>43</sup> In July 1940, German torpedoes sank the *Arandora Star*, a ship carrying Italian and German internees bound for Canada, leading to the deaths of over 600 'alien' passengers.<sup>44</sup> In another high profile incident, three ship staff were court martialled after allegations of human rights abuses and anti-Semitism on another ship (the *Dunera*) which took both Jewish refugees and Nazi sympathisers to be interned in Australia.<sup>45</sup> By the end of 1940, partly because of the stories concerning these ships and partly as the threat of imminent German invasion waned, most internees were released and more liberal government and press voices reasserted themselves.<sup>46</sup> Many 'aliens', however, remained in internment camps for much longer periods as their security risk status was re-considered.<sup>47</sup>

The other aspect of British/Jewish war experience that will be considered in this section concerns the reluctance of the British government to allow the entry of Jewish refugees after the war had started and the corresponding government reluctance to pursue war policies that would have specifically helped Jews suffering in the Holocaust.<sup>48</sup> From an early stage in the war, the government adopted a policy

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Column Menace' alleging the complicity of 'aliens' in the fall of Holland. See PRO, FO371/25189/462, Bland to Foreign Office, 14/5/40. A similar report was produced by the Joint Chiefs of Staff entitled 'British Strategy in a Certain Eventuality'. For analysis, see Gillman, L & P, *Collar the Lot!*, pp.101-102 or Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.172-173.

<sup>41</sup> Some analysts have highlighted the role of the Home Defence (Security) Committee under Viscount Swinton of Masham. Neither the exact membership details or terms of reference of this committee are known but Gillman and Gillman have highlighted the influence of this mysterious body in *Collar the Lot!*, pp.144-145. Also see Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.182-183.

<sup>42</sup> For details see Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.75-91.

<sup>43</sup> Burtleton has questioned whether the decision to move 'high risk aliens' abroad was also taken by the Swinton Committee. See Burtleton, L, 'The State, Internment and Public Criticism in the Second World War', in Kushner, T, and Cesarani, D, (eds.), *The Internment of Aliens*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>44</sup> For details see Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.100-109.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* pp.114-133.

<sup>46</sup> See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.147.

<sup>47</sup> See Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.240-251.

<sup>48</sup> From the outbreak of war, all visas granted to refugees who had not yet entered the UK were declared invalid primarily on the grounds of security. See PRO CAB 98/1, Records of Cabinet Meeting and Decision, 25/9/39. Also see Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.152-154. Only

which held that the best thing which could be done for European Jewry was to defeat Nazism.<sup>49</sup> As a result of this policy, requests from Jewish and other agencies for the government to offer specific help to European Jewry were most often denied. No significant action was taken to help Jews out of Nazi controlled areas and despite significant pressure, the government resisted suggestions that they should attempt to slow the 'Final Solution' by bombing railway routes to 'Death Camps' or the camps themselves.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, plans to 'drop' weapons to assist Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto were rejected.<sup>51</sup> It is fair to characterise British war policy towards European Jewry as a strategy of inaction and stalling, perhaps best epitomised in the Anglo-American failure to adopt a mass rescue plan for European Jewry at the Bermuda Conference of 1943.<sup>52</sup> This chapter will explore the reasons behind both internment policy and government attitudes towards Jewish rescue in an attempt to understand the role played by 'race' thinking in the formulation and implementation of these policies.

#### **i) The Case For Non-'Racial' Reasoning: 'The Very Nazi Doctrine Which We Are Trying To Stamp Out'**

Concerning both internment and rescue policy, the British government resisted directing help specifically towards Jews as a distinct 'racial' group. This decision was often presented as a refusal to deal in 'racial' classifications, in opposition to the overt 'race' thinking of Nazism.<sup>53</sup> In principle, the governmental decision not to 'racially' classify and differentiate between internees and refugees seems laudable

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a nominal amount of new visas were granted during the war for Jews to enter any British territory. Wasserstein has thus summed up government wartime policy towards refugee Jews: 'No retreat from the immigration provisions of the Palestine White Paper; no admission of refugees from Nazi Europe to Britain; and no entry for significant numbers to the colonial Empire' in Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-45*, p.38.

<sup>49</sup> See the typical comment of the British representative on the Allied High Command to a request that Allies should attack Nazi death camps: '...the only salvation for the Jews is for the Allies to win the war', in Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, Pimlico, London, 1981, p.321. Also see the following debate in the House of Commons Supply Committee. Mr Peake (answering for the government regarding decisions made at the Bermuda Conference), argued that nothing 'other than speedy and final victory' would help the Jews of Europe. *Hansard*, Vol: 389, Col: 1131, 19/5/43.

<sup>50</sup> See Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.299-324.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* pp.300-301.

<sup>52</sup> See Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.196-218, London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, pp.206-224 or Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.131-137. Kushner has described this conference as 'doomed from the start', in Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.155.

<sup>53</sup> See Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p.135, Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.135 and Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.74-75.

enough and in keeping with the contemporary scientific wisdom on 'race'. However, there was more to this non-'racial' government policy than meets the eye. Some analysts have argued that state refusal to recognise Jewish 'racial' difference was in fact motivated by a fear that this recognition could lead to a corresponding pressure to acknowledge the existence of Jewish 'nationality', with awkward implications for British Palestine policy.<sup>54</sup> Others have noted that 'racial' perceptions of refugees and internees were significant in shaping government thinking and decision-making. Kushner, for example, has argued regarding internment: 'Although the aliens were not interned because they were Jewish, neither was their Jewishness irrelevant'.<sup>55</sup> It is important to investigate this idea both with regards to internment and rescue policy.

The government refused to 'racialise' internment policy by creating any special category of 'risk' for Jewish refugees.<sup>56</sup> To differentiate between these refugees and other enemy nationals was presented as an unacceptably racist policy. Herbert Morrison replied to a question from Colonel Wedgwood concerning the possibility of releasing Jewish internees: 'It would not be right to base this policy on a distinction between Jews and others. Any categories of eligibility for release ought to be applicable to Jews and non-Jews alike'.<sup>57</sup> Bearing this in mind, it is arguable that the primary rationale behind internment agitation was non-'racial' and instead rooted in fears about the presence in Britain of all people of German nationality. It is certain that many British people failed to differentiate between Nazis and Jewish and non-Jewish German refugees from the regime.<sup>58</sup> This uncritical Germanophobia clearly bewildered many internees. One recorded:

When I was released...I had to fill in a form giving my past record.  
Have you ever been in prison before? November – December

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<sup>54</sup> The government feared that Zionists might use 'racial' recognition to demand national recognition. See Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, p.75 or Goldman, A, 'The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism in Britain during World War Two', *Jewish Social Studies*, Winter 1984, p.44.

<sup>55</sup> Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.147.

<sup>56</sup> See Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.75-91 or Kochan, M, *Britain's Internees in the Second World War*, pp.1-10.

<sup>57</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 365, Col: 804, 17/10/40.

<sup>58</sup> See Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.53-68 or Kochan, M, *Britain's Internees in the Second World War*, pp.1-10.

1938: Buchenwald, on the charge of being a Jew; July – December

1940: Onchan, on the charge of being a German.<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, non-discerning Germanophobia and not Judeophobia was clearly the primary driving force behind internment policy.<sup>60</sup> The heightened anti-'alien' agitation in the summer of 1940 that led to wide scale refugee internment was dominated by images of the German and not images of the Jew.<sup>61</sup> However, Kushner and Cesarani have been correct to note that despite the anti-German face of anti-alienism, internment policy represented a more complicated coalition of interests and 'racial' discourses.<sup>62</sup>

Ostensibly, the government denied that it ever dealt in 'racial' terms or was influenced by 'race' thinking. When it was impossible to ignore the 'Jewishness' of refugees, popular anti-Semitism was cited as the reason for restriction and internment. This enabled the government to blame sections of the general public for their decision to enforce a 'racial' policy. There is no definitive way to gauge the extent to which fears of rising anti-Semitism were used as a ploy to restrict refugee numbers or to what extent they represented genuine concerns.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, fierce debates were fought at the time concerning the real level of British anti-Semitism.<sup>64</sup> The government remained adamant that more refugees would lead to more racism as Eden explained in this private letter to Eleanor Rathbone in 1940.

I do not think that it would be in the interests of refugees themselves who are at present in this country to allow a further influx of refugees from territory under enemy jurisdiction. There is already considerable uneasiness about the number of aliens in this country, and fresh

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<sup>59</sup> Kochan, M, *Britain's Internees in the Second World War*, p.176.

<sup>60</sup> See Cesarani, D, 'An Alien Concept?', pp.33-35 or Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.161-191.

<sup>61</sup> For example, see Bland's notorious 'Fifth Column' report. Bland warned against 'every German and Austrian servant' and of all people with 'German or Austrian connections'. PRO, FO371/25189/462, Bland to Foreign Office, 14/5/40. Likewise, the *Daily Mail* usually voiced its fanatical anti-alienism in terms of hostility against Germans. See headlines from 16/5/40: 'Intern every German here' and the following year (31/5/41): 'Beware all Germans'.

<sup>62</sup> See Cesarani, D, and Kushner, T, *The Internment of Aliens*, p.12.

<sup>63</sup> This remains a matter of historical debate. Kushner has argued that generally the public were 'ambivalent' about Jewish refugees. See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.155. For an alternative perspective see Rubinstein, W, *The Myth of Rescue*, Routledge, London, 1997.

<sup>64</sup> See for example the debate on the public mood between parliamentarians on 10/7/40 in *Hansard*, Vol: 362, Cols: 1209-1300.

admissions would add to the public uneasiness and might do much to prejudice the position of refugees already here.<sup>65</sup>

As the war progressed, the government increasingly explained its inaction concerning refugees in other ways, citing the impossibility of getting Jews out of Nazi controlled countries and stressing that real logistical problems (and not 'race' thinking) were preventing more substantial rescue programmes from taking place. Here, a more obvious 'excuse' culture can be seen as the government sought not to allow the arrival of significant numbers of new refugees. In 1943, Peter Bergson (co-chair of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe) wrote to the Foreign Office to ask for special help for Europe's Jews. The letter provoked a minute from Foreign Office official J Walker, which outlined the government's position regarding the rescue of Jews in the context of the recent Bermuda conference.

The conference suggests that the Jewish refugee problem should be dealt with as a specific problem and not as part of the general refugee problem. The answer is that we cannot and do not contemplate action on these lines...It is out of the question for the allies to grant Polish Jews, or Jews of any other nationality preferential treatment over their non Jewish compatriots.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Rathbone MSS, File XIV, Eden to Rathbone, 6/3/40. This approach also lay behind the government's long held position that Jewish groups must foot the bill for arriving refugees. Although the government finally did provide some financial support after the war had started (and with the refugee groups facing collapse) this help was secret and limited, conditioned by fears that it may trigger public anger. See Cabinet Minutes: '...the heads of the Jewish Organisation had been reminded of the appalling consequences which must follow if their organisation collapsed and if some 13000 Jewish refugees were left to be maintained out of public funds. It was inevitable that in such circumstances anti-Semitic tendencies in the country would be strengthened', (PRO, CAB98/1, Cabinet minutes, 8/12/39). Some parliamentarians, however, were willing to challenge the assumption that more than limited help for refugees would lead to an increase in anti-Semitism. Famously, a dedicated band of MPs, with Eleanor Rathbone in the foreground, repeatedly urged the government into a bolder stance regarding refugees. See Rathbone addressing the *National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror*: 'It shows a grave underestimate of human feeling here to suggest, as has been done repeatedly in official quarters, that to admit any considerable numbers of Jewish refugees would cause a dangerous increase in anti-Semitism', Board of Deputies MSS, Notes from Committee Meeting, 26/7/44, E3/536/2.

<sup>66</sup> PRO, Walker Minute, FO 371/36666, W12857, 17/9/43.

Correspondingly, the Foreign Office News Department's account of the Bermuda Conference recorded the official position of the Allied governments as being unprepared to consider the refugee problem 'as being confined to persons of any particular "race" or faith'.<sup>67</sup>

A letter from Anthony Eden to the Chief Rabbi in 1944, further demonstrates the reluctance of the British government to tackle the plight of Jewish refugees as a unique or special case: '...to offer Jews, and Jews only, priority of escape as British protected persons would be to overlook the fact that German brutality has been directed very extensively, above all in Poland, against non Jews.'<sup>68</sup> As one official put it, special treatment of Jewish refugees would 'perpetuate the very Nazi doctrine which we are trying to stamp out'.<sup>69</sup>

After details of the Final Solution had become known, it became increasingly difficult for the government to sustain the case that the Jews were not a special case or that immigration should be restricted because of domestic anti-Semitism.<sup>70</sup> Jews, however, still did not receive significant help as the government maintained that it was logistically impossible to provide it. Offers to release Jews from Hungary and Bulgaria were met with initial enthusiasm by the British government, only to flounder amid British reluctance to be drawn or committed to actively trying to get these Jews out.<sup>71</sup> In the midst of the ultimately unrealised 1944 offer by Admiral Horthy to allow the departure of Hungary's Jews, Rathbone's notes recollect British government stalling at the vital stage of negotiations.<sup>72</sup> Similarly slow British reactions sealed the fate of potential refugees from France and Bulgaria.<sup>73</sup> Simply,

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<sup>67</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, London Metropolitan Archive, C11/7/3d/5, Foreign Office News Department Report (Undated).

<sup>68</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, C11/7/3d/4, Eden to the Chief Rabbi, 28/6/44.

<sup>69</sup> PRO, FO371/30917, Dixon to Martin, 16/5/44.

<sup>70</sup> The plight of European Jewry as a distinct group was recognised as Eden announced the 'Final Solution' to the House of Commons on 17/12/42. See *Hansard*, Vol:385, Col:2082-9. For analysis of this announcement see Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.158-159.

<sup>71</sup> Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.252-260 or London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.242.

<sup>72</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Rathbone to Eden, 31/7/44, E3/536/2.

<sup>73</sup> See Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.218-242.

the British government seem to have decided to talk benevolently regarding Jewish refugees and to do as little as possible to actually help them.<sup>74</sup>

It is appropriate to question whether inaction over rescue provides an example of the government using ostensibly non-'racial' rationales to pursue a policy conditioned by 'racial' thinking. Certainly, by refusing to differentiate between Jews and non-Jews, by citing fears of anti-Semitism and by stalling in the face of European rescue attempts, the British government managed to operate policies that affected Jews as a distinct group without overtly displaying a 'racial' attitude towards them. It is now therefore pertinent to investigate the extent to which Semitic 'race' discourse played a role in the governmental stance towards Jews during the war.

## ii) The Prevalence Of Semitic Discourses: Understanding Why World Jewry 'Allowed Hitler To Get Away With It'!

Racialised perceptions of Jewishness can be seen to have been significant in the government's decision to intern Jews in 1940 and to resist large scale Jewish immigration during the war. Two 'racial' rationales are evident in these decisions: the first held that there was a real risk that the 'Jewishness' of refugees would make them unreliable allies (and possibly even traitors) in the war struggle; the second that the presence of Jews (and the inevitable behaviour of these Jews) might increase British popular anti-Semitism to a dangerous level. Both these contentions were based in highly racialised perceptions of the Jewish character and reflected anti-Semitic agitation and opinion of the period. It is reasonable to argue (and it will be demonstrated here) that not only did the government accede to the lure of these 'racial' discourses but that there was often widespread acceptance of these views within government decision making circles.

Many parliamentarians and government members were convinced that refugees in Britain posed a 'fifth column' risk to the nation, based on reports (like those of Bland) concerning Nazi success in forcing the capitulation of European

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<sup>74</sup> As Rathbone noted: '...the government has very little sense of urgency over the whole matter, very little hope of doing anything for rescue except on a small scale and a strong desire to avoid pressure....We are treated kindly and courteously, but kept at arms length as much as possible'. Board of Deputies MSS, Rathbone notes on Government, 28/6/43, E3/536/1.



neighbours.<sup>75</sup> Earl Winterton told the House in August 1940: 'Again and again in the countries on the continent which were invaded by Germany it was found that refugees aided Nazis in their march'.<sup>76</sup> Bland's report, whilst not making references directly to Jewish refugees, implicitly (and probably deliberately) alluded to a specifically Jewish threat. His famous comments, that betrayal could come from 'the paltriest of servant maids' or 'every German or Austrian servant', could not have been made without recognition that the overwhelming majority of 'aliens' in domestic service in Britain were refugee Jews, whose right to remain in the UK had been made conditional on their agreeing to take on this work.<sup>77</sup>

As Europe seemingly crumbled in the face of Nazi aggression (and bearing in mind that Britain was the likely next target of Hitler's expansionism), perhaps it is understandable that certain fears of invasion and betrayal came to the fore. The nature of these concerns, however, suggest a widespread acceptance of Semitic discourses. Images of the Jew as a potential 'fifth columnist' obscured the obvious reality that refugees were the sworn enemies of the Nazi state which had robbed them of their money, homes and was often still persecuting their friends and family.<sup>78</sup> With the reality of Nazi persecution in mind, Colonel Wedgwood intervened in the House of Commons internment debate of August 1940 to point out: 'Nobody can doubt that of all those who are on our side, the Jews are most interested in our victory and are the least likely to act in any sort of way as agents of the enemy'.<sup>79</sup>

It is also revealing that there does not seem to have been any substantial evidence to suggest that refugees had 'betrayed' their host countries in the face of Nazi attack. Again, Wedgwood was left to point out that only a racist caricature linked Jewish refugees to these espionage allegations.

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<sup>75</sup> For accounts of governmental responses to 'fifth column' fears see Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.145-147, Gillman, L & P, *Collar the Lot!*, pp.100-145, Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, pp.172-177 or Stent, R, *A Bespattered Page?*, pp.53-59.

<sup>76</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 364, Col: 1539, 12/8/40.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, FO371/25189/462, Bland to Foreign Office, 14/5/40. For a history of Jewish refugees in domestic service see Kushner, T, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-40' in Kushner, T, and Lunn, K, *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain*, Frank Cass, London, 1990, pp.49-60.

<sup>78</sup> Many Jewish refugees found it difficult to understand that they could be perceived as potential allies to Hitler. See Kochan, M, *Britain's Internees in the Second World War*, p.34, Spier, E, *The Protecting Power*, Skeffington, London, 1951. Also see Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.150.

<sup>79</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 365, Col: 1564, 12/8/40.

I would very much doubt whether there has been any single case in this country of proved enemy assistance from any Jew. Indeed I know that there has not been, but there have been whispers. I know that Dreyfus did not write the *bordereau*, but I know that the staff of the army thought he had, and said he had. If you are to take as evidence the sort of rumours that get talked about the Jews, you will never get anywhere at all.<sup>80</sup>

Comments from other parliamentarians seem to support Wedgwood's allegation that members were being influenced by 'racial' thinking. Mrs Mavis Tate (MP for Frome) did not hesitate to cite the overtly anti-Semitic writer Douglas Reed in making her case for the mass internment of refugees, or to fuel the debate with suspicions of her own:

I sympathise with the Jews, but Germany has learned to make skilful use of them. There is a book called 'Nemesis' by Douglas Reed. He pointed out, very clearly, in several books, what was going to happen, and the use made, in some instances, of Jews by the Nazis. It is no good saying that because a person is a refugee, because a man is a Jew and a victim of Nazi aggression, that he may not, nevertheless, be a potential danger to this country. I can only say that to my certain knowledge, there are people in my constituency about whom the police have had very grave reasons to be suspicious.<sup>81</sup>

Implicit within 'spying' allegations lay the idea that Jewish immigrants (even when well meaning) were unlikely to have the courage required to withstand the terror of an imminent invasion.<sup>82</sup> The notion that Jews panicked easily and evaded any

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<sup>80</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 365, Col: 1564, 12/8/40.

<sup>81</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 362, Col: 1220, 11/7/40.

<sup>82</sup> The following argument from Winterton reflected many 'benevolent' governmental voices demanding internment: 'I am convinced that cases did occur where Germans said to refugees, "We are going to give you and your people a much worse time, but we will give you the opportunity, if you like, of going to other countries providing you will help us in any way you can"'. See *Hansard*, Vol: 365, Col: 1540, 12/8/40.

dangerous responsibility in wartime had been prevalent in the First World War and soon found popular currency as the new war began.<sup>83</sup> Records of *Mass Observation* highlight the incidence of these beliefs amongst ordinary people.<sup>84</sup> In the 1943 'Race Directive', despite no direct question being posed concerning Jewish war service, 'racial' ideas about Jewish cowardice were commonplace among popular responses concerning Jewry. One *Observer* noted: 'I do definitely think that Jews are more nervous and excitable in the face of physical danger – that may be their eastern origin, but I have noted their tendency to rush to safety before others can get there'.<sup>85</sup>

Comments of this nature were repeatedly focused on a few themes. Jews made every effort to avoid military service, fled at every opportunity to the safest part of the country and behaved selfishly in air-raid shelters. Similar remarks on Jews by *Observers* are too prevalent to cite but the contributions below serve as typical examples: 'As far as the army is concerned, very few Jews seem to be in uniform; and of those I have known, nearly all have obtained for themselves the so-called "cushy" jobs, however low their rank'.<sup>86</sup>

Racist views of this kind were commonly expressed in the writings of Douglas Reed.<sup>87</sup> Reed commented that one seldom saw 'a typically Jewish face' in uniform, much more often 'above white collars in hotels and restaurants'.<sup>88</sup> Drama critic James Agate concurred with this view and questioned, 'are we to believe that they have all been turned down by the services? The real explanation is that in the art of being

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<sup>83</sup> For images of the Jewish coward in World War One see chapter one, pp.22-25.

<sup>84</sup> The use of *Mass Observation* as a means of tracing public opinion is problematic in some ways. This organisation (which aimed to collect data and opinion for anthropological purposes regarding a range of issues) was self-selecting and voluntary and thus can only represent the views of the whole population to a limited extent. Overall, *Mass Observers* tended to be predominately middle class and liberal/left wing. However, the substantial existing archive of correspondence can still provide a window into the views and beliefs of wartime society and where similar views are expressed by hundreds of observers, it must be reasonable to conclude that one facet of public opinion (if not a definitive picture) has been illuminated.

<sup>85</sup> Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex, 'Race Directive' 1943, D3323. The portrayal of the European Jew as 'eastern' confirms the 'racial' nature of the thinking behind these kinds of comments.

<sup>86</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1943, D2804. Also: 'It certainly seems as if they are the first to dash off out of London in their cars, they are always to be found in safe areas inhabiting big houses', in 'Race Directive' 1943, D1345 and 'the shelter's nothing but a pigsty; no wonder – nothing but a lot of filthy stinking Jews doing their business all over the place.....they rush down the second the siren goes, in broad daylight, whether anything's happening or not; there's never any room left to sit, even, by the time the warning's over'. Topic Collection (Jews), File G, 1941.

<sup>87</sup> Reed remained a columnist with the *Times* and a popular novelist in this period.

<sup>88</sup> Reed, D, *A Prophet at Home*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1991, p.121.

embusque the Jew has no equal'.<sup>89</sup> As Agate was drawn into hostile correspondence with the *Jewish Chronicle* over these remarks, his partner Isadore Pavia, leapt to his defence with a highly 'racial' explanation for the Jewish reluctance to fight: 'It would seem natural for the average young Jew, belonging as he does to a pacific race, to feel that he is doing better for himself by making more money than he could in the services'.<sup>90</sup>

This kind of 'racial' thinking permeated decision making at the highest level during the war.<sup>91</sup> Refugee campaigner and MP Eleanor Rathbone highlighted the government tendency of thinking 'racially' in a leaflet designed to challenge anti-Semitism in policy making in 1943. State attitudes, Rathbone alleged, were formed against the stereotypes that 'the Jews are cowards; they shirk military service...the Jews are panicky'.<sup>92</sup> There seems to be some basis for Rathbone's allegation of governmental prejudice. After the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, one Foreign Office official communicated the idea that refugee Jews had not needed to leave the country and had only done so because of their lack of nerve. D.P. Reilly's notes for Lord Halifax on Jewish Czech refugees who had fled to Poland recorded:

A great many of these are not in any sense political refugees who were in danger, but Jews who panicked unnecessarily and who need not have left. Many of them are quite unsuitable as emigrants and would be a very difficult problem if brought here.<sup>93</sup>

Utilising similarly rooted 'racial' stereotypes of Jewish cowardice, the 'Central Office for Refugees' wrote to the Board of Deputies in April 1940, explaining that internment was necessary to restrain 'people of weak moral character...who might succumb to temptation in time of war'.<sup>94</sup> Even John Anderson (in the House of Commons interment debate of August 1940) questioned whether family and interests

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<sup>89</sup> Ego 5, 29/8/41, in the Ivan Greenberg MSS, Hartley Archive, Southampton, File 5.

<sup>90</sup> Pavia to Greenberg, Greenberg MSS, 25/11/42, File 5.

<sup>91</sup> Kushner has highlighted the 'racial' basis of thinking of this kind: 'On pure statistical grounds there was again no basis for the Jewish war shirker image to come about. To explain its pervasive appeal one has, as usual, to examine the past Jewish stereotype'. See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.122.

<sup>92</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, E3/536, 21/9/43.

<sup>93</sup> PRO, FO 371/24100, Reilly to Halifax, 29/7/39.

<sup>94</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, London Metropolitan Archive, E3/520, 2/4/40.

left behind in Germany might lead refugees 'perhaps at the hour of our greatest peril, to take action, on an impulse it may be, which afterwards they might greatly regret?'<sup>95</sup>

Anderson added an additional question:

Further, is it not the case that these enemy aliens include quite a large number who, perhaps because of the experience they have gone through, are fundamentally defeatist, who, if it appeared that the enemy was making progress in an attempt to land on our shores or by parachute, would lose heart, would be a source of weakness, and would tend to lower the morale of the people around them, and might be tempted in the last resort to try and make terms?<sup>96</sup>

Foreign Office minister Peake likewise concluded in this debate: 'It is necessary to have people of faint heart out of the way'.<sup>97</sup>

'Racial' thinking also influenced government intervention over a dispute between the Free Polish Army and some of its Jewish soldiers in the latter stages of the war.<sup>98</sup> A few hundred Polish Jewish soldiers demanded transfers into the British army claiming that levels of anti-Semitism amongst the Polish troops made their lives unbearable. The British authorities, for whom this was admittedly an awkward situation, responded with a near total lack of sympathy for the Jewish troops. D. Allen from the Foreign Office noted concerning the matter that 'these Polish Jews are shirkers and are of little military value'.<sup>99</sup> A 1940 note from the War Office to the Foreign Office highlights the 'racial' evaluation of Jewish behaviour that was implicit within the British reaction: 'The Jews behaviour in Poland during the Russian advance must clearly have caused a feeling of animosity in army circles which I think justified'.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 364, Col: 1546, 12/8/40.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 364, Col: 1579, 12/8/40.

<sup>98</sup> For accounts of this dispute see Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.120-127 and Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.140-141.

<sup>99</sup> PRO, FO371/39480, Allen minute, (Foreign Office Central Office), (Undated).

<sup>100</sup> PRO, FO371/24481/60, Wilkinson to Makins, 6/5/40.

Simply, the British reaction was that if anti-Semitism caused Jewish desertion, this hostility was largely justified by Jewish war behaviour and because Jewish soldiers were 'shirkers'. The British government were well aware of allegations of endemic anti-Semitism within the Polish military in Britain. Parliamentarians such as Tom Driberg and the left wing MP D.N. Pritt repeatedly offered evidence to the executive on this subject.<sup>101</sup> However, the fact that anti-Semitism in the Polish army was notoriously fierce and that the Jews involved had not asked for demobilisation but merely for a transfer to British units, was all but lost within the British analysis of the situation. Court martial, the British contended, should be the fate of any Jewish deserter. Finally, after the Commons intervention of Driberg on behalf of the refugees, the government acceded to the requests of the soldiers and allowed them to transfer to British pioneer units.<sup>102</sup>

'Racial' stereotypes about the Jewish soldier seemingly influenced the government decision to only establish belatedly, and then to under utilise, the Jewish Brigade during the war. Further, state reluctance to allow refugee Jews to serve in war support units within the UK can be seen as rooted in 'racial' images of the immigrants.<sup>103</sup> Both the ideas that Jews were cowards and that they were essentially perfidious affected government decisions concerning the establishment of Jewish forces. There seem to have been good and logical reasons to establish the Jewish Brigade as a fighting unit. In the early years of the war, there was a very real possibility that Rommel's troops would overrun British mandated territory in Palestine and that the scant British units allocated to the region would prove insufficient to repel an attack of this kind.<sup>104</sup> Notably, this view was held by

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<sup>101</sup> D.N. Pritt told Rathbone: 'The evidence I have of the treatment of Jews in the Polish army and the systematic anti-Semitic propaganda in a number of units of the Polish army is growing in volume and quantity', Rathbone MSS, Special Collections, Liverpool University, (File 14), May 1943.

<sup>102</sup> Driberg recalled the incident in his memoirs, *Ruling Passions*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1977, pp.202-3.

<sup>103</sup> For accounts of the debate surrounding the establishment of the Brigade see Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.49-50 or Beckman, M, *The Jewish Brigade: An Army with Two Masters, 1944-45*, Spellmount, Kent, 1988. Beckman argues that Jews were considered 'too thrusting, too clever, untrustworthy' to be allowed their own Brigade, p.13. Also see Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.283-288.

<sup>104</sup> A Board of Deputies report attempted to obtain government support for a Jewish Brigade utilising the argument of essential need for manpower in the Middle East: 'Strategic considerations of the utmost importance to the Empire and to the United Nations require that all available man power should be fully utilised against the common enemy'. Board Report on 'British Attitude Towards Palestinian War Service', July 1942. Board of Deputies MSS, ACC3121/C14/23.

Churchill himself, who remained a firm supporter of the Brigade as a concept throughout the war. He wrote to Lloyd George in June 1940:

Should the war go heavily into Egypt, all these troops will have to be withdrawn, and the position of the Jewish colonists will be one of the greatest danger....I think it is little less than a scandal that at the time when we are fighting for our lives, these very large forces should be immobilised in support of a policy which only commends itself to a section of the Conservative Party.<sup>105</sup>

Churchill, however, remained firmly in a minority over his desire to build and utilise a Jewish army. Many within the government and the military could not escape from their 'racial' reasoning that Jews only desired an army role in order to pursue their own agenda and manipulate British resources. The diary account of General Ironside (Chief of the Imperial Staff) of his meeting with Chaim Weizmann, highlights the extent to which these traditional Semitic discourses affected decision making.

One had strongly the impression that he [Weizmann] merely regarded the British empire as something likely to further his ends....He gave one an eerie sensation...I had strongly a feeling of half resentment that I was being 'used' for somebody else's benefit. I have never felt that before in my life.<sup>106</sup>

A note from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in May 1940 recorded a similar analysis of Jewish intentions. Besides the questionable intentions of Jews who wished to serve in the British military, MacDonald clearly saw the potential Jewish war role in grotesque, stereotyped terms as an essentially financial one. He argued that '..if, as they profess, the Jews whole-heartedly support the allied cause, it is open to them to aid that cause with their money'.<sup>107</sup> Grigg, at the War ministry, also remained a firm opponent of the Brigade throughout the conflict. His opposition,

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<sup>105</sup> PRO, PREM 3/348, Churchill to Lloyd George, 28/6/40.

<sup>106</sup> Macleod, R, and Kelly, D, (eds.), *The Ironside Diaries 1937-40*, Constable, London, 1962, 31/10/39, pp.135-6.

<sup>107</sup> PRO, FO371/24566, Note by Secretary of State to the Foreign Office, May 1940.

indeed, reflected the view of the great majority within the government.<sup>108</sup> Simply, it was inconceivable to most within the British administration that Jews could form a reliable and effective fighting force. Eden's view here seems typical, as he recorded in a 1941 note that the decision on allowing a Jewish Brigade was 'purely political'.<sup>109</sup> Churchill, though, remained a passionate advocate of the idea and was instrumental in ensuring that the force was formed belatedly in 1944.<sup>110</sup> However, opposition from nearly every other government quarter and crucially from inside the British military, ensured that the Brigade saw no substantial action and was largely utilised in marginal and secondary roles until the end of the conflict.<sup>111</sup>

'Racial' thinking concerning Jewish reliability in conflict also led to discrimination against Jewish people who wished to serve in home defence capacities such as the ARP and the LDV. Whilst prejudice was often exercised against Jewish volunteers at a local and not a national level, there was definitely ambivalence amongst both public opinion and the government about whether Jews could be trusted with fire watching, home guard and warden duties.<sup>112</sup> Frank Lewey, the mayor of Stepney, argued that local hostility towards Jewish volunteers was rooted in the belief that 'the Jews would panic if ever raiding became very bad'.<sup>113</sup> The Board of Deputies was inundated with protests from Jewish people, complaining that they had been rejected as volunteers because they had 'alien' parents. The case of Jack White came to the attention of the Board after White (an ex-soldier and winner of the Victoria Cross in World War One), was rejected for service with the local balloon barrage and then removed from the LDV because his parents were foreign.<sup>114</sup> The White case resulted in a question in the House of Commons regarding the rights of children with foreign parents to serve in domestic volunteer forces. Answering for the government, Eden conceded that exceptions needed to be made to the existing

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<sup>108</sup> Wasserstein has argued that within the Chamberlain War Cabinet only Churchill was in favour of establishing a Jewish fighting force in Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.252-277.

<sup>109</sup> PRO, FO371/27126, Eden note, 31/4/41.

<sup>110</sup> See Beckman, M, *An Army with Two Masters*, p.43.

<sup>111</sup> Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p.288.

<sup>112</sup> See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.53.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* p.53. Local 'racial' tensions have been ignored by other analysts of local defence in Stepney. Srebrnik has emphasised only class tensions in local ARP disputes in Srebrnik, H, *London Jews and British Communism 1935-1945*, Vallentine Mitchell, Essex, 1995, pp.42-49.

<sup>114</sup> See Board Of Deputies MSS, File C15/3/14, August 1940.



rule for ex-soldiers, but not that Britons with foreign parents should be allowed to serve in the LDV in general.<sup>115</sup>

White's case was not unusual and serves as an example of a widespread tendency to exclude immigrants and their children from the volunteer effort. The case of a Miss Isenman was brought before the Board in December 1940 and provides another good example of the problem. Isenman was rejected from both the ARP and as a munitions worker because she had foreign parents. Her letter to the Board neatly encapsulates the frustration of numerous Jewish people who could not join in the fight against Germany. Isenman asked the Board to investigate:

Was there a law passed forbidding British born children of foreign parents trying to help their country. Then I will be able to understand why I was refused when I offered my services free to the Bethnal Green Tower Hall ARP department a little while ago.<sup>116</sup>

Various parts of the media urged that foreigners should not be allowed to serve in civil defence posts. With typical xenophobic sensationalism, a *Daily Mail* report in May 1940 commented: 'It is fantastic that Germans should be called upon to take charge of Britons in an air raid, when one of their relatives might be in a bombing 'plane overhead'.<sup>117</sup> Exclusion created an anomalous situation whereby families may have had sons and fathers fighting in the British army whilst other family members could not join in the volunteer effort.<sup>118</sup> Most disturbingly, Jewish exclusion from the war effort served to create a vicious circle of 'racial' thinking: Jews were perceived as unsuitable for service, were excluded and then criticised for their cowardly refusal to serve, thus perpetuating the stereotype. The Board of Deputies bemoaned this problem in a 1940 memorandum, which concluded: 'This

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<sup>115</sup> See *Hansard*, Vol: 362, Cols: 1054/1055, 9/7/40.

<sup>116</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Isenman to Board, 5/12/40, C15/3/14.

<sup>117</sup> *Daily Mail*, 1/5/40.

<sup>118</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, File C15/3/14. See the case of Miss Polatchik who complained that whilst her brother was engaged 'In Her Majesty's Forces' she had been dismissed from the ARP and the British Red Cross despite her being born in Britain and her parents being naturalised. Polatchik to Montagu (undated).

exclusion might have very serious consequences'.<sup>119</sup> An undated letter to the Board from J. Gellman spelt out the danger clearly:

What would the average non Jew think and say if the circumstances required active work and risks by the LDV and it was noticed that numerous Jews were out of it? It would be easily forgotten that these Jews had been legally excluded from the Corps.<sup>120</sup>

The 'racial' nature of betrayal anxieties is illuminated nicely by the concentration of these fears on refugee Jews and not on overt British fascists.<sup>121</sup> Although leading members of the BUF and like-minded groups were eventually interned in 1940, the vociferous clamour for action against internal enemies focused consistently on refugee Jews. In July 1940, Wedgwood pointed out this anomaly to the House of Commons, seemingly without generating much support.

What I want to stop is not only injustice, but the stupidity of locking up those who should be our friends and who would fight for us, but who would never care to surrender, and leaving at liberty those people who are, and who will remain, a danger to this country because they dislike liberty and love dictatorship.<sup>122</sup>

However, that it was 'Jewishness' and not just being foreign that generated so much of the betrayal discourse can be seen by the very different attitude that was taken towards other refugees in the war period. The most striking example perhaps comes from the fiercely anti-immigrant *Daily Mail*, which showed itself to be quite capable of displaying compassion and warmth towards refugees when they were Belgian and not Jewish. As these refugees fled from the Nazi onslaught, the *Mail* offered a wholly sympathetic picture of them, dramatically different from their often-grotesque caricatures of the Jewish refugees.

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<sup>119</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Memorandum (undated), C15/3/14.

<sup>120</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Gellman to Board (undated), C15/3/14.

<sup>121</sup> This point was made at the time by defenders of foreign internees. Lafitte argued: 'We should be surprised if there were not a single traitor among the refugees; we should be still more surprised if there are not ten times as many traitors to be found in the City of London and the Mayfair drawing rooms where Ribbentrop was once welcomed'. See Lafitte, F, *The Internment of Aliens*, p.174.

<sup>122</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 362, Col: 1249/50, 11/7/40.

They gathered in tired, forlorn groups. Elderly men and women clutched small bundles of household treasures, their only souvenirs of home. Tiny children, dirty and weary after their journey, whimpered at their feet.<sup>123</sup>

At the height of 'alien' paranoia and even after the Belgian monarch had defected to the Nazis, the *Mail* remained adamant that the nation had nothing to fear from these refugees, who deserved the sympathy and support of their British hosts.

The defection of King Leopold should not be visited upon the Belgian refugees in this country. Their need is still great. They have to bear not only the loss of their country and possessions but the loss of the faith in their King.<sup>124</sup>

Fears of 'alien' betrayal were heavily interwoven with traditional 'racial' discourses, which portrayed Jews as inherently subversive and untrustworthy.<sup>125</sup> At their most dramatic, theories of this nature held that Jews were manipulating the war for their own ends and controlling how the British state acted and thought.<sup>126</sup> More soberly, Jewish conspiracy discourse often contended that Jews controlled the petty black market and exaggerated war crime allegations in order to obtain sympathy and residency in Britain and Palestine.<sup>127</sup> However different these allegations may seem, they were similarly rooted in traditional 'racial' theory concerning Jews. Whilst various parties bought into these ideas to different extents, ultimately, 'conspiracy'

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<sup>123</sup> *Daily Mail*, 15/5/40.

<sup>124</sup> *Daily Mail*, 30/5/40. Also: 'A Home Office official said. "There is always the possibility that Germany may try the trick of disguising agents as refugees. There is no suggestion that this is happening with those from Holland and Belgium"', 15/5/40. For analysis of the difference in attitude towards Belgian refugees, see London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.181.

<sup>125</sup> For an account of the impact of Semitic 'racial' discourses on state policy see Cheyette, B, 'Jewish Stereotyping and English Literature, 1875-1920: Towards a Political Analysis', in Kushner, T, and Lunn, K, (eds.), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1989, pp.12-32 or Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.106-133.

<sup>126</sup> See especially Reed, D, *Lest We Regret*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1943 and Reed, D, *Disgrace Abounding*.

<sup>127</sup> See Kushner, T, 'Beyond the Pale?', pp.143-157.

beliefs about Jewry served to temper public sympathy towards refugees and set government policy during the Second World War.<sup>128</sup>

Comments from *Mass Observers* in the 1943 'Race Directive' and in various other war surveys highlight the depth to which 'money and power' discourses permeated public perceptions concerning Jews. They reveal the emergence of a popular view that Jews were prominent within black market trading, utilising their inherent business superiority to exploit British people. One *Observer* remarked that:

A number of Jews in the textile trade, at any rate, are making a very good thing for themselves out of this war, and at the same time managing to avoid their obligations and war time liabilities.<sup>129</sup>

Another remarked that Jews 'were mostly without scruples and are completely devoid of social responsibility'. He concluded: 'It is not a coincidence that the majority of black market offences are committed by Jews'.<sup>130</sup> Despite the terrible circumstances of the Jewish refugees in this period, many *Observers* could not break free from the belief that Jews were manipulating the war for personal gain. One wrote: 'I feel that many of them will attempt to make money out of the war if they get a chance', another concluding that 'the Black market – in spite of BBC denials – is largely run by Jews'.<sup>131</sup> In a 1941 *Mass Observation* investigation into attitudes towards Jewry in the East End of London, the compiler of the report confirmed that the 'money' stereotype was the most commonly held belief expressed about Jews by their non-Jewish neighbours.<sup>132</sup>

The popular notion of Jewish money tightness was mentioned more than any other factor, equally by men and women....This is

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<sup>128</sup> See Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.88-89, London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.282 and Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.93-105.

<sup>129</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1943, D2512.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. D3158.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. D2575 and D1313.

<sup>132</sup> M-OA, Topic Collections (Jews), File C, 1941.

closely linked with avarice and the two together form easily the most often quoted reason for disliking Jews.<sup>133</sup>

These stereotypes permeated thinking in government circles and affected wartime attitudes towards refugee Jews. The Asquith Committee on refugees reported to the Cabinet in 1940 that proposals to release interned Jews who had jobs awaiting them were unpractical, as Jewish businessmen would not be able to resist their 'natural' urge to exploit the potential cheap labour.

The opinion was conveyed to us from a very responsible and well informed labour source that if a category on the lines suggested were established, 'every Jewish employer would take advantage of it to obtain sweated labour' by log rolling arrangements with internees.<sup>134</sup>

Similarly, the circumstances of the war did not dampen a governmental belief that Jews were rich and powerful. Discussion took place in a 1939 Cabinet meeting regarding the extent to which the government should support Jewish voluntary organisations. Cabinet minutes noted 'the obvious objection to the British government lending money to the Jews'.<sup>135</sup> Many people within the executive clearly bought into prevalent, popular Semitic stereotypes, despite government attempts to present these views as perceptions of the public mood (to which they needed to respond). An interesting meeting between Sidney Salomon and R.H. Parker (Director of the Home Intelligence Division) in 1943 saw Parker explain that government policy towards Jewish refugees could not be relaxed as public anti-Semitism was rising amid the belief that 'Jews were predominant in the black market'.<sup>136</sup> That Parker refused to show Salomon any evidence of this anti-Semitism may reveal that he was expressing a view that was as commonly held in Whitehall and Westminster as it was amongst the general public.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> M-OA, Topic Collections (Jews), File C, 1941.

<sup>134</sup> PRO, HO213/565, Report from committee to Cabinet meeting, 20/11/40.

<sup>135</sup> PRO, CAB98/1, Minutes of Cabinet meeting, 8/12/39.

<sup>136</sup> Greenberg MSS, Salomon to Greenberg, File 5, 12/2/43.

<sup>137</sup> Kushner has emphasised the importance of the image of the Jewish 'Black Marketeer' in both wider society and in the government in Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.119-122 and 138-139.

Related to Semitic wealth discourses were images of the Jew as a conspiratorial power broker. Again, despite the extent of evidence to the contrary, ideas that Jews were not only profiting from the war but had instigated it in order to pursue a covert Jewish agenda, were common currency in wartime Britain. The *Mass Observers* frequently cited Jewish conspiracy discourse of this nature. One noted that he had 'always seen the Jews as a huge octopus with its tentacles spread over the wealth of the world'.<sup>138</sup> Another commented: 'The Jews will always try to secure for themselves all the power and wealth (regardless of other people) that they can lay hands on by fair means or foul'.<sup>139</sup> Even school children, when asked in a 1939 questionnaire, put forward views of this kind. One sixteen year old remarked that 'in most countries nearly all the money comes from the Jews or is controlled by them'.<sup>140</sup>

Leading British wartime writers often characterised Jews according to these 'racial' conspiracy stereotypes. Kushner has noted discourses of this nature in books by Beresford and Wynne Tyson and by Keverne.<sup>141</sup> However, Douglas Reed's persistent and dramatic use of Jewish conspiracy theory in several wartime publications makes his work the best example of the persistence of conspiracy characterisations in British literature. Reed believed that a secret Jewish agenda had created the war and was manipulating its conclusion to fit an international, Jewish design. He argued: 'The same influence, hidden but powerful, works to confuse our foreign policy and our war aims'.<sup>142</sup> Reed was convinced that international affairs were being secretly manipulated to achieve Jewish goals:

Consider the birth of 'Zionism'. It was still a dream fifty years ago. Since then, one world war has brought it to fulfilment; a second now produces still greater ambitions. This opens sinister ways of thought, in the search for the origins of these two world wars, and I wish they were closed. It enshadows our future.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1943, D1016.

<sup>139</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1939, D1108.

<sup>140</sup> M-OA, Topic collections (Jews), File C, 1941.

<sup>141</sup> Kushner cites Beresford, J, and Tyson, E, *Men in the Same Boat*, Hutchison, London, 1943, and Keverne, R, *The Black Cripple*, Collins, London, 1941 as examples of Semitic conspiracy discourse in British literature in Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p. 117.

<sup>142</sup> Reed, D, *Lest We Regret*, p.263.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* p.270.

Whilst the extremism of Reed's ideas left him increasingly isolated as the war went on, his work is relevant as it captures forcefully the melodrama of conspiracy accusations. Additionally, in a time when European Jewry was being systematically destroyed in the Final Solution, the very existence of this image of Jewry highlights the sustained potency of 'racial' theory.<sup>144</sup>

It is possible to show that some people in powerful positions were influenced by Jewish conspiracy discourses of this kind, though these images were clearly not as influential as those concerning the Jewish moneymaker.<sup>145</sup> One area where conspiracy discourse can be seen to have had a very real effect was British Palestine. Within British Middle East policy, the idea that Jews could not be trusted, were essentially perfidious and pursued a secret agenda influenced both the British decision not to enlist the support of Palestinian Jews as soldiers and policy concerning the number of Jews allowed to enter Palestine during the war.<sup>146</sup> A minute by Foreign Office official R.T.E. Latham exposes 'racial' thinking regarding Jewish conspiracy within the Colonial Office. Commenting on the attitude of Colonial Office official H.F. Downie, Latham noted:

One has, in matters emanating from the Middle Eastern Department of the Colonial Office, to take into account Mr Downie's inward and spiritual conviction that illegal immigration is only the outward and visible sign of a world wide scheme to

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<sup>144</sup> In *Disgrace Abounding*, Reed described the departure of refugees from Czechoslovakia in 1939. Noticeably, he saw the Jew as an outsider among the other émigrés, as someone who was not being forced to leave their home but was choosing to do so, in order to fulfil some dramatic and secret goal. 'The Jew raised his arm, fist clenched, in the workers' greeting. On the little finger a diamond flashed in the light of the lamps. Now, why? I asked myself as I came away. He simply is not of those men, those working men, neither he nor his ring nor his rather theatrical cry nor his mother nor his sister. They are all quite different, they belong somewhere else. Why then was he there, and what were his inner most motives? I could find no answer. He was just different'. Reed, D, *Disgrace Abounding*, p. 262.

<sup>145</sup> See Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.50-53.

<sup>146</sup> Conspiracy theory regarding Palestinian Jews even stretched as far as government allegations of complicity between Jewish 'revisionist' Zionist groups and the Gestapo. Describing illegal immigration, the War Office contended: 'The revisionists are behind the whole business, and to some extent the Gestapo behind them', PRO FO371/25240, MacKenzie (War Office) to Bennett (Colonial Office), 5/3/40. For British thinking on 'illegal' Jewish immigration to Palestine see Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.17-80, Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.22-25 and London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.38.

overthrow the British empire. It is only if one realises that he regards the Jews as no less our enemies than the Germans that certain features of this draft become explicable.<sup>147</sup>

The persuasive nature and prevalence of these Jewish conspiracy discourses ensured that Jewish refugees would often fail to be perceived as the victims that they were.<sup>148</sup> The Final Solution was difficult to understand within a 'racial' mind frame that held that Jews were ultimately wealthy and powerful and was incomprehensible to those who perceived Jews as secretly in the driving seat of European affairs.<sup>149</sup>

One *Mass Observer's* comments, regarding the ongoing destruction of European Jewry, reveals the power that 'racial' discourses held over reality. The *Observer* remarked (regarding the Holocaust) that he 'could never understand why world Jewry allowed Hitler to get away with it'.<sup>150</sup> To Reed, Jews were so powerful that the only feasible explanation for the Final Solution was that it was a Jewish conspiracy. He described reports of genocide as 'the greatest example of mass-misinformation in history'.<sup>151</sup> Reed clearly perceived the Holocaust as the product of a Jewish media invention, the goal of which was to create a Zionist state and facilitate Jewish immigration to Britain and to the United States. The atrocity was, to Reed, 'the most stupendous political and press campaign in my experience'.<sup>152</sup>

This inability to perceive the real situation of the refugees resonated through the anti-'alien' press during the early stages of the war. Despite never going as far as Reed, the *Daily Mail* repeatedly failed to show any sympathy towards Jewish refugees, who were portrayed with a gross lack of humility as merely being in Britain to take advantage of free hospitality. As internment intensified in 1940, armed soldiers with fixed bayonets escorted refugees to detention camps in the Isle of Man. This experience must have been terrifying for the internees and was covered by the

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<sup>147</sup> PRO, FO371/27132, Minute by R.T.E. Latham, 27/4/41.

<sup>148</sup> See Kushner, T, 'Beyond the Pale?', pp.155-156.

<sup>149</sup> For example, Kushner has noted the inability of left wing British opinion to understand that wealthy Jews were victims of Nazi oppression. See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.88.

<sup>150</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1943, D1226.

<sup>151</sup> Reed, D, *Lest We Regret*, p.250.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* p.253.



*Daily Mail* under the headline, 'Immigrants off to the seaside'.<sup>153</sup> The newspaper could not manage to muster any sympathy for interned 'aliens'. Its 1940 story: 'Luxury war for aliens. Bathing, no work' was typical.<sup>154</sup> As with Reed, Semitic discourses prevented the writers of the *Mail* from understanding the reality of the situation. However, it was not only some journalists and fringe agitators who found it difficult to see refugee Jews as victims. In some government circles, 'racial' thinking similarly affected attitudes towards the plight of European Jewry.

A widespread belief existed within the government that Jews exaggerated stories of persecution in order to gain British sympathy for Jewish refugees and force more Jews into Palestine.<sup>155</sup> A joint memorandum from the Foreign and Colonial Offices in 1940 outlined their belief that Jewish attempts at Palestine immigration were politically motivated and were 'not primarily a refugee movement'.<sup>156</sup> The Jewish aim, the report contended, was 'an organised invasion of Palestine for political motives, which exploits the facts of the refugee problem and unscrupulously uses the humanitarian appeal of the later to justify itself'.<sup>157</sup> The belief seems to have been held that Jewry (as an organised collective) were deliberately pursuing a manipulative agenda by exaggerating their predicament in Europe. As Caventish-Bentinck (Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee) commented: 'The Poles and to a greater extent the Jews, tend to exaggerate German atrocities in order to stoke us up'.<sup>158</sup> Significantly, the belief in Jewish 'exaggeration' persisted all the way to 1945, where Ian Henderson (from the refugee department of the Foreign Office) noted:

Sources of information are nearly always Jewish whose accounts are only sometimes reliable and not seldom highly coloured. One notable tendency in Jewish reports on this problem is to exaggerate the numbers of deportations and deaths.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> *Daily Mail*, 20/5/40.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* 18/5/40.

<sup>155</sup> See Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp.312-323, Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp.167-169, London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.276 and Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.157-160.

<sup>156</sup> PRO, FO371/25238/274, Joint Memorandum on Refugees, 17/1/40.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> PRO, FO371/34551, Cavendish-Bentinck Minute, 1943.

<sup>159</sup> PRO, FO371/51134, Note by I.L. Henderson, 11/1/45.

Ultimately, the Holocaust and the arrival of its victims in Britain did not eradicate the 'racial' discourses which had been prominent in Britain before the war. 'Racial theory' moulded around the new circumstances and played a significant role in setting the tone both of government policy and the reception of refugees. Kushner has concluded: 'The Jewish image, so firmly rooted in British consciousness, was both highly flexible and diverse, and thus capable of adaptation to new needs'.<sup>160</sup>

### iii) Community Reactions To 'Racial' Discourse: Jewry 'Attempting To Convince Itself'

Analysts of the British Jewish community's reactions to refugees have been correct to cite that a fear of rising anti-Semitism prevented Britain's Jews from becoming more vociferous supporters of their fleeing co-religionists.<sup>161</sup> This thesis has already argued that a very real anxiety existed amongst many of Britain's Jews, that refugee newcomers could jeopardise the safety of the established British community. However, it has also been argued that the belief amongst British Jews, that more Jews would cause more racism, indicates some Jewish acceptance of prevalent 'racial' discourses.

As was the case before the war, many within the British Jewish community seemed to regard foreign Jews less as brothers than as embarrassing, distant relations. The refugee Jews seemed essentially and dangerously foreign and were often perceived by the self-conscious British community as outsiders in a 'racial' sense. Two examples illustrate the point: The first concerns the opinions of a British Jewish member of an 'aliens' tribunal, Reverend Simmons. Simmons wrote to the Board of Deputies with reference to a house full of refugee *Yeshiva* students living under the jurisdiction of his tribunal, who required classification as potential internment risks. Simmons, in correspondence with Neville Laski, said that he perceived this group as a 'probable danger to the country'.<sup>162</sup> As these men were clearly not Nazi sympathisers, it is difficult at first glance to understand exactly what kind of threat Simmons

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<sup>160</sup> Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.194.

<sup>161</sup> See London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.6 and Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.167. For a different perspective see Bolchover, R, *British Jewry and the Holocaust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

<sup>162</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Simmons to Laski, E3/520, 14/10/39.

thought them to pose. His biggest criticism seems to have been that 'no effort was apparently being made...to train them under English guidance to be decent British citizens'.<sup>163</sup> Simply, to Simmons, these men were dangerous because they were foreign. His conclusion, in a later letter to Laski, that 'it would be far better in the interests of the Jewish name that they had been interned' highlights dramatically the level to which British Jews were capable of buying into ideas rooted in 'racial' discourses.<sup>164</sup> Simmons' argument (that these men could be 'trained' into English ways) highlights cultural as opposed to essentialist 'racial' thinking but his notion of 'foreignness' as being synonymous with a security risk betrays 'racial' theory within his reasoning.<sup>165</sup>

The Board of Deputies corresponded with Mrs A Petrie in the summer of 1940. Petrie was a member of a Jewish 'Public Relations' committee, which aimed to limit the embarrassment caused by newly arrived foreign Jews. This group was so concerned about the poor behaviour of Jewish refugees that they approached the Chief Rabbi, requesting that he instigate a nationwide 'Citizens Saturday', where ministers could take issue with their congregations 'on the subject of general behaviour and morals'.<sup>166</sup> For their part, the group set up 'vigilance committees' in order to monitor the behaviour of refugees and organised their own meetings to spread their message and 'approach individual cases of anti-social behaviour'.<sup>167</sup> Ultimately, instead of empathising and supporting vulnerable refugees, this committee worked to eradicate what it saw as the undesirable 'racial' traits of the newcomers. Petrie described in her correspondence a meeting between herself and a newly arrived refugee couple, which illustrates this tendency:

I approached them in connection with speaking German and the lady screamed such abuse that a crowd quickly collected and it was impossible for me to put my case at all. I, therefore, followed the couple to their home and reported the case to Scotland Yard who

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<sup>163</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Simmons to Laski, E3/520, 14/10/39.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> For further analysis of this case see Kushner, T, 'Clubland, Cricket Tests and Alien Internment', pp.85-86.

<sup>166</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Report by A Petrie, June 1940, C2/2/6.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. Aims of Public Relations Committee, (Undated), 1940.

sent police along immediately and, I understand, that they are proceeding with the matter.<sup>168</sup>

There seems to have been a widespread acceptance within the British Jewish community that Jews were guilty of many of the 'black market' charges of which they were so often accused. Even Sidney Salomon, one of the staunchest defenders of Britain's Jews during this period, conceded in a note to Ivan Greenberg (editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*): 'There seems, it is true, to be a larger proportion of Jewish names than of non-Jewish among offenders of this kind reported in the press'.<sup>169</sup> Another community leader, Robert Waley Cohen, agreed as much in a 1943 letter on the subject: 'I fear that there is widespread black marketing going on; it is true under severe temptation, but that will not help if there are prosecutions'.<sup>170</sup> Kushner has concluded that whilst Greenberg's *Jewish Chronicle* sustained a robust defence of the Jewish war effort, the tone of the journalism 'appeared to be attempting to convince itself'.<sup>171</sup> Ultimately, British Jews were often susceptible to the 'racial' discourses that influenced wider societal thinking in wartime Britain.

As for the refugee Jews, the government simply had no intention of allowing a large, further number to enter Britain. Whether excuses were made regarding domestic racism or whether logistical barriers were used to deflect criticism, whether indeed the British Jewish community agreed, the effect was much the same. Jewish refugees were consistently viewed by many decision makers and much of the public as an undesirable 'racial' addition to Britain's wartime population and no humanitarian considerations could supersede these perceptions. The government's desire to cloak their decision to exclude the refugees in sympathetic language and excuses speaks volumes about the social acceptability of overt 'race' thinking. The ultimate exclusion of these people and the limited public criticism of this policy speaks volumes about the sustained prevalence of Semitic discourses in British society. This chapter will now turn its attention to a consideration of the history of the Black population in wartime Britain. It will assess the impact of anti-Black 'racial' discourses on Black wartime immigration and presence in Britain and will probe the

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<sup>168</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Report by A Petrie, June 1940, C2/2/6.

<sup>169</sup> Ivan Greenberg MSS, File 5, Salomon to Greenberg, (Undated), 1941.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. Box 2, Waley Cohen to Greenberg, 8/2/43.

<sup>171</sup> Kushner T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.127.

impact of 'racial' thinking on British Black minority communities in general. Finally, this chapter will compare attitudes, policy and thinking concerning Black minorities with the Jewish experience already discussed, in order to analyse the role of 'racial' theory in British wartime society.

### c) Black People in Wartime Britain: A Nation 'Devoid of Racial Consciousness'?

Two related issues dominated attitudes and policy towards Black people in wartime Britain. One involved the role of Black Britons in the war effort, whilst the other concerned the perceived impact of the increased Black presence in the UK (caused largely by the arrival of Black American GIs) and corresponding attitudes towards the prospect of Black/white social and sexual contact. Analysis of these issues will again call into question the impact of changing attitudes towards the idea of 'race' in governmental and popular thinking and will particularly question the role of the United States in shaping British 'racial' theory in this period. If Britain really was, as the American Commander in Chief alleged in 1940, 'devoid of racial consciousness', did the presence of the American army alter British thinking, or was there instead a misjudgement on the part of some Americans concerning the 'racial' stance of their British allies?<sup>172</sup>

Differences between the dominant American and British stances on 'race' certainly existed.<sup>173</sup> Whereas the U.S. had a long history of debate and conflict over Black/white 'racial' integration, relations with Black people were to most Britons only a hypothetical issue. Nonetheless, it is insufficient to dismiss differences in American and British approaches towards 'race' purely as being rooted in different experiences. Indeed, a prominent theme of this thesis has been that the development of 'racial' discourses rarely had anything to do with actual experiences with the communities concerned. Instead, British and American differences need to be understood in the context of contrasting 'racial' discourses across the Atlantic. It is

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<sup>172</sup> Remarks by Eisenhower in a letter to Washington, 10/9/42, cited from Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, I.B. Tauris and Co, London, England, 1987, p.35.

<sup>173</sup> See Richmond, A, 'Economic Insecurity and Stereotypes as Factors in Colour Prejudice', (Liverpool Central Archive, File H327), p.162 or for a more recent analysis, Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations, The American Occupation of Britain 1942-1945*, pp.302-324.

important to realise that the fact that British 'racial' thinking may have been different does not necessarily mean that it was less important or less pronounced. This section will attempt to position the relationship between American and British 'race' thinking as epitomised by wartime issues surrounding the Black presence in Britain.

**i) Black/White 'Race' Mixing: 'A Bad Thing For Any Country'**

One of the most repeated American fears about British society concerned the lack of British policy and discourse regarding 'miscegenation'.<sup>174</sup> However, American fears that the British took no stance on this issue seem to have been unwarranted. British hostility to 'racial' mixing (in keeping with British 'race' scholarship) was noticeable if muted amid a growing societal awareness that such hostility was increasingly intellectually indefensible.

Many in British society were uncomfortable with their own objections to 'race'-mixing.<sup>175</sup> Some *Mass Observers*, despite still being unhappy with the idea of 'miscegenation', recorded their fears in a self-conscious and almost guilty way. To many who took part in the 'Race Directive', their attitudes towards the subject seem to have been a source of personal embarrassment. Generally, this did not lead to a transformation of thinking, usually just to the development of tenuous and apologetic rationales explaining personal hostilities towards Black/white sexual contact. Seemingly, sexual mixing was the last bastion of 'racial' thinking in the minds of many people.<sup>176</sup> Even *Mass Observers*, who held magnanimous and benevolent views towards the arrival of Black people in the UK, could not escape from a squeamish backtracking when it came to the subject of sex.<sup>177</sup> One recorded on the subject of Negroes: 'I admire those who come to this land to study medicine, etc. They should

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<sup>174</sup> The letter home from Eisenhower, cited above, continued: 'To most English people, including the village girls – even those of perfectly fine character – the negro soldier is just another man, rather fascinating because he is unique in their experience, a jolly good fellow and with money to spend. Our own white soldiers, seeing a girl walk down the street with a negro, frequently see themselves as protectors of the weaker sex and believe it necessary to intervene even to the extent of using force, to let her know what she's doing'. Cited in Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, p.218.

<sup>175</sup> See Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, pp.187-217 and Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.306-315.

<sup>176</sup> This has been a common theme in British Black history. See Hoch, P, *White Hero Black Beast*, p.51 and Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.197-198.

<sup>177</sup> Smith has cited this tendency: '...few people saw any intellectual gulf between their broad acceptance of Blacks and their particular dislike of miscegenation' in Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p.199.

not be used as slaves. Nevertheless, I do not approve of white marrying colour'.<sup>178</sup>  
Another similarly remarked:

I have met only one in my life, and he struck me as particularly charming. I feel that their association with white women is revolting, but I have nothing against them as a class, and have every sympathy with them as regards the treatment which is meted out to them by the Americans.<sup>179</sup>

Many *Observers*, in a trend that would become more commonplace in years to come, grounded their objections to 'race' mixing in concerns for the welfare of the resulting children in the midst of a racist society. One contended: 'I would hesitate about, say, encouraging any of my children to a mixed marriage, either with another nationality or race, but on the grounds of social expediency only, not of any innate difficulty'.<sup>180</sup>

Likewise, some British policy makers can be seen to have shared these self-conscious prejudices. Where the British government felt the need to take steps against 'racial' mixing it did so surreptitiously, attempting to obscure the 'racial' thinking that underpinned policy decisions.<sup>181</sup> This tendency was most notable within the secret instructions that were given to British troops regarding contact with Black soldiers in 1942. Faced with a situation where the government did not want fraternisation between white and Black troops but was not prepared to speak 'on the record' on the subject, decisions had to be made about the best way to achieve the goal of separation without overtly supporting a policy of discrimination. The *Bolero Combined Committee* met in August 1942 to discuss the problems of American 'Coloured' troops in Britain.<sup>182</sup> Minutes of the meeting record that serious consideration was given to the idea of openly discouraging 'miscegenation'. 'The question was raised whether it was proposed to discourage British women from such associations by an open statement on the danger of venereal disease'.<sup>183</sup> When it was decided that this was a politically untenable strategy, 'the question was then raised

<sup>178</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive', 1939, D1456.

<sup>179</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive', 1939, D1119.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. D1351.

<sup>181</sup> See Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, pp.194-197.

<sup>182</sup> Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, pp.62-65.

<sup>183</sup> PRO, CO876/14, Minutes of the *Bolero Combined Committee*, 12/8/42.

whether it was proposed to foster a whispering campaign on the same lines'.<sup>184</sup> Advice to troops was indeed given orally in the wake of the meeting. Officers were ordered to brief troops to keep away from American Black soldiers whilst at the same time not to appear impolite. Strict instructions were given not to write these orders down but Arthur Dowler (Chief administrator of the Southern British army) did record and leak the instructions, leading to an awkward question in the Commons from Tom Driberg. Churchill, in response, declined to confirm that any instructions had been given along these lines.<sup>185</sup>

The surreptitious nature of the British anti-'miscegenation' stance well represents the declining societal respectability of 'racial' difference, although the prevalence of British objections to Black/white sexual contact reveals the sustained potency of 'racial' thinking in British society. Fears concerning 'miscegenation' and paranoia about all levels of inter-'racial' fraternisation had far reaching effects on attitudes towards Black people and generated controversy and outrage on a massive scale during the war years. Simply, Black immigrants were often not perceived as posing a threat to British jobs and houses as much as posing a threat to the very essence and secret of 'Britishness', to British 'racial' stock.<sup>186</sup>

Reading the *Mass Observation* 'Race Directive' of 1939, one cannot help but be overwhelmed by the incidence of expressions of concern about mixed 'race' relationships. These views were expressed far more frequently than any other and dominate *Observers'* responses about Black people. The argument was often made that mixed 'race' sex contact was naturally abhorrent to a healthy, moral citizen. This belief fuelled a corresponding assumption that those who engaged in such sex practices were deviant or disturbed. One *Observer* asserted that mixed 'race' sex would be virtually impossible to carry out. 'Such close intimacy, as say, sexual with a Negress would not in normal circumstances be possible because of an innate feeling of revulsion'.<sup>187</sup> Another commented: 'Negresses disgust me and whenever I see a

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<sup>184</sup> PRO, CO876/14, Minutes of the *Bolero Combined Committee*, 12/8/42.

<sup>185</sup> PRO, FO371/30680, incident recorded in Foreign Office notes, August/September, 1942.

<sup>186</sup> See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations: Sex attitudes 'rested on the prevailing social Darwinist stereotypes about distinct races of differing attributes and quality'*, p.307.

<sup>187</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1939, D1264.



white women and a coloured man I feel like shooting both'.<sup>188</sup> Some *Observers* clearly felt that Black people exuded an odour that, to white noses, was too repulsive to even allow mixed 'race' dancing. 'I got a Negro in a spoon dance once. They smell: I am sorry but that is my strongest feeling about them'.<sup>189</sup> Another was sure that even contact without sight would not leave her in any doubt as to the 'race' of the person with whom she was associating. 'I could tell from the feel of the skin that he was a Negro'.<sup>190</sup>

A wide group of contributors believed in the existence of significant physical, as well as mental 'racial' differences between white and Black people, which fuelled their fears about 'miscegenation'. An *Observer* wrote that 'marriage between white and coloured people should, I think, be discouraged because between our races and the Negroes there are physical differences'.<sup>191</sup> In-keeping with the traditional ideas of 'race' thinkers, some *Observers* voiced fears that 'miscegenation' would lead to the deterioration of British 'racial' stock. 'Intermarriage should be forbidden by law as marriage between white and black results in white race deterioration'.<sup>192</sup> Another *Observer* asserted that Black 'intermarriage and intercourse with Europeans should be discouraged, because half-castes generally are below a favourable standard'.<sup>193</sup>

Views of this nature were not uncommon amongst parliamentarians, government members and officials and must be seen as having had an impact on wartime policy decisions regarding Black people. Whilst officially the British government did not adopt a stance on the issue of mixed 'race' relationships, a clear hostility existed towards them. The issue led to correspondence between MPs and ministers regarding the desirability of allowing any Black U.S. or Colonial troops to enter Britain.<sup>194</sup> Far from being concerned about their impact on the Allied military effort, Maurice Petherick (Conservative MP for Penryn and Falmouth), voiced the concern that 'they will quite obviously consort with white girls and there will be a number of half-caste babies about when they have gone – a bad thing for any

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<sup>188</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1939, D2094.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.* D1077.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* D1563.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* D1656.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.* D1423.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* D1559.

<sup>194</sup> See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.216-240.

country'.<sup>195</sup> British 'racial' stock was at stake, Petherick contended. Could not these troops be stationed elsewhere in Europe, perhaps 'fertilize the Italians who are used to it anyhow'.<sup>196</sup>

When the decision was taken to allow a small number of Black Honduran workers to come to Britain to work on a forestry project concerns about their sexual activities abounded. It was felt necessary to house these men in remote quarters as the director of the home grown timber department said that he did not 'feel inclined to take responsibility for placing these men...on private estates close to house and cottages occupied by estate employees'.<sup>197</sup> When the Duke of Buccleuch (on whose estate the men were working) wrote to the government asking about what could be done to prevent 'race' mixing taking place, Macmillan responded for the government that there would 'naturally be the risk of some undesirable results...All we can do is mitigate the evil'.<sup>198</sup> The Minister for Supply was even more candid. Although the government took no interest in sexual behaviour 'where Europeans were concerned', it could not be so passive 'where coloured people were involved'.<sup>199</sup> In 1942, the Police raided the camps where the Hondurans lived and arrested all the white women present. Whilst there remained no legal barrier to inter-'race' sex contact, this incident was just one of many examples where coercive action was taken by state authorities against white women who consorted with Black men.<sup>200</sup>

Some members of the government wished to go further and entrench anti-'miscegenation' law. In correspondence with Churchill, W. Grigg outlined a firm desire for legislation on this topic. Far from just producing information that would discourage Black/white mixing, Grigg told Churchill that there was a necessity 'for measures more stringent than education'.<sup>201</sup> In a private report for the Cabinet, the minister outlined his stance against 'miscegenation'. 'White women should not

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<sup>195</sup> PRO, FO954/30A, Petherick to Eden, 17/7/43.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles: West Indian Workers and Service Personnel in Britain 1939-45*, Karia Press, London, 1985, p.101.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. p.113.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. pp.113-116.

<sup>200</sup> For example, Reynolds has recorded how police prosecuted mixed 'race' courting couples for damaging crops and by using defence regulations on trespass. Some white women were imprisoned for up to three months as a result of prosecutions of this nature. See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, p.229.

<sup>201</sup> PRO, PREM 4/26/9, Grigg to Churchill, 21/10/43.

associate with coloured men. It follows then that they should not walk out, dance, or drink with them'.<sup>202</sup> Grigg justified this case with repeated assertions that Black sexual activity with British women could have a disastrous effect on the morale of British soldiers serving abroad. 'I expect that the British soldier who fears for the safety or faithfulness of his women-folk at home would not feel so keenly as the BBC and the public at home appear to do in favour of a policy of no colour bar'.<sup>203</sup> Grigg's failure to win over his colleagues and secure legislation against 'miscegenation' should not be seen so much as an indication of governmental disagreement with the minister, but more as a reflection of the British reluctance to legislate in overtly 'racial' terms.

Although challenges to the respectability of 'race' thinking were substantial enough to prevent the government from creating 'racial' legislation, the widespread obsession with Black 'sex' highlights the sustained influence of theories of 'racial' difference within the British imagination. These are epitomised in the evident widespread psychological obsession with the exotic Black body in this period.<sup>204</sup> It is evident that *Mass Observers* often regarded Black sex as something arousing and exotic. One female *Observer* offered the following answer to a question about what came into her mind when she thought of 'Negroes':

A black shining figure of fine physique, wearing only a loin cloth, and with a wide smile showing white, even teeth.....in his fine body and open expression, he is superior to many other men. His sexual attraction is quite strong, more so than in white men – though remember this is a mind picture, not reality.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> PRO, PREM 4/26/9, Grigg Report for Cabinet, December 1942.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Some historians (investigating the role of 'racial' thinking in society) have argued that white communities transferred their sexual fantasies and fears onto the bodies of Black people. In this context, Hoch has argued: 'In a white civilisation which considers many forms of sexuality to be immoral – and consigns them to the dark dungeons of the unconscious – the devil, "dark" villain or black beast becomes the receptacle of all the tabooed desires'. See Hoch, P, *White Hero, Black Beast*, p.44.

<sup>205</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1939, D1047.

Likewise, a male *Observer* commented that Black men 'shine in the world of Hot music...the grosser the cacophony of sound the greater the attraction to women and cissyfied men'.<sup>206</sup>

Looking at newspaper coverage of alleged sexual contact between Black troops and white women, one cannot escape the feeling that reports were often little more than fantasised perceptions of exciting, promiscuous Black eroticism. A report from the *Huddersfield Examiner* exemplifies the point: 'The problem is one of white girls and coloured men meeting clandestinely and making love to one another in shop doorways, quiet side streets, open spaces and in some instances in vehicles drawn up at the side of the pavement'.<sup>207</sup> Richmond, in post-war analysis concerning the difficulties of Black people in wartime Britain, also emphasised the problem of a 'racial' super-eroticised Black image.

Among the stereotypes are those which attribute to the Negro an abnormally high sexual potency, a tendency towards promiscuity and a high capacity for giving and receiving sexual satisfaction from intercourse. It is often suggested that a white woman who has once had intercourse with a Negro will never return to a white man.<sup>208</sup>

These fantasised perceptions affected thinking at every level of policy making. Marlborough wrote to Churchill that the danger of a Black troop presence was their possession of marijuana that 'could excite their [women's] sexual desires either as a cigarette or ground up in food'.<sup>209</sup> Grigg told the Prime Minister that Black sex crimes were inevitable due to 'the natural propensities of the coloured man'.<sup>210</sup>

Closely aligned to fears of sexual mixing was a corresponding 'racial' belief that 'Blackness' inferred the presence of diseases that could infest British society if any degree of intimacy were allowed to take place. One reason frequently given for

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<sup>206</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1939, D1616.

<sup>207</sup> *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 20/9/40, in Central Black Archives.

<sup>208</sup> Richmond, A, *Colour Prejudice in Britain: A Study of West Indian Workers in Liverpool 1941-51*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954, p.78.

<sup>209</sup> PRO, PREM 4/26/9, Marlborough to Churchill, (Undated), 1943.

<sup>210</sup> PRO, PREM 4/26/9, Grigg to Churchill, 2/12/43.

excluding Black people from Britain was that they were carriers of venereal disease. It was this belief that probably lay behind Grigg's 1943 assertion that Black troops were 'something of a commitment from the health point of view'.<sup>211</sup> Revealingly, later in the same year, Grigg reported to the Prime Minister that only 2.3% of white troops were infected with V.D., compared to 13% of Black soldiers.<sup>212</sup> It is arguable that those government forces that wished to prevent Black wartime immigration and settlement in Britain aimed to maximise the notion that Black people spread venereal disease, as a less irrational explanation for their desire for Black exclusion.<sup>213</sup> As was discussed above, the *Bolero Committee* considered using the image of Black V.D. as a propaganda weapon. Within a discussion proposing methods to prevent inter-'racial' sexual contact, the Committee contemplated whether British women could be put off by an 'open statement on the danger of venereal disease'.<sup>214</sup> Others within the British administration clearly felt that various parties were manipulating the threat of V.D. for political reasons. J.L. Keith, a Colonial Office civil servant, thought that the American government was attempting to utilise Black disease threats in this way. Keith recorded on the subject: 'We should not allow any nonsense about rape, V.D., etc, to deter us from sticking to our principles'.<sup>215</sup>

However, many British people accepted the Black V.D. threat as a real issue. When Black workers were allowed to come to the UK, special V.D. clinics were often set up for them in an attempt to prevent the spread of the disease.<sup>216</sup> British Intelligence reports noted that female war volunteers (in the Women's Voluntary Service) were reluctant to help black soldiers because of the 'prevalence among them of venereal disease'.<sup>217</sup> Eventually, special separate 'silver birch' clubs were set up to entertain Black soldiers in a safe 'controlled' environment.

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<sup>211</sup> PRO, CO968/17/5, Grigg to Stanley, 23/9/43.

<sup>212</sup> PRO, PREM4/26/9, Grigg to Churchill, 2/12/43.

<sup>213</sup> This point should not be over emphasised. Whilst it is clear that certain government forces did wish to create a 'racial' fear of venereal disease, Reynolds has argued that infection was in fact significantly more prominent amongst Black G.I.s. See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, p.318. Reynolds explains this as a vicious circle. As inter-'racial' sex contact was discouraged, often the only women accessible to Black men abroad were prostitutes, leading to a rocketing in V.D. rates amongst Black soldiers.

<sup>214</sup> PRO, CO876/14, Minutes of *Bolero Combined Committee*, 12/8/42.

<sup>215</sup> PRO, CO876/14, Memorandum by J.L. Keith, 12/9/42.

<sup>216</sup> In the case of the Honduran Foresters, one day a week at a local medical practitioner was dedicated to treating Black troops suffering from V.D. See Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles: 'An inordinate amount of attention was paid by the Ministry to the incidence of venereal disease among the men'*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>217</sup> Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p. 84.

Through a blend of deliberate manipulation and genuine racist belief, the idea that Black troops were a health hazard added to the image of the Black sexual monster, which held considerable sway over the way in which Black troops were perceived in Britain during World War Two. 'Racial' thinking in British society was changing and genuinely different from the American perspective, but the issue of sex sharply illustrates the sustained importance of 'racial' theory on this side of the Atlantic. As Reynolds has concluded, the British shared with the Americans 'a general disposition against miscegenation'.<sup>218</sup>

## ii) 'Nothing but a Nuisance'. Attitudes Towards Black Soldiers and War Volunteers

Underpinning hostility to 'miscegenation' was the idea that 'Black' men were essentially different and inferior to white Britons. This particular view resonated through much of the correspondence within the *Mass Observation* 'Race Directive' of 1939. Asked to give their opinion on 'Negroes', the *Observers* expressed views that were often highly 'racial', volunteering the idea that Black people were a different species or type of human, essentially different from white Britons. One *Observer* wrote that Negroes 'seem to me to be of an entirely different type to white men' whilst another argued that 'it is hard to feel that they are completely human with their shiny black skins, woolly hair and general appearance of missing linkness'.<sup>219</sup> To these writers, 'Blackness' meant total difference. Black people came, according to a third contributor, from 'another order of things'.<sup>220</sup>

*Observers* mostly had little doubt that this 'other' type was inferior and primitive compared to the white Briton. Black people were described as 'a biologically inferior race, [with] mental and physical processes...on a much lower plane than ours'.<sup>221</sup> Another *Observer* said that he thought of them as '100, 000 years behind in mental evolution' and a third offered this similar opinion.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, p.307.

<sup>219</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive 1939', D1129 and D2151.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* D1939.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* D1423. Also see Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.304-308

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* D1460

I consider negroes on the whole to be at an earlier stage of civilisation than white races, and because of that, I consider that except in the cases of exceptionally advanced negroes, association between the negro and white races cannot be on an exactly level footing but rather that of a school master and middle school or senior boy.<sup>223</sup>

The idea that the inferiority of Black people was similar to that of white children was a common one in *Observers*' answers. One described Negroes as a 'child like race with elemental passions'; whilst another said that the Black men that he had encountered were most inferior, 'rather like children of 10 or so'.<sup>224</sup>

Children, however, could learn and grow and many other *Observers* did not believe that Black people could ever master 'white' civilisation. Often, therefore, comparisons were made not with children but to animals. When considering if he would live under the same roof as a Black person, one *Observer* answered: 'Would I willingly share a bedroom, a dinner table, or a change of clothes with a Negro? No, no more than I would admit my dog to such intimacy'.<sup>225</sup> Another recorded: 'I feel like patting the Negro on the back or head, like a big black docile dog or pony'.<sup>226</sup> As Black people were not perceived as equally human, it stood to reason for many *Observers* that any attempt to bring these people to Britain or another 'civilised' country would be disastrous. One contributor noted: 'I don't think Negroes are "responsible" people somehow...those who visit English universities acquire only a superficial veneer of white conduct and civilisation'.<sup>227</sup> Another concluded:

Driven by their emotions. Intellectually different from the white man, and almost certainly needs to develop an individual system of

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<sup>223</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive 1939', D1346. It should be noted that these views regarding the immaturity of Black peoples corresponded with some high-ranking 'reformist' scientific opinion in this period. See scientific support for the idea of Britain taking a 'parental' stance towards its Black Empire in Huxley, J, *Democracy Marches*, pp.86-95.

<sup>224</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive 1939', D2091 and D2007.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. D1403.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. D1529.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. D1379.

education fitted to their mental capacities. Unless they are extraordinary, 'western' education makes them into misfits.<sup>228</sup>

Opinions regarding Black inferiority can be shown to have seriously affected government policy during the war. Importantly, the decision not to utilise Black soldiers from the Empire (except in the most menial and peripheral ways) seems to have been rooted in ideas of this kind.<sup>229</sup> In 1942, the Minister for War prepared a report for the Cabinet concerning the possibility of utilising Black military manpower. The report urged the Cabinet not to employ Black soldiers in the fighting arena because they were inferior to white troops. In a two page endnote (marked 'not to be published'), Grigg offered a candid explanation of his opinion as to why Black soldiers should not be allowed to fight.

While there are many coloured men of high mentality and cultural distinction, the generality are of a simple mental outlook...In short they have not the white man's ability to think and act to a plan...Too much freedom, too wide associations with white men tend to make them lose their heads and have on occasions led to civil strife. This occurred after the last war due to too free treatment and associations which they had experienced in France.<sup>230</sup>

Grigg not only saw Black troops as mentally inferior to their white counterparts but also as physical liability. He wrote to Lord Stanley in 1943 that West Indian soldiers could not be used as combatant troops because they were 'not a very robust race'.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive 1939', D1423. Alibai Brown's records of attitudes amongst British soldiers in India during the war have highlighted the commonness of perceptions of Black inferiority. Recalling the attitudes of his colleagues and himself towards 'native' Indian troops, one retired, white soldier said: 'To be honest, we regarded these soldiers very highly but never as our equals', Alibai Brown, Y, recorded in the Central Black Archive, File for 1991. Kenneth Chevannes, a Caribbean man who came to the UK during the Second World War, has recorded the effects of these popular perceptions of white superiority in his account of his war experiences in Liverpool. 'The majority of people did not know where the West Indies was and school did not teach them anything about black countries or their culture, only brainwashed people in the belief that black people were inferior to whites'. In Wilson, C, "'In their own words": West Indian Technicians in Liverpool During World War Two', *Journal of Caribbean Studies*, Winter/Summer, 1990/1991, pp.71-87.

<sup>229</sup> For government view, see Reynolds, D, 'The Churchill Government and the Black American Troops in Britain during World War Two', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol: 5, No: 35, 1985, pp.113-133.

<sup>230</sup> PRO, PREM4/29/6, Report by Grigg for the War Cabinet, September 1942.

<sup>231</sup> PRO, CO968/17/5, Grigg to Stanley, 23/9/43.



These views were not merely held by Grigg, but were common currency amongst Whitehall officials and other politicians.<sup>232</sup> Even war service that was considered less prestigious was often denied to Black Britons amid allegations that they were not mentally up to the task. A Ministry of War minute sent to the Colonial Office reveals the racist reasoning behind the rejection of West Indian seamen from the 'Seamen's pool'. The note recorded the view that 'West Indian seamen are not as a rule up to the normal standards of skill and discipline [and that] during the war they have adopted a decidedly "cheeky" attitude'.<sup>233</sup> A 1943 War Office report entitled 'The employment of British West Indian soldiers in a theatre of war' concluded that Black soldiers were undesirable combatants within every potential arena of conflict.<sup>234</sup> Black troops in the past had proved 'quite unsuitable' and 'their staying power under aerial bombardment [was considered] untried and suspect'. In West Africa, the troops would be 'nothing but a nuisance', in India 'an undoubted embarrassment'.<sup>235</sup> Ultimately, and tying in with discourses concerning Black primitivism, the report concluded that the armed forces may 'lose control' of Black troops, should it attempt to utilise them.<sup>236</sup>

A note from Mayle at the Colonial Office recorded the excuses used by the War Office to delay the establishment of the West Indian Regiment: 'The War Office maintained their objections to a combatant unit...putting forward objections on the ground of climate, accommodation and shipping'.<sup>237</sup> Black people also found themselves quietly prevented from entering other active military roles by various sections of military regulations, which enabled the exclusion of people from non-European backgrounds.<sup>238</sup> However, in 1939, these official 'racial' restrictions were finally removed. This did not, though, signal a new period of egalitarianism within the armed forces, but merely a shift from overt to covert exclusion. As Lees at the Colonial Office noted regarding the removal of these restrictions: 'This does not, of

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<sup>232</sup> See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.216-240 or Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, pp. 37-96.

<sup>233</sup> PRO, CO937/6/3, Watson to Megson, 2/9/44.

<sup>234</sup> PRO, CO968/17/5, War Office Report, 17/12/43.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles*, pp.28-38.

<sup>237</sup> PRO, CO968/17/5, Mayle memorandum, 30/4/43.

<sup>238</sup> Colour Restrictions were entrenched in Army Order 89 and Section 95 of the Air Force Act.

course, mean that British subjects who are obviously men of colour will in practice receive commissions'.<sup>239</sup> Sherwood has demonstrated the widespread continuation of 'racial' exclusion across all three armed services during the war and within British military support units.<sup>240</sup> She has cited the following 1941 advertisement for the ATS, as offering rare, direct evidence of the continuing operation of such restrictions. Appearing in *The Scotsman* in 1941, the advert read: 'Women between the ages of 18 and 40 are invited to enlist for general service overseas in the ATS. They must be British subjects of pure European descent'.<sup>241</sup>

Amid the prevalent 'racial' perceptions of Black inferiority, the prospect of Black soldiers playing a significant role in the Allies struggle was discounted. Although a limited number of Caribbean Black technicians and other volunteers were allowed to enter the UK and whilst a 'West Indian Regiment' was eventually formed, overall it is clear that the government had no intention of using any significant number of Black Britons in war service.<sup>242</sup>

### **iii) 'The Points of View of all Concerned will be Mutually Understood and Respected': U.S. and British Attitudes to the Increased Black Presence in Britain**

This chapter has already argued that real differences existed between American and British attitudes to 'race'. However, it is important to question further the British response to American 'racial' thinking. Faced with American requests for 'racial' segregation and with the racist attitudes of a number of U.S. troops at all levels, the British response in terms of agreement, defiance or indifference to U.S. 'racial' attitudes requires consideration. Was the British political leadership true to its word that the 'views of all concerned' would be 'mutually understood and respected'?<sup>243</sup> Additionally, what does any British complicity with American 'racial' thinking really reveal about British 'racial' attitudes?

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<sup>239</sup> PRO, CO323/1673, Note by Lees, 14/10/39.

<sup>240</sup> Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles*, pp.3-25.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.* p.11.

<sup>242</sup> Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles*: 'What emerges from the remaining files is a picture of racism and racial prejudice throughout the ranks of British society: Black men were not wanted in Britain even in times of crisis', p.51. Also see Sherwood, pp.124-126.

<sup>243</sup> Churchill in the House of Commons, *Hansard*, Vol: 383, Col: 670-671, 10/9/42.

Some early analysts of wartime racism seem to have accepted that the Americans were to blame for the entrenchment of segregation policy in Britain. Richmond, for example, noted that 'the arrival of American troops was a disturbing factor which led to the re-imposition of a colour bar in several places hitherto freely used by the Negro factory workers and seamen'.<sup>244</sup> There is certainly some truth in Richmond's contention, in that 'racial' segregation undoubtedly did become further entrenched as a result of the American arrival. However, his analysis fails to sufficiently question the British agenda and agency in segregation policy and too quickly absolves Britain's politicians from assuming any responsibility over this issue.<sup>245</sup>

It was apparent to all involved that there was bound to be some tension regarding the different 'racial' perspectives of the Americans and the British. This chapter has already noted Eisenhower's fears that Britain was 'devoid of racial consciousness [and that the British knew] nothing at all about the habits and conventions of polite society'.<sup>246</sup> There was indeed some hostility among British officials towards the likely 'racial' implications of the American arrival in Britain. J.L. Keith from the Colonial Office released a memorandum to the Cabinet arguing the importance of 'resisting the so called southern American attitude towards Negroes'.<sup>247</sup>

However, the attitude of Keith was a minority view within the British administration. For the most part, the government were only too happy to acquiesce to the requests of the Americans regarding 'racial' segregation. This accommodating behaviour (which Smith has described as 'an almost excessive zeal'), betrayed in no small part home-grown British 'racial' attitudes.<sup>248</sup> Whilst officially, British policy set out to respect both Black troops and the attitudes of their white American

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<sup>244</sup> Richmond, A, *Economic Insecurity and Stereotypes as Factors in Colour Prejudice*, p.162.

<sup>245</sup> For a more sophisticated analysis see Thorne, C, 'Britain and the Black GIs: Race Issues and Anglo-American Relations in 1942', in *Border Crossings: Studies in International History*, Basil Blackwood, Oxford, 1988, pp.259-274, Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull* and Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.216-235.

<sup>246</sup> See Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p.35.

<sup>247</sup> PRO, CO876/14, Keith memorandum, 12/9/42.

<sup>248</sup> See Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p.83.

counterparts, in reality the British government adopted a supine position in the face of American racism which was tantamount to institutional complicity.<sup>249</sup>

One favoured response of British politicians regarding segregation issues held that it was right for the British to defer to the Americans because they knew more about Black people. Eden sent a memorandum to the Cabinet in October 1942 outlining this perspective. 'The British people themselves have not had sufficient experience on a large scale of the colour problem to enable them to appreciate the American point of view'.<sup>250</sup> This governmental approach was underpinned by the belief that if more Black people came to the UK, then the 'racial' attitude of the Americans would have to be adopted. This view perhaps explains not only why British forces were encouraged to respect and comply with American attitudes, but also why every effort was made to ensure that as few Black people as possible were utilised within the British military.<sup>251</sup>

Although officially not adopting a stance on the American 'racial' perspective, the British secretly pursued a policy of accommodation with 'Jim Crow' racism.<sup>252</sup> Further, the British government seem to have used U.S. views as an excuse to act out their own 'racial' agendas. This essay has already noted that secret instructions (written up by Arthur Dowler) were issued to British troops advising a voluntary policy of segregation from American Black soldiers and that the government assisted this voluntary effort by working to keep Black troops (and workers from the Empire) out of the UK as far as possible. Additionally, the government showed no desire to confront 'colour' bars where they knew them to exist and even set up a few of their own, despite maintaining throughout that no 'racial' policies were in operation in Britain.

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<sup>249</sup> See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*: 'The US Army was operating a policy of de facto racial segregation, but it could not have done so without the cooperation or at least acquiescence from the British authorities', p.224.

<sup>250</sup> PRO, CO 876/14, Eden Memorandum, 10/10/42.

<sup>251</sup> See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, p.216.

<sup>252</sup> The government agreed to comply with 'racially' segregated night leave for soldiers and even to separate leave areas to ensure the segregation of Black and white troops. Additionally, special clubs were introduced for Black soldiers. See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.304-311 and Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, pp.97-116.

iv) A Very British 'Racial' Policy

Blaming American 'race' thinking for British policy is especially problematic when the British efforts to exclude Black U.S. troops from the U.K. are considered. The British administration made it consistently clear that they wanted as few Black American troops in Britain as possible and put considerable pressure on the Americans to achieve this goal.<sup>253</sup> In December 1942, the American *League for the Advancement of Coloured People* wrote to the British government requesting a 'categorical denial' that the British had asked Washington not to send any more Black troops. No response was given to the letter seemingly because the British government had done just that. Foreign Office records explain that a denial could not be issued as 'the Prime Minister may have said something of the sort'.<sup>254</sup> Indeed, the note continued, the only possible denial would be based on a technicality that would do little to mitigate against the offence caused: 'To a sensitive Negro the difference is slight between asking for "no more" and asking for "as few as possible"'.<sup>255</sup>

The reason given for the governmental desire to exclude Black troops from Britain was that white American attitudes towards their Black counterparts would cause offence to the fair-minded British public.<sup>256</sup> It is naive not to see in this request a British 'racial' agenda, which becomes clearer amid the realisation that the government similarly aimed to exclude British Black troops as well as American ones.<sup>257</sup> These British attempts at exclusion were never transparent, rooted as they were in the murky and confused world of British 'racial' thinking.<sup>258</sup> However, the desire to enact 'colour' restrictions in British society can however be seen in the actions and attitudes of leading policy makers.

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<sup>253</sup> See Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles*, pp.1-25, Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, pp.216-218 and Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, pp.47-48.

<sup>254</sup> PRO, FO371/30680, Malcolm to Butler, December, 1942.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> See Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p.48.

<sup>257</sup> See above, pp.48-51.

<sup>258</sup> The fate of the Honduran foresters serves as a good example. Sherwood has noted that whilst the government officially supported the programme, they utilised a myriad of mechanisms to ensure that it would not be successful: 'While publicly decrying the existence of colour bars, the government used discriminatory wages, employment, living and working conditions, and total non-recognition of skills to achieve the same aims...One could almost say that what the ministry set about ensuring was that the Hondurans would be "bad producers"'. See Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles*, pp.124-126.

When a colour bar in a London restaurant was brought to the attention of the Prime Minister, he showed a disparaging lack of interest which nicely indicates his own 'racial' sentiments on the subject. Churchill told Lord Cranbourne (who had asked him to intervene on behalf of his Black Colonial Office colleague who had been denied entrance to a London restaurant): 'That's all right: if he takes his banjo with him they'll think he's one of the band'.<sup>259</sup> If this comment reveals a lack of willingness to confront colour prejudice at the highest level, an incident regarding a Warrington night club shows a desire on the part of the government to itself establish colour bars, albeit secretly.

Nat Bookbinder's nightclub was, by the beginning of the war, one of the most popular night venues in the region. The club specialized in jazz and had entertained Black and white customers, and provided a playing venue for numerous Black musicians, ever since it opened in the 1930s. As Warrington became a major location for American G.I.s, the club's non-'racial' policy came under scrutiny. White American soldiers demanded that Bookbinder eject and ban a Black customer, Herbert Greaves, and operate a colour bar. Bookbinder refused and instead banned white G.I.s from attending the club. There was little unusual about this situation. Scholars have noted a common tendency amongst British proprietors to reject white American custom instead of ceding to un-British 'colour bar' demands.<sup>260</sup> What is unusual about this story is that the British authorities responded by reiterating the American demand and, when Bookbinder again refused to comply, by banning British and Canadian troops from the club. This decision was enforced on the ground by British military police. The local MP, Noel Goldie, complained to Grigg who

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<sup>259</sup> Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p.80.

<sup>260</sup> Smith, G, in *When Jim Crow Met John Bull* has noted that British public houses often produced door signs reading: 'For British people and coloured Americans only'. Smith has also recorded incidents of British bus conductors encouraging Black servicemen not to give up seats for white U.S. soldiers, p.118. Reynolds has likewise highlighted local level resistance to governmental complicity in the establishment of colour bars. He argues that there was an ideological division on 'race' between the 'governors' and the 'governed'. See Reynolds, D, *Rich Relations*, p.304. Ultimately, this point must not be overstated. As has been seen in *Mass Observation* reactions here, much of the public were still informed by 'racial' thinking. Popular defences of Black G.I.s reveal that British 'race' views did not always match those of white Americans and that parts of the British public did not like to see governmental (or local) acquiescence to the imposition of U.S. 'race' thinking in Britain.

responded that 'overcrowding' within the club had led to the ban.<sup>261</sup> This explanation, however, merely and typically highlights the British refusal to openly admit to 'racial' decision making. The case serves as a clear example of the operation of British 'race' policy, a policy which may have been more subtle than that of the Americans but which, in this and other cases, proved to be just as discriminatory. The author who has recorded Bookbinder's story, herself concluded: 'The British army, intent on keeping "unity under the skin" saw Herbert Greaves dignity and Nat Bookbinder's job as a small price to pay'.<sup>262</sup>

The subtle and secret nature of the above colour bar serves as a good example of other British anti-Black discrimination from the period. As with policy that aimed to curtail Jewish immigration, the British authorities were loath to admit that there was any 'racial' agenda in operation. Such a confession could have had damaging consequences in Britain's Empire, as the Lord Chancellor observed in this 1942 memorandum concerning policy towards Black troops: 'The British empire is, on the whole, a coloured Empire, and it is necessary to emphasise what the reactions might be in the Empire if we took a wrong course on this subject'.<sup>263</sup>

However, British secrecy surrounding 'racial' policy was not only rooted in a desire not to upset the balance of the Empire. The British non-'racial' façade was, as has been discussed here, more due to an increasingly uneasiness about the ethics of 'race'. The continuation of 'race' thinking amid denial, confusion and opposition reflects neatly the contemporary academic positions on the subject. Simply, many British people at all levels, although still believers in 'race' difference, were increasingly uncertain of their views and ashamed of their racism. This uncertainty can be seen in the 'quietness' of British 'race' policy and below in the views of *Mass Observers*.

Many *Mass Observation* contributors outlined their racist views amid a sheepish awareness that these opinions were in some way wrong or outdated. One *Observer* commented: 'I have a certain "feeling" against Negroes. I realise this is

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<sup>261</sup> Toole, J, 'G.I.s and the Race Bar in Wartime Warrington', *History Today*, Vol: 43, Issue 7, July 1993, pp.22-28.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> PRO, CO876/14, Memorandum by the Lord Chancellor, 9/10/42.

irrational and must be resisted'.<sup>264</sup> Another recorded that he did not like Black people then adding, 'I know I shouldn't feel like this'.<sup>265</sup> Many of these apologetic racists seem to have felt that their hostility towards 'Blackness' was a natural reaction that required a rational challenge. One *Observer* wrote: 'Although I recoil with loathing, my reasoning self tells me they are no better or worse than whites'.<sup>266</sup> Another noted: '[I] feel instinctively, but not by reason, that they are inferior to white people'.<sup>267</sup> It seems that although 'race' thinking was increasingly discredited as an idea, the power and legacy of concepts of 'racial' difference had become entrenched. Whilst some value could often be seen in the ethics of egalitarianism, 'racial' beliefs often lurked beneath the surface. The testimony of the *Observers* suggests that one reason why these beliefs lingered was that they were, by their nature, beliefs in hereditary make-up. Thus *Observers* felt that they could not help their racist views as they were, like their perceived 'racial' type, inherent. Ultimately, as long as members of British society perceived these 'racial' differences, there would be a corresponding societal belief that one could not alter, or at least not easily, this 'natural' awareness of difference.

#### d) Conclusions: Change and the 'Racial' Hangover

The focus of this chapter on 'racial' thinking has provided a window for a comparative analysis of the experiences of Jewish and Black immigrants and minorities in wartime Britain, although this study has emphasised that these experiences were in many ways very different.<sup>268</sup> The chapter has argued that 'race' thinking seriously affected the immigration and integration of both Black and Jewish people in Britain during the Second World War, as both communities (according to their respective negative 'racial' characterisations) were similarly rejected as unsuitable immigrants for Britain. Despite differences, both groups were often perceived as poor and unreliable soldiers, instigators of social problems and as potential corrupters of British 'racial' stock and public morality.

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<sup>264</sup> M-OA, 'Race Directive' 1939, D2145.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. D1472.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid. D1631.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid. D1024.

<sup>268</sup> In this period, perhaps the most notable difference in attitudes towards the two minorities was that public fear of 'miscegenation' with Jews was not nearly as pronounced as it was concerning Black-white mixing.



The chapter has emphasised that 'racial' theory regarding Black and Jewish people continued to influence governmental and popular attitudes in wartime Britain despite changes in scientific thinking. It has argued that scientific changes did ensure that governmental and popular pronouncements and thinking on 'race' became increasingly cautious and divided over this period. Simply, the concept of 'racial' difference still featured as an important societal idea and informed policy towards Black and Jewish immigrants to Britain, but it increasingly surfaced in a hidden or apologetic form. An evaluation of British post-war attitudes towards Black and Jewish immigration (which will be considered in the final chapter of this thesis), will raise further questions concerning the extent of the decline of 'race' during the Second World War. Smith has concluded regarding post-war attitudes: 'the wartime experience of the British does not appear to have prepared them in any significant way for the new era in their country's history'.<sup>269</sup>

Despite the continuing importance of 'race' thinking, this chapter has offered the idea that 'race' as a concept lost much of its authority in the academic arena during the war years. It has also argued that politicians and the public were increasingly hesitant to articulate feelings towards immigrant groups in 'racial' terms, though most continued to think 'racially' even where their language and tone was adjusted according to changes in the respectability of 'race' as an idea.<sup>270</sup> This seems to indicate that scientific changes of thinking on 'race' were relevant to wider societal thinking, even though popular opinion did not by any means jump into step behind reformist scientists. Ultimately, scientific shifts did not cause transformations in thinking across society but they did trigger a new hesitancy and the beginnings of a new etiquette of expressing and understanding difference.

However, it is important to emphasise that despite semantic changes, policies and attitudes towards Jews and Blacks in wartime Britain still mostly betrayed old 'racial' beliefs in 'type', inherent difference and in 'racial' stock, even where the new language was utilised. Mostly, new terms and classifications merely offered 'race' in

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<sup>269</sup> Smith, G, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull*, p.229.

<sup>270</sup> For analysis of the societal tendency to think in 'racial' terms after these ideas had been academically discredited see Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, pp.72-155 and Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.11-53.

a safer language, less tarnished by Nazism and by traditional 'racial' thinking. Thus, the end result was very much 'racial'; Jews and Blacks were discouraged from entering Britain (and were marginalized in the war effort) based on the idea that their increased presence would be detrimental to the fabric of the nation, its social behaviour and core values. In the cases of both Blacks and Jews, this chapter has shown that 'racial' policy continued to operate in these years behind a plethora of excuses, deceptions and apologies.<sup>271</sup>

Indeed, whilst ideas of 'race' may have been on the retreat during the war, a new pseudo-'racial' vision of 'Britishness' actually emerged. This new vision grew out of Britain's overall understanding of its war history and importantly, did not incorporate Jewishness or Blackness into its perceived self-image.<sup>272</sup> Although it had become clear that a limited Jewish and Black presence in Britain was unavoidable, these communities were mostly still considered as 'outsiders' within the British imagination, no matter how much they attempted to assimilate.<sup>273</sup> Old ideas lurked behind the new exclusion. Black people remained seen as mentally and sexually primitive whilst Jews could not break free from their 'racial' tag as money-criminals and untrustworthy neighbours. Essentially, both communities were still mostly perceived as 'alien' and foreign, people who could ape British behaviour but who would never truly be 'racially' British.<sup>274</sup>

It would, however, be an exaggeration to dismiss all wartime 'racial' change as merely semantic or insignificant. This chapter has argued that scientific attitudes to

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<sup>271</sup> This chapter has emphasised the growth of an excuse culture as the British government pursued 'racial' policy through a variety of guises. Fear of growing public racism was the most prominent excuse given for governmental hostility towards an increased Jewish and Black presence.

<sup>272</sup> See Calder's influential study on the impact of the war on British self-perception in Calder, A, *The Myth of the Blitz*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1991. For ideas concerning the subjectivity of inclusion/exclusion in the development of nationalist thinking see Anderson, B, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London and New York, 1991.

<sup>273</sup> A few high profile examples emphasise this tendency during the war. Notably, the political decline of Minister for War, Leslie Hore-Belisha, should be understood as the removal of a perceived outsider. See Wilkinson, R, 'Hore-Belisha – Britain's Dreyfus?', *History Today*, Vol:47, Issue 12, 1997, pp.17-23 or Trythall, A.J., 'The Downfall of Leslie Hore-Belisha', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol:16, No: 3, July 1981. For an account that has satisfactorily recognised the importance of Semitic discourses in Hore-Belisha's downfall see Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.81-83 or Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?*, p.37.

<sup>274</sup> Kushner has emphasised the sustained potency of Jewish 'racial' images in Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.106-133. For an account of continuity of anti-Black 'racial' discourses see Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.373-389. Also see Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp.183-208.

'race' altered substantially with public opinion mostly following slowly behind. Some people in this period really did reject 'race' and move towards a more egalitarian and critical understanding of ethnic difference.<sup>275</sup> Although they were neither numerous or prominent enough to alter overall government policy during the war, their views mark the beginnings of a critique of 'race' which would strengthen in post-war Britain. Similarly, semantic changes must not be dismissed as irrelevant. In the post-war years, the notions of culture and ethnicity that arose in this period were important in facilitating a less essentialist understanding of difference, emphasising environment more than heredity as the significant formative experience.<sup>276</sup>

'Race' thinking in British society from this period onward can perhaps best be explained as a 'hangover' of old beliefs. Prominent scientific opinion was finally in the process of a firm rejection of 'race' and the term was increasingly considered inappropriate in societal discussions of immigration and in understanding mental differences between populations.<sup>277</sup> Whilst it would take further decades for society to fully catch up with the perspective of reformist science, the war years can be seen as the period where 'race' began its final retreat from mainstream thinking. Simply, 'race' did not die in this period but it did begin a slow but unstoppable process of decline.

The views of the majority, conditioned for generations by a belief in the sagacity of 'racial' reasoning, followed these changes in science slowly and inconsistently, often finding it difficult to balance the newly held credo with previously held feelings concerning the 'racial' difference of Black and Jewish people. The fortunes of those Jews and Blacks who stepped into this slowly changing society were conditioned by this ambivalence, resulting often in widely divergent local and individual experiences.<sup>278</sup> In general, policy towards these communities was at many points still very much affected by racist attitudes, so that changes within societal 'race' thinking may have seemed to immigrants and minorities little more

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<sup>275</sup> The most notable example give here is the war writing of Lancelot Hogben. See above, pp.4-5.

<sup>276</sup> This is most immediately obvious in the UNESCO statements on 'race' (see chapter 3).

<sup>277</sup> See Dummert, A, and Dummert, M, in Husband, C, (ed.), *'Race' in Britain: Continuity and Change*, Hutchison, London, 1982, pp.100-102.

<sup>278</sup> In this context, studies of local reactions to Jewish and Black immigrants have been useful. See in particular Kushner, T, and Knox, K, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, pp.1-18 and Sherwood, M, *Many Struggles*, pp.92-122.

than academic. Changes nonetheless were beginning to take place as Britain dragged its feet slowly towards a post-war, post-'racial' society.

## Chapter Four

### 'Race' on the Retreat? Jews, Blacks and 'Race' Thinking in Post-War Britain 1945-62

#### a) 'Race' in Post-War Britain: 'Biological Phenomenon' or 'Social Myth'?

The final chapter of this thesis will consider the impact of 'race' theory and thinking in post-war Britain by investigating policy and attitudes towards immigration (and especially towards Jewish and Black immigration) between the end of the Second World War and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962. This period witnessed the largely government orchestrated immigration of nearly three hundred and fifty thousand European workers in various post-war labour initiatives as well as the arrival of half a million Black Commonwealth immigrants to Britain.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the war and the defeat of Nazi Germany undoubtedly created a new international sensitivity towards the term and concept of 'race' amongst politicians and much of wider society.<sup>2</sup> In this context, the previous chapter argued that the conflict against Nazism played a key role in developing and focusing existing British scientific objections to the concept of hierarchical 'racial' difference and in building wider opposition to 'race' thinking.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will assess the effect of changing attitudes towards 'race' on governmental and societal responses to immigration after the defeat of Germany, especially in recognition that many scholars have argued that responses to immigrants and minorities in this period set the tone of immigration policy for the remainder of the century.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Number of European immigrants recorded in Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Post War Era*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1997, p.64. Figure for Black immigration in Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain*, Routledge, London, 1997, p.119.

<sup>2</sup> See Carter, B, and Joshi, S, 'The Role of Labour in the Creation of a Racist Britain', in *Race and Class*, Vol: 25, No: 3, 1984. Race was now 'taboo at the formal political level', p.65. Also see Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, p.104.

<sup>3</sup> See Barkan, E, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*, pp. 279-341 and Rich, P, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp.145-169.

<sup>4</sup> For analysts who have concluded that this period was formative in terms of shaping immigration policy see Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?*, pp.54 -56, Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, Macmillan, London, 1989, p.61, Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.161, Layton

Some pockets of scientific resistance remained defiant concerning the sagacity of 'racial' analysis in the post-war years.<sup>5</sup> Notably, Gates and Keith remained outspoken proponents of the idea of 'race' as a designator of human difference and continued to publish on the subject after the war.<sup>6</sup> Gates indeed carried his belief in the importance of 'races' right up to his death in 1962. In an article written that year on the importance of continuing the study of what Gates called 'racial biology', he asserted with unwavering belief that 'races or ethnic groups exist and that they are in fact the raw material by means of which human evolution has taken place'.<sup>7</sup> Gates continued to the last to defend the principles of his subject and the ideas in which it was based. Trying to justify the existence of 'racial biology' in the post-war period, he argued:

A scientific approach to racial questions, free from sentiment, propaganda or bias, may lead to a more reasonable attitude to the problems which agitate considerable sections of mankind. This need for a calmer approach to problems of race on the part of civilised peoples as well as more primitive tribes makes it desirable that a journal should exist in which the problems of racial origin and racial relationships can be quietly discussed, without rancour or bigotry and with the primary aim of elucidating facts.<sup>8</sup>

However, the great majority of scientists roundly rejected 'race' as a concept in this period and Gates died a marginal and discredited voice in the world of biology. In 1950 and 1952 UNESCO issued two statements on 'race', the first signed by a

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Henry, Z, *The Politics of Race in Britain*, Social Science Research Board, London, 1980, pp.30-34 and Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, p.381.

<sup>5</sup> Whilst they were less influential figures, other 'race' thinkers also continued to put forward theories of 'racial' difference. For example, see Ludovici, A, *The Child: An Adult's Problem. First Aid to Parents*, Carroll and Nicholson, London, 1948, pp.57-58.

<sup>6</sup> See Keith, A, *Essays on Human Evolution* and Gates, R.R., *Human Genetics* both from 1946, discussed in the previous chapter. Also see Gates' 1948 work, *Human Ancestry From a Genetical Point of View*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge U.S.A., 1948 and *Genetic Linkage in Man*, W.Junk, The Hague, 1954. Both these works continued to posit polygenist explanations of human evolution, which Gates used to propose that different human groups had reached different levels of civilisation and development.

<sup>7</sup> Gates, R.R., *The Emergence of Racial Genetics*, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

prominent array of international social scientists, the second by a similarly impressive list of physical anthropologists and geneticists.<sup>9</sup> These statements, which were extremely similar, aimed to undermine the concept of 'race'. They both argued that 'for all practical social purposes "race" is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth'.<sup>10</sup> The reports did not challenge the notion of 'difference' between peoples but held that these differences were based in culture and were not rooted in essential 'racial' hierarchies: 'In short, given similar degrees of cultural opportunity to realize their potentialities, the average achievement of the members of each ethnic group is about the same'.<sup>11</sup>

British scientists and thinkers were at the centre of this new discourse on 'race' and were prominent amongst both groups of UNESCO contributors.<sup>12</sup> As has been seen in the previous chapters, scientists like Hogben and Huxley had articulated their discomfort with the notion of 'race' before and during the war. In the post-war period they continued to do so, as the reformist stance that they had previously put forward became mainstream scientific currency. Hogben wrote in his study 'The Race Concept':

All the available evidence about so mobile a species as homo sapiens points to a long history of migrations in which very few assemblages of genotypes have remained in isolation long enough to ensure a high measure of homogeneity; and nothing we have learned during the past century about the geographical distribution of human physique has any

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<sup>9</sup> UNESCO (The United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation) aimed to promote internationalism and champion cultural exchange. Julian Huxley was made director of this programme. See Huxley, J, *UNESCO: Its Purpose and its Philosophy*, Public Affairs Press, Washington DC, 1948. As scientists increasingly began to view 'race' as a social construct, social scientists came to the fore of 'race' relations analysis. Notably in Britain, Ruth Glass, Sheila Patterson, Anthony Richmond and Judith Henderson offered influential sociological readings of majority-minority relations in this period. See notably Glass, R, *Newcomers: the West Indians in London* and Patterson, S, *Dark Strangers: A Study of West Indians in London*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> 'The UNESCO Statement by Experts on Race Problems', 18/7/50. Cited in full in Montagu, A, *Race, Science and Humanity*, Von Nostrand, London, 1963, p.176.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p.175.

<sup>12</sup> Huxley was, as director, involved in both statements. In the first statement, Prof. Morris Ginsberg represented the UK. In the second statement the UK was represented by Dr J.C. Trevor and Prof. S Zuckerman.

certain relevance to the diversity of Man's unequally distributed cultural achievements.<sup>13</sup>

Hogben's argument here is revealing of the changing perspective within British 'racial' thinking. 'Race', he argued, was not a permanent or unchanging force and 'racial' purity was a myth. However, Hogben still contended that an explanation was required for man's 'unequally distributed cultural achievements'. The explanation, as he hinted, lay in the perceived peculiarities of different ethnic cultures. Concurring, Philip Mason of the Institute of Race Relations argued a year after Hogben's paper: 'It is the differences of culture which matter'.<sup>14</sup> The thinking behind this new perspective was clarified by British born academic Ashley Montagu: 'Of course there exists differences, but we want a term by which to describe the existence of these differences'.<sup>15</sup> The international scientific community buried the concept of 'race' in this period but did not bury with it the concept of 'difference'. The idea that peculiarities of behaviour, strengths and limitations existed between different peoples was entrenched in new concepts of culture and ethnicity and epitomised in UNESCO's own publications during this period.<sup>16</sup> As Gilroy has concluded regarding post-war thinking on 'race' and difference: 'Mythic versions of cultural ecology were invented to rationalise the lives of...discrete national and 'racial' identities'.<sup>17</sup>

These changes in scientific thinking set standards of international respectability regarding 'race' in the post-war era. States who wished to be at the centre of the international community could not now easily pursue overtly racist policy. It is significant that even apartheid South Africa began to articulate its 'racial' agenda in the language of cultural difference in this period. Indeed, whilst Verwoerd's 'Homelands' policy was far from non-'racial', it was entirely wrapped in

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<sup>13</sup> Mason, P, (ed.), *Man, Race and Darwin: Papers Read at a Joint Conference of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and the Institute of Race Relations*, Oxford University Press, London, 1960, p.11.

<sup>14</sup> Mason, P, *Common Sense about Race*, Victor Gollancz, London and Southampton, 1961, p.151.

<sup>15</sup> Montagu, A, (ed.), *The Concept of Race*, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1964, p.13.

<sup>16</sup> See Huxley, J, *UNESCO: Its Purpose and its Philosophy*, pp.18-21. Huxley argued that UNESCO aimed 'to let in light on the world's dark areas', the word 'dark' being revealing of the Blackness that he still considered to indicate lesser cultural progress. He continued: 'it will be impossible for humanity to acquire a common outlook if large sections of it are the illiterate inhabitants of a mental world entirely different from that in which a fully educated man can have his being, a world of superstition and petty tribalism in place of one of scientific advance and possible unity'.

<sup>17</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.32.



the new and ostensibly more acceptable international discourse of cultural difference.<sup>18</sup>

There was no place for overt 'racial' policy in British political thinking. Britain, as the self-perceived vanquisher of Nazism, liberal world power and centre of a multi-cultural Commonwealth, was perhaps more than any other country ideologically committed to the new path of non-racialism. Yet, just as in the new scientific discourse, beliefs in 'racial' difference between peoples did not wholly disappear from political thinking in this period. Significantly, however, the term 'race' was no longer acceptable within political discussion. Questions that were essentially based in 'racial' thinking were presented as issues of population control and assimilability. As Paul has argued: 'What was perceived as a "race" problem had to be disguised as an "immigration" problem – a much more politically and socially acceptable issue'.<sup>19</sup>

This chapter will show that amid new language and new etiquette 'race' thinking remained important in post-war society and influenced government and popular responses to potential immigrant communities. The period is marked by what Dummett and Dummett have described as 'crypto-racialism', where the surface of immigration policy and attitudes toward perceived 'outsiders' have to be scratched to reveal 'race' thinking lurking behind.<sup>20</sup> New articulations of difference enabled the continuation of old 'racial' thinking and characterisation, disguised within a less essentialist and more moderate semantic base. Frankenberg has convincingly argued in this context that:

Essentialist racism remains the benchmark against which other discourses on 'race' are articulated...the notion of ontological 'racial' difference underlies other, ostensibly cultural, conceptualizations of 'race' difference.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Norval, A, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, Verso, London, 1996, pp.160-169.

<sup>19</sup> Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.134. Also see Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, p.59, Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.127 or Carter, B, Harris, C, and Joshi, S, 'The 1951-1955 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol: 6, No: 3, 1987, pp.335-346.

<sup>20</sup> Dummett, M, and Dummett, A, in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, p.101.

<sup>21</sup> Frankenberg, R, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, p.139.

Thus, the decline of 'race' did not mean that immigrants to Britain would not be assessed in terms of difference. It meant that decisions concerning inclusion or exclusion would be justified in ostensibly non-'racial' concerns about cultural integration, social problems and employment suitability.

This chapter will explore two case studies in order to consider further the impact of these changing societal attitudes towards 'race'. First, it will analyse the thinking and agenda behind post-war initiatives designed to utilise foreign workers to plug the British labour shortage (and especially how these policies affected Jewish refugees). Second, it will explore the decision to restrict (Black) immigration to Britain in the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962.

#### b) Jewish Holocaust Survivors as British Immigrants: 'Unwilling to do a Job of Work'

In the wake of the Second World War, two very different British government programmes facilitated the migration to the UK of refugees from continental Europe. The European Volunteer Workers programme was initiated in 1946 at the instigation of Clement Atlee and the Ministry of Labour in order to secure badly needed workers to fill gaps in the British economy.<sup>22</sup> Over 300 000 'E.V.W.s' were brought to Britain for this purpose within various different labour initiatives.<sup>23</sup> The Distressed Relatives Scheme was initiated by the government late in 1945 as a humanitarian programme to enable the immigration of stateless refugees who had close family already residing in

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<sup>22</sup> It should be emphasised that the European Volunteer Worker programmes were conceived and operated with a largely economic (not a humanitarian) agenda. Thus, the selection of immigrants was made on the basis on their economic utility and not their personal needs. Paul has described this as a 'utilitarian perspective', in *Whitewashing Britain*, p.79. Also see Kay, D, and Miles, R, 'Refugees or Migrant Workers: The Case of European Volunteer Workers in Britain 1946-1951', in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol: 1, No: 3/4, pp.214-236 or Tannahill, J, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1958, p.114.

<sup>23</sup> For analysis of these programmes see Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers? European Volunteer Workers in Britain 1946-1951*, Routledge, London, 1992, pp.42-65, Tannahill, J, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, pp.19-33, Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, William Heinemann, London, 1992, pp.68-81, Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.64-89 and Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp.210-218.

Britain.<sup>24</sup> Although this scheme did not specify eligibility in terms of any particular ethnicity, in practice it can be seen as a government mechanism to respond to the issue of stateless Jewish Holocaust survivors. A consideration of both these programmes respectively helps to illuminate prevalent governmental and popular perceptions about Jewish refugees and facilitates a consideration of the role of 'race' thinking in the formulation of post-war government policy towards Jewish immigration.

Early historical analysis of the E.V.W. programme did not record any governmental 'racial' agenda.<sup>25</sup> Nominally, the scheme did not take account of the nationality or ethnicity of the workers considered. Correspondence between British staff in Vienna and the Foreign Office in London highlighted the egalitarian approach that was to be adopted: 'We note from the Draft Zonal Instruction issued in Germany that there will be no distinction on grounds of nationality'.<sup>26</sup> A week before this note, the Allied Commission for Austria argued that the important task of British agencies abroad was to choose 'productive people...no matter what their race or nationality'.<sup>27</sup> However, perceptions of 'racial' difference did influence the selection of European Volunteer Workers.<sup>28</sup> The above note by the Allied Commission in Austria itself demonstrated ambivalence about the idea of group prioritisation. Whilst the productivity of potential workers was to form the guiding criteria for suitability, the note concluded that any immigrants that were to be considered needed to be 'compatible to the British public'.<sup>29</sup> 'Racial' origin, it was further argued, could be the deciding factor regarding whether certain workers were 'compatible'. 'For example', the note added, 'the situation in Palestine, and anti-Semitism, clearly prevented the recruitment of Jews'.<sup>30</sup> Despite the fact that immigration was not to be limited to any particular nationality in principle, in practice, entire 'races' could be

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<sup>24</sup> For analysis of the Distressed Relatives Scheme, see London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, pp.266-269, Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp.229-238 and Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, pp.78-88.

<sup>25</sup> See Tannahill, J, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, pp.19-33.

<sup>26</sup> PRO, FO945/500, Note from Vienna to London Control Office, 31/3/47.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Note by the Allied Commission for Austria on the Recruitment of Displaced Persons for Great Britain, 24/3/47.

<sup>28</sup> See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp. 84-88, Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, pp.113-117, Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, pp.165-176 and Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, pp. 70-78.

<sup>29</sup> PRO, FO945/500, Note by the Allied Commission for Austria on the Recruitment of Displaced Persons for Great Britain, 24/3/47.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

deemed ineligible or at least 'de-prioritised' if it was felt that due to some trait or tendency, they would not fit in with other workers within the British economy.<sup>31</sup> A letter from Major-General T.J.W. Winterton (the Deputy Commissioner, Allied Commission for Austria) to Lord Pakenham at the Foreign Office clarified that perceived national and 'racial' groups were to be prioritised in this way.

The present scheme provides that, although displaced persons of any nationality are eligible, we shall in fact concentrate on each nationality in turn in accordance with a given priority, and shall not pass from one nationality to another until we have exhausted the immediate possibilities of recruitment.<sup>32</sup>

Jews, ex-enemy nationals and *Volksdeutsch* were cited as the unwanted groups within the original E.V.W. programme.<sup>33</sup> The records of a conference between officials from the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Labour and the Austrian Embassy outline this decision.

Some discussion took place on the question of nationalities which could be brought within the field of recruitment and it was finally agreed that all except ex-enemy nationals, *Volksdeutsch* and Jews could be included.<sup>34</sup>

Although later changes to the scheme facilitated some inclusions of initially unwanted groups, it is significant that these communities were chosen for exclusion. This decision, along with the later loosening of restrictions regarding *Volksdeutsch* and enemy nationals, is important in shaping understanding regarding the agenda and concerns of the E.V.W. programme and will be discussed later in the chapter. At this

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<sup>31</sup> Analysts of the E.V.W. programmes have argued that Western European and Baltic people were prioritised as the best potential workers that could be brought to Britain amid the belief that these immigrants could assimilate most successfully with indigenous Britons. See Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, p.175, Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.86-88 and Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, p. 73.

<sup>32</sup> PRO, FO945/501, Winterton to Pakenham, April, 1947.

<sup>33</sup> *Volksdeutsch* was a much contested term used to describe citizens of non-German countries who were perceived as German by ethnic origin. Many of these people became refugees after German defeat in the war, encountering persecution and hostility in their countries amid allegations of complicity with Nazism.

<sup>34</sup> PRO, FO945/500, Conference on the Extension of the 'Westward Ho' Scheme to Austria, 11/4/47.

stage, however, it is merely important to note that beneath the claim that the E.V.W. programme was open to people of all nationalities, decisions were made in order to restrict secretly and proscribe the immigration to Britain of people who were perceived as coming from undesirable ethnic groups.<sup>35</sup>

Cesarani has argued that the E.V.W. programme was 'shot through with racist assumptions about "good human stock" and "assimilability"'.<sup>36</sup> Regarding the consequences of this approach, he has concluded: 'In the end, it would benefit Balts, Ukrainians and ethnic Germans; Jews, Blacks and Asians would be the victims'.<sup>37</sup> It is clear that 'racial' assumptions shaped the scheme to some extent and affected the thinking of many officials. A.W.H. Wilkinson at the Foreign Office argued at the birth of the programme in January 1947 that various nationalities should be prioritised or 'we may find that other countries will have skimmed the cream of the displaced persons, especially the Balts who are undoubtedly the elite of the refugee problem'.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the Cabinet Foreign Labour Committee in a 1947 meeting contended that 'if we did not put in our bid quickly the cream would be taken by other countries and we should be left with the least satisfactory section from which to select'.<sup>39</sup>

These comments highlight the prevalence of a belief in 'racial' hierarchies amongst many British decision makers. However, it should be noted that this 'racial' thinking was the subject of debate, challenge and some discord within government departments. A letter from the Chancellor about the so-called *Volksdeutsch* revealed real discomfort at the operating 'racial' categorisations: 'To brand many of these people as German because they are of German ethnic origin is tantamount to perpetuating the Nazi nationality myths'.<sup>40</sup> However, even opposition to the exclusion of the *Volksdeutsch* from the programme was often rooted in 'racial' thinking. It is possible to see a 'racial' undertone in Earl Winterton's defence of the *Volksdeutsch*,

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<sup>35</sup> See Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, p.169.

<sup>36</sup> Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, p.73. Also see conclusions of Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*: 'It should therefore be stressed that notions of "stock", "blood" and "breeding" were embedded in official discourses about the EVWs', p.175.

<sup>37</sup> Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, p.73.

<sup>38</sup> PRO, FO371/66709, Wilkinson memorandum, 24/1/47.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Minutes of the Cabinet Foreign Labour Committee, 14/2/47. Tannahill has noted concerns in government thinking that the best workers would be taken by other countries in Tannahill, J, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, p.42.

<sup>40</sup> PRO, FO945/501, Chancellor to Winterton, (Undated), 1947.

as he argued that this group should be included in the programme as they were 'our best workers and those most likely to make good British citizens'.<sup>41</sup>

Ethnic or 'racial' exclusions from the E.V.W. programme can perhaps best be understood as a combined result of prejudice within government circles and governmental perceptions regarding which immigrants the public would find acceptable. Analysis of Jewish exclusion clarifies the agency of both these factors respectively.

As was recorded in the note from the Allied commission in Vienna, one reason for Jewish exclusion was the perception that the public would not accept more Jewish immigrants, especially in the wake of Jewish terrorism in Palestine.<sup>42</sup> There were certainly reasons for regarding British anti-Semitism as a potent force in 1947. At the beginning of August, widespread anti-Semitic rioting occurred across Britain, ostensibly as a result of the hanging of two British officers by Jewish terrorists in Palestine at the end of July. Kushner, in detailed analysis of these riots, has argued that the Palestinian attack was but one feature of wider anti-Semitic feeling amongst sections of British society.<sup>43</sup> Whilst this is undoubtedly the case (and further indicates the sustained potency of anti-Semitic 'racial' prejudices) it is evident that Palestinian terrorism caused great hostility in some circles towards British Jewry. Creech Jones described these feelings in a Commons debate on Palestine in the month following the murders: 'We are all experiencing how strong is the reaction of British opinion in our own country to these outrages'.<sup>44</sup> The widespread belief that Britain had been particularly sympathetic to Jewish refugees during the war made anger at Palestinian terrorism more pronounced. Crossman expressed these feelings in parliament as he

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<sup>41</sup> PRO, FO945/501, Winterton to Pakenham, April, 1947.

<sup>42</sup> Jewish terrorism in Palestine had been muted during the war as the leadership of the *Yishuv* fell in behind the Allies in their fight against Nazism. Terrorism began in earnest after the end of the conflict and was especially pronounced as radical Jewish groups splintered off from the more moderate Haganah. For details see Gilbert, M, *Exile and Return: the Emergence of Jewish Statehood*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1978, pp.272-296 or Segev, T, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2000, pp. 112-150.

<sup>43</sup> Kushner, T, 'Anti-Semitism and Austerity: the August 1947 Riots in Britain', in Panayi, P, *Racial Violence in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, pp.152-166. Also see Alderman, G, *The Jewish Community and British Politics*, pp.128-150, Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, p.245 and Leitch, D, 'Explosion at the King David Hotel', in Sissons, M, and French, P, *The Age of Austerity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986, pp.58-85.

<sup>44</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 441, Col: 2315, 12/8/47.

argued that 'no country has shown a greater sympathy to the Jews than ours, or a greater understanding of their sufferings'.<sup>45</sup>

Although there is some case for reasoning that Jewish exclusion was rooted in genuine fears of anti-Semitism, Kushner has argued that the government were impetuous in conceding to this perceived threat: 'The government mistook ambivalence for antipathy and attempted to satisfy only the lowest common denominator'.<sup>46</sup> It is arguable that government willingness to exclude Jews from the European Volunteer Workers' Scheme was less rooted in fears of public anti-Semitism than in 'racial' thinking at governmental level. It is relevant to question whether voices within government departments utilised fears of rising anti-Semitism as an excuse to prevent Jewish immigration, which was perceived by them as undesirable amid a variety of Semitic 'racial' discourses regarding Jews as workers and citizens.

It is certainly arguable that 'racial' discourses were significant in the exclusion of Jewish refugees from the E.V.W. programme. Within established 'racial' discourses, Jews were often perceived as inherently urban, commercial and correspondingly as 'work-shy' as regards manual, industrial or agricultural labour. In parliamentary debate in 1947, Major Tufton Beamish (MP for Lewes) argued that the Jewish refugees he had met in Displaced Persons Camps had been 'unwilling to do a job of work'.<sup>47</sup> Whilst Beamish was an extreme voice of anti-Jewish hostility, the image of the work-shy Holocaust survivor permeated mainstream government thinking.<sup>48</sup> Ernest Bevin warned against the danger that Jewish immigration might lead to the 'undesirable concentration of them in the towns'.<sup>49</sup> Underpinning this concern was the idea that Jews would flock to urban centres irrespective of where they were placed within any employment programme.

A pamphlet produced by the Anglo-Jewish Association (designed to counter anti-Semitism) described the prevalence of Semitic discourses of this kind. The

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<sup>45</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 441, Col: 2357, 12/8/47.

<sup>46</sup> Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.276.

<sup>47</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 441, Col: 2350, 12/8/47.

<sup>48</sup> See Marrus, M, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, p.333.

<sup>49</sup> PRO, LAB 8/99, Bevin to Isaacs, 21/2/46.

publication cited common grievances against Jews in order to challenge them. 'Anti-Semites complain that Jews live in concentrated areas in a few large towns...[and] sometimes allege that Jews shirk occupations involving heavy or manual labour'.<sup>50</sup> Whilst Jewish worker discourses cannot be said to have been wholly responsible in themselves for Jewish exclusion from the E.V.W. programme, the perception of Jews as work-shy combined with the previously noted desire to exclude Jews in order to prevent anti-Semitism. These factors together ensured the rejection of Jewish Holocaust refugees as foreign workers. As Kushner has concluded: 'Jews had no place in such considerations as they were seen as unsuitable workers and harbingers of anti-Semitism'.<sup>51</sup>

The 1988 report on the entry of Nazi War Criminals into the UK in the wake of the war has highlighted the eradication of restrictions regarding the admission of *Volksdeutsch* and ex-enemy nationals as the E.V.W. scheme progressed.<sup>52</sup> This report has shown that even known ex-SS combatants were not ultimately excluded from labour programmes.<sup>53</sup> Citing pertinent government records from the period, the report has argued that many within the British government saw E.V.W. immigration purely in terms of providing a labour solution. Bevin, it is asserted, was looking 'purely to secure the most rapid solution of the labour crisis in the UK'.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, the Lord Chancellor is cited in the report as making the following remarkable statement about the possible immigration of war criminals:

I am willing to risk their [E.V.W.s] being Nazis – and I think they probably are – so long as they are highly skilled technicians who will teach our people something which they primarily did not know.<sup>55</sup>

These findings raise important questions regarding the place of Jews in the E.V.W. schemes. Having initially rejected the idea of *Volksdeutsch* and ex-enemy national

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<sup>50</sup> Anglo-Jewish Association MSS, Hartley Archive, University of Southampton, 'The Jews of Britain', AJ95/148, (undated).

<sup>51</sup> Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.234.

<sup>52</sup> Cesarani, D, (et al.), *Report on the Entry of Nazi War Criminals and Collaborators into the UK, 1945-1950*, published for the House of Commons, All Party Parliamentary War Crimes Group, November, 1988.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p.51.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p.23.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p.62. Lord Jowitt speaking in the House of Lords, 10/3/46.



immigration on the grounds of feared public disquiet, the government were not ultimately dissuaded from allowing these groups to come, even where there was evidence of their complicity and participation in Nazi war crimes. This suggests that the government were prepared to challenge public prejudices in order to solve the labour crisis.<sup>56</sup> In this context, it is difficult to explain Jewish exclusion from the E.V.W. scheme in terms of a governmental fear of rising anti-Semitism. As significant as anti-Semitism may have been, it was surely not as prevalent or vociferous as hostility towards ex-Nazis in the wake of the war. It seems more pertinent to argue that fears of anti-Semitism were utilised as an excuse to exclude potential Jewish immigrants by members of the government who subscribed to Semitic discourses concerning Jewish worker suitability. Cesarani has concluded that it was indeed 'racial' criteria which set and sustained the E.V.W. policy on eligibility. In explaining why it was that the government were prepared to 'exert' themselves in promoting some workers even in the face of public hostility, the scholar concludes:

In considering why East Europeans were deemed worth this exertion, but Jews, Blacks and Asians were not, it is all but impossible to avoid the conclusion that racism was at work.<sup>57</sup>

'Racial' perceptions concerning Jewish working habits blended with other Semitic discourses in the creation of the image of the Jew as an unsatisfactory worker for the E.V.W. scheme. A fear existed that the import of further numbers of Jews to Britain could create a population that was not only work-shy but perhaps more importantly, potentially subversive and economically parasitical. These 'racial' images of the Jew as a bad citizen and an economic predator had been at the heart of

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<sup>56</sup> In fact, there is evidence that the government was, on its own terms, prepared to go to significant lengths to smooth potential 'racial' hostility towards E.V.W.s where it feared it might occur. See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.86, Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers*, p.172, Sword, K, (et al.), *The Formation of the Polish Community in Great Britain 1939-1950*, Caldera House, London, 1989, pp. 278-289, Tannahill, J, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, pp.68-70 and Bevan, V, *The Development of British Immigration Law*, Croom Helm, London, 1986, p.75.

<sup>57</sup> Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, p. 81. This analysis of exclusion has been supported by other experts on the E.V.W. programmes. See Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers? 'EVWs were not conceptualised as a single, homogenous category, but were, minimally, dichotomised. Nevertheless, they were all racialised: the discourse of "race" was implicit (as in references to "blood" and "stock") and explicit in the drawing of conclusions about the "suitability" of EVWs, but in combination with evaluations of their social and cultural attributes*, p.123. Also see Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.64-89.

earlier Semitic 'racial' discourses and continued to impact with some significance on perceptions of Jews in this period.<sup>58</sup>

In the wake of the Holocaust, traditional Semitic conspiracy discourse at its most unabashed was only expressed at the peripheries of British society. As was the case in the war years, the writing of Douglas Reed serves as an excellent example of the sustained potency of ideas of Jewish conspiracy, whilst Reed's decline as a popular journalist and writer in this period similarly tells us much about the social acceptability of his opinions. Unmoved by and unbelieving in the Holocaust, Reed continued to assert that Britain and the world was under threat from the machinations of international Jewish plotting. Indeed, he perceived the Holocaust itself as part of a Jewish plot: 'No proof can be given that six million "perished"; proof can be adduced that so many could not have perished'.<sup>59</sup> To Reed, it was no coincidence that guilty Nazi leaders at Nuremberg were 'executed on the Jewish Day of Atonement'.<sup>60</sup>

The relevance of Reed's extreme and isolated contributions are not that they were representative but that they indicate the nature of Semitic control and conspiracy discourses in their crudest form. It is arguable that there was a relationship in terms of origins and intent between Reed's diatribes and the more sober thinking of anti-Semitic protagonists in this period. Prominent ideas held that Jews controlled a disproportionately large amount of the British economy and were suspiciously 'well connected' internationally. In the August 1947 Palestine debate, Colonel Clarke (MP for East Grinstead) commented: 'We know that Jewish economy and civilisation in Palestine have roots that extend all over the world'.<sup>61</sup> In his analysis of the 1947 anti-Jewish riots, Kushner has cited the persistence of similar domestic allegations of secret Jewish dominance.

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<sup>58</sup> For a thorough analysis of the history of these images see Cheyette, B, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society*, pp.1-13, Memmi, A, *Portrait of a Jew*, pp.142-163 and Gilman, S, *Smart Jews*, pp.34-50.

<sup>59</sup> Reed, D, *Far and Wide*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1951, p.308.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* Importantly, Reed's writing highlighted the manner in which Jewish immigration could be perceived as a domestic security risk within a conspiratorial mind frame. Commenting on Jewish entry to America, Reed argued that these immigrants had completely taken over decision making in the whole country. 'The Gentile Americans number over 140 millions, but have no free choice from the mind's menu; the dishes are first tasted by the court official, as it were, and only those approved by him appear on it', p.309.

<sup>61</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 441, Col:2366, 12/8/47.

Myth and reality became interwoven, as the widespread belief that Jews controlled the retail trade in Britain and especially the chain stores was translated into attacks on shops which were falsely assumed to have been under Jewish ownership.<sup>62</sup>

Bill Williams has concurred regarding the importance of Semitic discourses in the riots. They were, he argues, 'a grim reminder that traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes had survived Nazism in the popular imagination'.<sup>63</sup>

Analysis of the behaviour of the British Jewish community in this period provides further indications that Semitic discourses remained prominent in post-war British society. Alderman has noted the reluctance of Jews to organise politically after the war for fear of generating anti-Semitic allegations that they were trying to exercise a controlling 'Jewish vote' in British affairs.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, records of Jewish communal organisations reveal a temerity towards challenging the government, seemingly for the same reason. The following policy statement regarding post-war refugees by the Anglo-Jewish Association's Committee for European Affairs, articulated this tendency neatly:

The association should undertake the task of informing the community of their responsibilities as British subjects and give an Anglo-Jewish viewpoint on Jewish matters. In so doing should not be afraid to criticise government but should be careful to do so in a manner appropriate to loyal citizens [my emphasis].<sup>65</sup>

Revealing similar tendencies, the Board of Deputies reacted angrily when the World Jewish Congress criticised the British government for not allowing the immigration of more Jewish refugees in the wake of the war. A report by Julius Jung (on behalf of the Board's Aliens Committee) concluded that the Congress's comments were an

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<sup>62</sup> Kushner, T, 'Anti-Semitism and Austerity: the August 1947 Riots in Britain', p.156.

<sup>63</sup> Williams, B, *Sir Sidney Hamburger and Manchester Jewry*, Valentine Mitchell, London, 1999, p.77. For analysis of the continuation of traditional anti-Semitic thinking after the war, see Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp. 244-245 and London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.274.

<sup>64</sup> Alderman, G, *The Jewish Community in British Politics*, pp.138-141.

<sup>65</sup> Anglo-Jewish Association MSS, AJ37/4/7, Minutes of Committee for European Affairs, 11/12/45.

'unwarranted interference...detrimental to the Board's work'.<sup>66</sup> This response indicated a fear amongst British Jewish leadership that overly assertive or critical political behaviour could lead to dangerous questions about the ultimate loyalty of Britain's Jews. Whilst it may only have been isolated voices like Reed that were prepared to articulate theories of Jewish domination and control in this period, it is clear that undercurrents of these discourses were prominent and affected both policy towards Jews and Jewish reaction and resistance.

Perhaps the most mainstream and tangible manifestation of Semitic power and conspiracy discourse in this period was the widespread belief in Jewish economic control. Significantly, even people who publicly identified with Jews and Jewish causes often still bought into conspiratorial ideas of Jewish money dominance. This ambivalence is well expressed in the following extract from MacInnes's novel *Absolute Beginners* where the narrator outlined his attitude towards Jewish people.

And how they handle whatever stuff life's made of, like it was a material they were sampling, makes you realize immediately that they're an old, old, senior people who've been in the business of existence for a very long while indeed. But when the Jewish population have all made enough loot to take off for America or Israel, then I'm leaving too. It would be like turning out the light.<sup>67</sup>

In Eysenck's 1953 text, *Uses and Abuses of Psychology*, the author conducted opinion polls to investigate popular perceptions of Jews in Britain. He concluded that there was 'considerable agreement in the population with respect to those traits which are supposed to characterise the Jew'.<sup>68</sup> This survey revealed that 31% of people questioned agreed that 'Jews in their dealings with others are an absolute menace, money grabbing and unscrupulous'.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, ACC3121/C2/12, Jung Report, 12/2/53. It should be borne in mind that the Board's objection to W.J.C. interference also needs to be seen as a political power conflict concerning the representation of Britain's Jews. Other British Jewish organisations (notably the Anglo-Jewish Association) objected to the level of contact between the Board and the W.J.C. In 1947, the A.J.A. actually withdrew their delegates from the Board of Deputies in protest of this contact. See A.J.A. MSS, AJ37/15/8, Letter to Board of Deputies, 24/4/47.

<sup>67</sup> MacInnes, C, *Absolute Beginners*, pp.92-93.

<sup>68</sup> Eysenck, H.J., *Uses and Abuses of Psychology*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1953, p.262.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p.261.

Jewish exclusion from the E.V.W. programme cannot be understood, then, without reference to the sustained potency of Semitic discourses in post-war Britain. Ideas about Jewish attitudes to work, the economy and about Jews as citizens, created a popular image of Jewry which often prevented refugee Jews from being perceived as a suitable source of foreign labour.<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, these refugees would not be able to enter Britain as European Volunteer Workers. The only programme that would allow their immigration was the Distressed Relatives Scheme, and it is to this scheme that the chapter will now turn its attention.<sup>71</sup> In the immediate wake of the Holocaust, considerable pressure was exerted on the British government to allow some of the stateless and stranded Jewish refugees to enter the UK. Pressure of this kind was exerted both by sympathetic parliamentarians as well as from some elements of the press. Additionally, calls for a liberal British attitude towards immigration came from the international community and especially the United States.<sup>72</sup>

The government seemingly felt that it was imperative to avoid the impression of inaction concerning Jewish refugees. A senior official in Germany noted from correspondence with the Foreign Office that 'this scheme has vast political implications at home and the government has decided that it must work and in a very short time'.<sup>73</sup> The Distressed Relatives Scheme was thus set up in November 1945 in order to enable close relatives of refugees already in Britain to join their families. Categories for admission were strict. No refugee who had equally close relations in

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<sup>70</sup> See Marrus, M, *The Unwanted*, p.333.

<sup>71</sup> For analysis of this initiative see Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.232 or London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, p.268.

<sup>72</sup> The following British newspaper editorials serve as good examples of the kind of questions that were being asked of government refugee policy in this period. The fact that cuttings of the articles were retained within Home Office papers in itself reflects governmental concern that they were vulnerable to criticism that not enough was being done for the refugees. See PRO, HO213/618, *The People*, 7/10/45: 'Is it really true that, after all the indictment of Hitler's inhumanity, no one will find a home for 70,000 survivors of the men, women and children whose ill treatment at the hands of the Germans caused the use of so many horrified speeches, so many indignant sermons, and so many earnest prayers.... Are we not, unless we help the innocent, also guilty ourselves?'. Also see PRO, HO213/618, *The Observer*, 23/9/45: 'The accusation is brought against the British Home Office that it will not give entrance permits to this country to the comparatively few of these unhappy people who have husbands or wives or children or other near relatives already domiciled here and eager to support them'.

<sup>73</sup> PRO, FO1071/2, Letter from Major General of the Staff Group, Travel Bureau, Zonal Executive Offices, Germany, 23/7/46.

another country would be admitted whilst none but the closest relatives (children, parents and siblings) could apply.<sup>74</sup>

Ultimately, the results of the programme were disappointing. Kushner has concluded that only 7000 Jews entered Britain between 1945-51 and contrasts this figure with the 100,000 allowed to enter the U.S.<sup>75</sup> When it is considered that many of these refugees to Britain gained admission as E.V.W.s (by registering in terms of their nationalities and not specifically as Jews) or by other means, the modest achievements of the Distressed Relatives Scheme become clear.<sup>76</sup> Critics of the government at the time were quick to point out the inadequacies of the programme. In the House of Commons, Sidney Silverman asked whether it was true that since the Home Secretary had announced the scheme eight months previously, 'not a single person in a displaced persons' camp in Germany has benefited by it'.<sup>77</sup> An angry letter from the Czech Refugee Fund to the Home Office likewise lambasted the limited nature of the scheme:

It seems to be widely felt among all the refugees organisations that it would have been preferable for the Home Office to declare that it had no intention of bringing any foreign nationals into this country at all. As it is, however, the Home Office have raised undue hopes by their declarations that they would view the matter sympathetically but they have shown no signs of translating their professions of sympathy into practice.<sup>78</sup>

Even the Aliens Committee of the Board of Deputies, ever cautious of attacking the government, voiced criticism that the scheme had 'unfortunately not been embracing enough' though adding the caveat that it had been a 'great blessing to many people in distress on the continent'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> PRO, HO213/360 & FO1071/2 contain documents that outline the rules of admission under the scheme.

<sup>75</sup> Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.229.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. Kushner has concluded that the programme 'set restrictions so tightly that in practice it turned out to be nearly unworkable', p.232.

<sup>77</sup> PRO, HO294/185, Silverman to Ede, 6/6/46. No denial of Silverman's charge is recorded in the parliamentary record.

<sup>78</sup> PRO, HO294/185, Letter from H Verschoyle, 4/10/45.

<sup>79</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, Speech by Chairman of the Aliens Committee, 20/7/50, ACC3121/C2/12.

It is clear that whilst not wanting to appear unsympathetic towards the plight of Jewish refugees, the government had no intention of allowing more than a nominal number of them to enter the UK. At the very inception of the Distressed Relatives programme, the Home Secretary cited the need for extreme caution over new admissions: 'For numerous reasons the addition of foreigners to our population at the present time must be closely limited'.<sup>80</sup> As has already been discussed regarding the E.V.W. programme, it is clear that the government considered the admission of further Jewish immigrants as a specific security threat. Perhaps this is most evident within a comparison of the security screening processes for potential applicants under both schemes. One reason for differences between the two sets of procedures may lie in the rationales and respective organisation of the different programmes. One was organised by the Ministry of Labour to solve an urgent labour crisis, the other was a humanitarian programme controlled carefully by the Home Office, who were in no rush to allow anyone to enter the UK. However, more differences than those of departmental practice are evident when one compares the two respective procedures. The comparison suggests both that Jewish immigrants were perceived as a particular security threat and that the British government utilised administrative mechanisms to facilitate Jewish 'racial' exclusion.

The Commons Report on the Entry of Nazi War Criminals has revealed the extent to which security screening was deliberately minimised in order to facilitate fast, effective immigration for the E.V.W. programme.<sup>81</sup> The screening that did take place, the report argues, was deliberately flawed in order not to delay the desired immigration.

While such screening may have served a public relations function, enabling ministers to claim that war criminals were being rigorously

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<sup>80</sup> PRO, HO213/618, Memorandum by Chuter Ede, 29/10/45.

<sup>81</sup> Also see Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, pp.127-129, Sword, K, (et al.), *The Formation of the Polish Community in Great Britain 1939-50*, pp.295-341 and Tannahill, J, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain*, p.42.

excluded, it was recognised at the time that these measures were unreliable, inadequate and half-hearted.<sup>82</sup>

This report further asserted that a 'soft' government attitude towards screening was part of a conscious attempt to facilitate the surreptitious admission of some immigrants with highly questionable war records. The authors have even alleged that the government agreed to the admission of some ex-SS personnel, whilst misinforming the public and the media about the histories of these new immigrants.<sup>83</sup> The role of this thesis is not to consider government complicity in the immigration of ex-Nazis or to specifically examine governmental attitudes towards relations with recent adversaries. It is merely significant to conclude that screening procedures were not allowed to impede the E.V.W. programme and that where the government wished, it was capable using speedy, deliberately ineffective screening to cloak fast, desired immigration even of the most controversial immigrants.<sup>84</sup>

The nominal security procedures considered desirable in the E.V.W. programme stand out in sharp contrast to the rigorous and laborious screening that surrounded any immigrant who attempted to enter Britain within the Distressed Relatives Scheme. The procedure for the security screening of potential refugees differed slightly between British, French and American occupation zones, but the outline of procedure below (as recorded by Foreign Office officials for potential entrants from the French zone) was largely typical. Any candidate for admission required an exit permit and a letter of invitation from a suitable host in the UK. If these were in order, he would be 'interrogated by the French authorities on the bona fides of his claim' before security and financial checks were made. After this, all the candidate's papers would be sent to Berlin 'for scrutiny'. If everything was in order, refugee organisations in Britain would be contacted to pay for his dispatch to a reception camp in Hanover where further security and health checks would be conducted before the candidate could be finally admitted to Britain.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Cesarani, D, (et al.), *Report on the Entry of Nazi War Criminals and Collaborators into the UK, 1945-50*, p.23.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p.52.

<sup>84</sup> See Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, pp.165-172 and Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.64-86.

<sup>85</sup> PRO, FO1071/2, Instructions for procedure for the admittance to Britain of Distressed Relatives in the French Zone, (undated), (Doc: Zon/E1, 46, 44).



In the chaos of post-war Germany (and considering the traumatised state of any potential applicant) it is difficult to conclude that measures of this kind were thought to achieve anything except preventing many refugees from successfully negotiating the scheme. In the British zone, interrogation of the applicant was to be conducted by the 'German police', a procedure that must have been a terrifying prospect for any Holocaust survivor.<sup>86</sup> The draconian nature of these procedures becomes most clear amid a recognition that all that was normally needed in terms of security screening in the E.V.W. programme was a brief interview and a name check against United Nations lists of wanted war criminals. Indeed, the Commons Report noted that even when dealing with known ex-enemy combatants often only a nominal percentage of applicants were screened at all.<sup>87</sup>

It seems remarkable that the British government considered that Jewish refugees posed a greater threat to domestic security than ex-Nazi soldiers, either in terms of their potential subversive qualities or their ability to anger British public opinion. Perhaps one explanation for the different attitudes adopted in the two cases lies in the perceived potential values of the respective immigrants. As discussed, E.V.W.s were seen as vital contributors to the future of the British economy whereas no potential value was attached to Jewish immigration, which was instead seen as a humanitarian concession. However, this explanation does not explain the mean-spirited stance of the government towards this 'humanitarian' gesture. A clearer answer only emerges amid an understanding that the previously discussed 'racial' discourses significantly affected perceptions of Jewry. In order ultimately to understand the nature of governmental post-war policy towards Jewish immigration, it is important to place these discourses in the context of British reactions to the Holocaust.

In *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, Kushner has demonstrated the difficulty experienced by British society in the 1940s and 1950s in perceiving and

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<sup>86</sup> PRO, FO1071/2, Instructions for procedure for the admittance to Britain of Distressed Relatives in the French Zone, (undated), (Doc: Zon/E1, 46, 44).

<sup>87</sup> Cesarani, D, (et al.), *Report on the Entry of Nazi War Criminals and Collaborators into the UK, 1945-50*, p.28.

comprehending the Holocaust.<sup>88</sup> As was noted in the previous chapter, the government had generally refused to acknowledge and emphasise the specific 'Jewishness' of the genocide as it was taking place.<sup>89</sup> This made it all the more difficult for the specifically Jewish tragedy of the Holocaust to be understood in the wake of the war. The Final Solution did not fit easily as a concept into the British mind frame and 'racial' discourses had their part to play in this problem. Jews were often perceived as having exaggerated their plight or as in some way having provoked the wrath of Nazi Germany.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, amid perceptions of national sacrifice, there was little scope for special sympathy for any immigrant group, especially for one made up of so many ex-German nationals. Germanophobia had tempered sympathy for refugees both before and during the war and in the aftermath of the conflict, difficulties of differentiation between refugees and Nazis damaged refugee/host relations. The tragic irony of this particular xenophobic confusion is all too obvious. Kushner has even argued that the discovery of concentration camps by the British army actually led to increased domestic hostility towards 'German' Jewish refugees.<sup>91</sup>

An additional problem regarding the British attitude towards Holocaust survivors concerned Britain's perception of her own role in recent Jewish affairs. A widespread and popular belief existed that Britain had been a good friend to European Jewry in its hour of need. Britain after all had stood firm against Nazism, defeated it, and had facilitated the rescue of thousands of European Jews. Crossman's claim (also cited above) that no country had 'shown a greater sympathy for the Jews', seems to have represented the most common opinion of the time.<sup>92</sup> It was echoed by Clement Davies, the Liberal leader, who argued:

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<sup>88</sup> Also see London, L, *Whitehall and the Jews*, pp. 253-284 and Bower, T, *Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, America and the Purging of Nazi Germany – A Pledge Betrayed*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1981, pp.199-214.

<sup>89</sup> See Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, pp.157-165, Wasserstein, B, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, p.132 and Gilbert, M, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, pp. 312-323.

<sup>90</sup> Kushner, T, *The Persistence of Prejudice*, p.105.

<sup>91</sup> Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.220.

<sup>92</sup> See above p.9. *Hansard*, Vol: 441, Col:2357, 12/8/47.

No nation in the world has been as generous to the Jewish people as this nation; it has not only opened its gates and protected them, but made every office in the land open to them.<sup>93</sup>

The Home Secretary's response to a question in the House, regarding Britain's actions towards refugee Jews, emphasises the government's subscription to this blameless self-image. The refugee issue would be dealt with, Ede argued, according with the 'country's historic tradition of affording asylum to the distressed'.<sup>94</sup> The argument here does not aim to suggest that no one in Britain thought that more could have been done for European Jewry. It only contends that the majority of Britons at all levels did not perceive that any great debt was owed to refugees. Perhaps most significantly, Jewish communal leaders seem (at least partly) to have shared this view. The Board of Deputies decided not to oppose the arbitrary powers afforded to the Home Secretary in the Aliens Act (to control asylum and immigration) when these legislative provisions were due their annual renewal by parliament in 1953. The Board deemed that recent history proved such a challenge unnecessary as:

We had been blessed in this country with very broadminded and humanitarian Home Secretaries, who have shown great sympathy and have taken adverse decisions only in extreme cases.<sup>95</sup>

Even when the Board challenged the government to do more for refugees, no significant critique of Britain's recent history was offered. In fact, the Board's case that the government should allow the entry of Iraqi refugee Jews was typically framed in the congratulatory language of Britain's liberal self-perception.<sup>96</sup>

It would be a shame to stain the enviable record of England which is leading the world in its treatment of aliens within its midst and

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<sup>93</sup> A.J.A. MSS, AJ37/6/1b/7, Speech cited in statement by Stein, 4/3/47.

<sup>94</sup> PRO, LAB 8/99, Ede to Bacon, cited in House of Commons official report, 13/11/45.

<sup>95</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, ACC3121/C2/12, Minutes of Aliens Committee Meeting, 10/2/53.

<sup>96</sup> Two thousand so called 'Baghdadi' Jews had fled to Britain in fear of the consequences of Indian independence. See Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp.244-245.

especially of people who have been persecuted on 'racial' or religious grounds.<sup>97</sup>

Kushner has suggested deeper-rooted reasons behind the British inability to understand the Holocaust and their role within it. The horror of the Holocaust, he argues, threatened 'the strong liberal attachment to the concept of progress', and was difficult to comprehend in this context.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps it is not surprising that it took some time for the unique nature of Nazi Jewish persecution to be realised. Many, it seems, could not understand that the Holocaust was incomprehensible in terms of slave labour or even concentration camps but that it was a sustained attempt to annihilate innocent communities.<sup>99</sup> Bower, in his analysis of the post-war Belsen trial, has highlighted these difficulties of perception:

As the charges were read out, the use of the phrases 'well being' and 'ill treatment' struck many of the non-British spectators as peculiar. Concentration camps like Auschwitz were after all not designed for 'well being' but for murder...The British seemed to be treating the deaths as an administrative failure rather than the planned outcome of the Final Solution policy.<sup>100</sup>

Bower's citation of the Judge Advocate General's decision that being a member of staff at Auschwitz or Belsen 'was not enough to justify conviction', again indicates a British inability to comprehend the nature of these camps and of Nazi Jewish policy in general.<sup>101</sup> Whilst the methodical, clinical programme of the Final Solution was undoubtedly difficult to comprehend, it is fair to argue that Semitic discourses played a part in preventing greater understanding. Images of the Jew as German, perfidious and manipulative, tempered attitudes towards Holocaust survivors.<sup>102</sup> This lack of sympathy was indeed reflected in the miserly and inadequate provisions of the

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<sup>97</sup> Board of Deputies MSS, ACC3121/C2/12, Report by Jung for the Aliens Committee on the subject of granting asylum for Iraqi Jews, 18/11/51.

<sup>98</sup> Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.274.

<sup>99</sup> Marrus has argued concerning the unique position of Jewish 'displaced persons' after the Holocaust: 'A vast gulf of agony and humiliation yawned between them and the rest of humanity' in Marrus, M, *The Unwanted*, p.332.

<sup>100</sup> Bower, T, *Blind Eye to Murder*, p.199.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* p.200.

<sup>102</sup> See Marrus, M, *The Unwanted*, pp.331-333.

Distressed Relatives Scheme. Although the Holocaust did generate some sympathy for Jewish refugees, established 'racial' discourses ensured ambivalent reactions from many people. The British defence lawyer at the Belsen trial did not express an isolated view when he commiserated with the camp commander for having had to deal with 'the dregs of the ghettos of Eastern Europe'.<sup>103</sup>

This chapter has so far argued that despite changes in attitude towards 'racial' thinking and growing ambivalence about the sagacity of concepts of hierarchical difference, 'racial' discourses continued to play an influential role in setting policy and attitudes towards post-war immigration to Britain. The case of Black immigration raises further questions regarding the continuing role of 'race' thinking as a factor in societal relations and it is to this immigration that the chapter will now turn its attention.

### c) Black Immigrants to Britain and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act: Origins of 'a Distasteful Necessity'

The title of this section borrows a phrase from Randell Hansen's analysis of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. To Hansen, this legislation (which restricted the immigration of mainly Black Commonwealth citizens to the UK) was forced upon the British government by the vehemence of racist public opinion. The tendency of thinking in 'racial' terms, according to this scholar, 'has since the war been marginal and politically insignificant among politicians and bureaucrats'.<sup>104</sup> Hansen's analysis provides an interesting and provocative starting point for this section of the thesis. Did 'race' thinking, which was so important in setting government attitudes towards Black immigrants before and during the war, finally become only a marginal factor in post-war governmental ideology as Hansen suggests? Had an anti-'racial' majority emerged amongst politicians, opposed to 'racial' categorisation and decision-making? Hansen's assertion that 'the politicians who were consistently hostile to Black immigration were a handful, numbering less

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<sup>103</sup> Marrus, M, *The Unwanted*, pp.331-333.

<sup>104</sup> Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, p.15.

than ten, of backbenchers' certainly seems to suggest that anti-Black 'racial' thinking was not an influential factor in post-war British political decision making.<sup>105</sup>

One of the difficulties in drawing accurate conclusions regarding these questions lies in the confidentiality that shrouded discussions of 'racial' matters in the post-war period. In earlier chapters, the tendency of the government to obscure 'racially' informed decisions in non-'racial' language has been shown, a tendency that in itself indicated a shifting of 'race' attitudes. Undoubtedly, overt 'racial' thinking was not perceived as acceptable within government after the war so that even the statement made above (that the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was designed to prevent Black immigration) is founded in the designed consequences of the legislation and not in its wording. That expressions of racism were increasingly taboo in post-war Britain is unarguable, as is Hansen's case that most politicians publicly shied away from the policies of overt discrimination. However, this chapter will question Hansen's further conclusions concerning the marginality of racist agendas amongst British politicians.

Most scholars of British Black history have agreed that the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 was carefully and deliberately designed to exclude Black immigrants. One analyst has concluded regarding the 'racial' intention of the Act: 'It was how the country at large took it and was meant to take it'.<sup>106</sup> That this question is even a matter of debate is due to the fact that the Conservative government, who created the legislation, emphatically denied that any form of 'racial' restriction was intended within it.<sup>107</sup> The new law nominally applied to all Commonwealth countries and thus, it was argued, was not rooted in any anti-Black prejudice. However, overwhelming evidence leaves little doubt as to the Act's 'racial' intentions. This

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<sup>105</sup> Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, p.119.

<sup>106</sup> Dummett, A, and Dummett, M, cited in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, p.103. Similar views have been expressed by a disparate range of scholars of post-war British racism. See Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.372-399, Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, pp.11-114, Layton Henry, Z, *The Politics of Race in Britain*, pp.39-43, Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.111-130, Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, pp.129-133, Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, pp.61-63, Foot, P, *Immigration and Race in British Politics*, pp.133-164, Deakin, N, in Rose, E, (et al.), *Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, pp.553-578, Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp.262-269 and Goulbourne, H, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post-Imperial Britain*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp.87-125.

<sup>107</sup> See Butler's defence of the Bill in Parliament denying any racist intent: 'It affects Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders in the same way as it affects Indians, Pakistanis and West Indians', *Hansard*, Vol: 654, Col: 1192, 27/2/62.

section of the thesis will explore the path to and passing of this legislation in order to analyse some key questions regarding who perceived the Act as necessary, why they did so and the reasons for the covert nature of this restrictive legislation.

There are two primary explanations for the British reluctance to openly legislate against the entry of Black people. First, some analysts have argued that the adoption of an overt racist policy was avoided for fear of badly damaging Britain's relationship with the emerging, independent Black Commonwealth.<sup>108</sup> Second, other scholars have cited political uneasiness with the principle of entrenching 'racial' legislation into the constitution of 'liberal' Britain as an explanation for limited and delayed restrictive legislation.<sup>109</sup>

The right of Commonwealth citizens to settle within the UK was reaffirmed in the 1948 Nationality Act.<sup>110</sup> The Act confirmed the rights of British residency upon citizens of independent Commonwealth countries and those of 'the UK and the Colonies'. Designed as a constitutional response to the changing nature of the Empire/Commonwealth, and confirming the Britishness of people living in Commonwealth countries that declared separate citizenship, the Act emerged as a bipartisan expression of Britain's perceived world and Commonwealth role.<sup>111</sup> As Chuter Ede declared in the Commons, the Act addressed 'the maintenance of the British Commonwealth of nations...one of the duties that this generation owes to the world and generations to come'.<sup>112</sup> Whilst this legislation indeed neatly expressed Britain's self-perception and desired world role, it was not designed to actually enable significant migration to the UK from Black Commonwealth countries.<sup>113</sup> Amid the symbolic grandeur of the Act, the potential immigration effects were not, it seems, considered.<sup>114</sup> This fact was later reflected upon within the following ministerial report:

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<sup>108</sup> See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.113 or Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.130.

<sup>109</sup> See Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, pp.13-35.

<sup>110</sup> For analysis of this legislation see Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.16 and Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.55.

<sup>111</sup> The Act was perceived as a necessary confirmation of the unity of British citizenship throughout the Commonwealth after Indian independence and the Canadian Nationality Act of 1946 had created citizenship separate from Britain.

<sup>112</sup> *Hansard*, Vol: 453, Col: 397, 7/7/48.

<sup>113</sup> See Bevan, V, *The Development of British Immigration Law*, Croom Helm, Kent, 1986, p.76.

<sup>114</sup> Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.55.

The principle that the United Kingdom should maintain an open door for British subjects grew up tacitly at a time when the coloured races of the commonwealth were at a more primitive stage of development than now. There was no danger then of a coloured invasion of this country.<sup>115</sup>

However, although Black immigration may have been perceived as an undesirable and unforeseen consequence of Britain's world role (epitomised in the 1948 Act), the government were keen to avoid rescinding or amending the constitution for fear that it may provoke an angry reaction from the 'Black' Commonwealth countries. Changing the Nationality legislation, it was thought, could lead to awkward and hostile interpretations of Britain's outlook. As one official put it in November 1961, it would be perceived that 'as soon as people of the wrong colour started coming through the door in substantial numbers, we took steps to close it'.<sup>116</sup>

These concerns about reaction in the Commonwealth should be seen as an important factor in the maintenance of nominal non-racism within the Commonwealth Immigrants Act.<sup>117</sup> Some analysts have dismissed the importance of the Commonwealth within the thinking of politicians in this period.<sup>118</sup> Hansen, however, has been correct to challenge this view and to argue that there is evidence to suggest that many within the British government were genuinely concerned about the implications of restrictionist legislation on Commonwealth relations.<sup>119</sup> It is unsurprising that the most vehement internal opposition to restriction came from the Colonial and Commonwealth Relations Offices. Some historians have argued that it was objections within these ministries that prevented the enactment of earlier restrictionist legislation in the 1950s.<sup>120</sup> Deakin has concluded: 'The private pressure

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<sup>115</sup> PRO, CAB129/77, Report by a Committee of Ministers, 22/6/56.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, PREM11/3238, Norman Brook to Macmillan, 9/10/61.

<sup>117</sup> The importance of maintaining good relations with the Commonwealth as an influential factor in British policy making has been emphasised in much recent scholarship. See Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, pp.73-83, Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.113, Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.130 and Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, p.60.

<sup>118</sup> Notably see the scholarship of John Solomos and Ambalavaner Sivanandan.

<sup>119</sup> Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, p. 60.

<sup>120</sup> Carter has argued that the decline in the influence of the Colonial and Commonwealth Relations Offices (caused by the decline of the Commonwealth) was a crucial factor on the road towards 'racial'



of the Commonwealth Relations Office and Colonial Office seems to have outweighed the arguments advanced by the Home Office and the joint working party'.<sup>121</sup> A 1960 memorandum from a civil servant within the Colonial Office highlighted the fears of this Ministry about even hidden 'racial' restriction. 'However disguised, such restrictions would be interpreted as anti-colour measures and this would weaken the Commonwealth and damage the reputation of the UK internationally'.<sup>122</sup> It was understandably in this Office that the sensitivities of Commonwealth countries were most often considered. An earlier report had noted the dangers of prioritising 'race' over the rights of British nationality: 'The putting of West Indians on quota whilst Italians were being imported in bulk would make difficult debating ground'.<sup>123</sup>

It would be inaccurate, though, not to emphasise that fears about Commonwealth relations permeated much of government thinking, above and beyond the influence of the Colonial and Commonwealth Relations Offices. A report by the Lord Chancellor for a 1958 Cabinet meeting outlined the perceived value of the Commonwealth as providing:

'strength in numbers' and moral influence in the world at a time when our heavy losses in two world wars have so reduced our material power. [The commonwealth provides a] real foundation for our world wide trading position.<sup>124</sup>

As late as 1961, a report by the Inter-Departmental Working Committee on Immigration argued that restriction would 'impose a serious strain upon our relations with the coloured Commonwealth'.<sup>125</sup> Education Secretary Edward Boyle wrote to one of his Handsworth constituents on the subject in 1958: 'I do not believe a

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immigration restriction. See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, pp.126-129. It is arguable that as Britain's leaders began to see her future in terms of closer European alliances in this period, the pressure to maintain good relations with the British Commonwealth was significantly reduced.

<sup>121</sup> In Rose, E, (et al.), *Colour and Citizenship*, p.210.

<sup>122</sup> PRO, CO1031/3932, Colonial Office Memorandum, (Undated), 1960.

<sup>123</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Colonial Office Working Party Minutes, 26/3/57.

<sup>124</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Memorandum for Cabinet, June 1958.

<sup>125</sup> PRO, CAB21/4774, Report by Inter-Departmental Working Committee for Lord Chancellor, 28/7/61.

number of people fully realise the very severe effects which any quota restriction of coloured immigrants would be bound to have on the Commonwealth'.<sup>126</sup>

However, it is revealing of government priorities that concern for Commonwealth relations did not stop restriction but only cloaked its purpose and delayed its arrival.<sup>127</sup> Ultimately, 'race' legislation was deemed worth risking the wrath of Commonwealth leaders though their disaffection was regretted. The covert 'racial' nature of the legislation did not prevent Commonwealth criticism and the government knew that this would be the case.<sup>128</sup> The Prime Minister of the newly formed West Indian Federation described the law as 'no different in kind to the basis on which the system of apartheid in South Africa is based'.<sup>129</sup>

The desire to hide the 'racial' nature of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act cannot be sufficiently explained as a governmental attempt to limit the damage of the new law on Commonwealth relations. Instead, the legislation needs to be set in the context of new international attitudes towards the concept of 'race'. In this context, it becomes clear that many people within the British establishment were embarrassed and unwilling to openly pursue a 'racial' policy.<sup>130</sup> Many politicians retained a desire to exclude Black people from the UK yet few were prepared to articulate these views. When the matter could not be avoided, it was broached very much within new and acceptable language.<sup>131</sup> The Commonwealth Immigrants Act is perhaps the best example of this new order. Essentially racist, the Act carefully avoided any overt 'racial' language or intention. As Dummett and Dummett have concluded:

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<sup>126</sup> Boyle MSS, Brotherton Archive, Leeds, Boyle to Crees, 11/9/58, MS660/14408/1.

<sup>127</sup> See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.122.

<sup>128</sup> See Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.82 and Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, pp.58-59.

<sup>129</sup> PRO, PREM11/3238, Adams to Macmillan, 17/11/61.

<sup>130</sup> See Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?*, pp.55-56 and Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.127.

<sup>131</sup> It is possible to see here a key error in Hansen's argument. Hansen reads a parliamentary rejection of 'race' thinking into the lack of comment on the subject of 'race' in recorded discussion. It seems more probable that these silences reflected an embarrassment concerning racist views and not that these views were not held. Holmes' analysis seems more accurate: 'Behind the scenes, away from public scrutiny, a different picture can be found', in Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?*, p.55. Also see Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.53. For the alternative analysis see Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, pp.13-17.

...to those least willing to acknowledge the presence of their own prejudices, it could be represented as not racial in character at all, but merely motivated by a concern for the total population figures in this 'crowded little island'. The fact that such a case was patently spurious did not matter at all.<sup>132</sup>

Among politicians and officials, the 'spurious' nature of the non-racialism in the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was indeed realised and not considered important. The main concern seems to have been to achieve the legislation beneath a cloak of non-racialism. As the law was finally drafted in 1961, a deluge of evidence confirmed its hidden agenda. A memorandum for the Home Secretary highlights the point:

We must recognise that although the scheme purports to relate solely to employment and to be non-discriminatory, its aim is primarily social and its operation is intended to, and would in fact, affect coloured people almost exclusively.<sup>133</sup>

The inter-departmental Working Party on Immigration reported the strengths of the coming bill to the Lord Chancellor:

While it would apply equally in all parts of the Commonwealth, without distinction on grounds of race and colour, in practice it would interfere to the minimum extent with the entry of persons from the 'old' Commonwealth countries who would tend to come in categories (1) and (2).<sup>134</sup>

Put even more blatantly by the committee a few months later, the Bill would 'leave the door wide open' to white immigration.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Dummett, M, and Dummett, A, in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, p.102.

<sup>133</sup> PRO, CAB21/4774, Memorandum for the Home Secretary, October 1961.

<sup>134</sup> PRO, CO1032/304, Notes by the Working Party on Immigration, 28/4/61. The term 'Old Commonwealth countries' described Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa from where any immigration would largely be expected to be white.

<sup>135</sup> PRO, CAB21/4774, Report by the Working Party on Immigration, 28/7/61.

It seems that whilst the British government were determined to take action against unrestricted Black immigration they were keen to work within the new international language of non-racialism. It is this context that the Commonwealth Immigrants Act can be described as being perceived as a 'distasteful necessity'. Indeed, British governments in the 1950s went to some lengths to avoid the need for legislation, attempting to prevent further Black immigration by more subtle means. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act should be seen as a reaction to the failure of these other tactics.

Early in the 1950s, the government tried to alter African travel documents in order to obscure the nationality of the traveller on the form, thus removing his/her right to travel to Britain. These new 'British Travel certificates' were introduced in 1951 and 1952 ostensibly to prevent stowaways arriving in the UK. A Colonial Office memorandum recorded the ultimate intention of the policy.

The West African colonies issue a special document, known as a British travel certificate, for local travel on the West African coast, and these necessarily have to be issued freely without elaborate safeguards. Arrangements were however made to omit from these documents any statement as to nationality, so that any holder who arrived in the UK could be sent back under alien order powers.<sup>136</sup>

More substantially, attempts were made throughout the decade to influence Commonwealth countries into discouraging emigration to Britain and to spread propaganda in these countries about the lack of employment and housing opportunities in the UK. A 1958 minute from Colonial Office civil servant Ian Watt about his meeting with Profumo recorded government intentions.

After the meeting, Mr Profumo sent for me, to say that the suggestion had been aired in the meeting that there might be some value in

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<sup>136</sup> PRO, CO1028/22, Colonial Office Memorandum, 24/3/53.

HMG's trying to direct towards the West Indies some discreet propaganda to discourage unnecessary emigration to this country.<sup>137</sup>

Watt concluded by noting that a memorandum of this nature had been sent to every West Indian nation. It asked the governments in question to 'extend and expand their publicity measures to bring home to intending emigrants the present grave unemployment situation for West Indians in this country'.<sup>138</sup>

Attempts were likewise made to persuade other governments (notably India and Pakistan) to adopt a similar stance. Although these governments made a sincere effort to limit migration to Britain they were ultimately not able to prevent it, whilst Caribbean governments were much less cooperative about the idea of even trying to discourage their citizens from leaving.<sup>139</sup> The opportunity to migrate to Britain was important to their respective electorates and in nearly all cases domestic unemployment made governments especially reluctant to prevent the departure of excess workers. Additionally, there is evidence that many Commonwealth leaders resented British attempts to exclude their citizens, seeing attempted restriction for the racist policy that it was. Speaking in Birmingham in June 1961, Norman Manley (the Prime Minister of Jamaica) argued the point:

I have not been able to find any sound economic or social reason for putting a ban upon migrancy now and, therefore, I conclude that the real reason – many people who live in England have come to the same conclusions – has to do with colour.<sup>140</sup>

Deakin has concluded that 'the West Indian governments remained unprepared to take any responsibility for a decision which would certainly be exceedingly unpopular with their electorates'.<sup>141</sup> There was indeed widespread resentment within Black

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<sup>137</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Watt minute, 8/9/58.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. Memorandum from Secretary of State for the colonies to all W.I.O. governments. September, 1958.

<sup>139</sup> See Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.50. Paul has argued that the Indian and Pakistani governments were 'extremely cooperative', in Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.152.

<sup>140</sup> PRO, CO1032/304, Birmingham address by Manley, 11/6/61.

<sup>141</sup> Deakin, N, in Rose, E, (et al.), *Colour and Citizenship*, p.218.

Commonwealth countries at the idea of restrictive legislation. One Antiguan journal comprehensively summed up the most common objections:

In the West Indies hey day the English took everything and gave nothing in return...It is the duty of the British today to do what their forefathers have left undone...If West Indians go to the United Kingdom to seek a richer and fuller life today it is because for the years that the British have been in possession of these islands they have been slow in inaugurating the means for West Indians to live richer and fuller lives at home and they have every right to do so.<sup>142</sup>

Caribbean politicians may well have shared these feelings but even if they did not, it was politically untenable for them to assist the British government in a policy of administrative restriction.<sup>143</sup> Ultimately, incapable of exercising the desired level of control without legislation and shy of the international unacceptability of overt racist measures, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was created as the least undesirable method of solving the perceived immigration problem at hand.<sup>144</sup>

This chapter has argued that the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was designed to prevent covertly Black immigration to the UK but it needs also to explain why the willingness existed to exclude Black people from Britain. Most of the remainder of this section will examine the impact of 'racial' discourses in setting and articulating negative attitudes towards Black immigrants and minorities. However, it is briefly important to consider where the pressure for 'racial' exclusion came from. Some analysts have argued that the government had its hand forced over 'racial' restriction by the vehement hostility of the British public towards the immigration of Black people. This case was initially put forward by Donlay Studlar and has recently been reinforced by Randall Hansen.<sup>145</sup> The idea that the public would not stand for

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<sup>142</sup> PRO, CO1031/3932, 'The Workers' Voice: Organ of the Working People of Antigua', 23/10/60.

<sup>143</sup> See Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy since 1939*: '...it would have been politically suicide and economically costly for the Jamaican, or any Caribbean, government to attempt to interfere with the flow of migration', p.103.

<sup>144</sup> See Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, p.61 and Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.122.

<sup>145</sup> Studlar, D, *Great Britain: Decline or Renewal?*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1996, pp.10-18 and Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, pp.110-120. Also see Hiro, D, *Black British, White British*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1971 and Phillips, T, and Phillips, M, *The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain*, Harper Collins, London, 1998, p.190.

further Black immigration was certainly central to the government's explanation of restriction. However, other analysts (most notably Dummett and Dummett) have asserted that the legislation was necessitated by 'racial' prejudices that ran to the very top of the government itself.<sup>146</sup> This chapter will argue that whilst there clearly was some popular hostility towards Black immigration, this hostility did not form an impenetrable barrier around public opinion.<sup>147</sup> More benevolent and welcoming views were also commonplace. Government inability to perceive this public ambivalence and willingness to fear 'racial' hostility in an exaggerated sense should be seen as an indication that wide sections of the administration were themselves influenced by 'racial' discourses and were not merely reacting to public pressure for restriction.<sup>148</sup>

Contemporary analysts of Black Commonwealth immigration to Britain heavily criticised the government for not making a sufficient effort to educate the public or to positively influence opinion about Black people. Likewise, politicians were accused of not providing the necessary facilities and support which could have facilitated smoother Black assimilation into British society.<sup>149</sup> In Glass's study on Black immigrants, she argued: 'So long as the screen of information behind the coloured man is blank, he stands out strikingly as the dark mysterious stranger'.<sup>150</sup> Analysts commissioned by the Jamaican government to assess the 'race' situation in Britain concluded similarly: 'The introduction of foreign workers into Britain was accomplished by the government without much preparation of the native population'.<sup>151</sup> Reports from inside the Colonial Office revealed an irritation that the government had not done more to promote the 'Commonwealth' ideology, which may

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<sup>146</sup> Dummett, M, and Dummett, A, in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, pp.101-102. This view has become the dominating view in British scholarship from early scholars such as Paul Foot, Michael and Anne Dummett and Nicholas Deakin through to Katherine Paul, Ian Spencer, Harry Goulbourne and Bob Carter.

<sup>147</sup> A middle position (emphasising the agency of both government and the general public in creating pressure for immigration control) has been put forward by some scholars notably John Solomos in *Race and Racism in Britain*, pp.61-64. Also see Layton Henry, Z, *The Politics of Race in Britain*, pp.30-31.

<sup>148</sup> Many scholars have emphasised the scope for political leadership in shaping popular attitudes towards Black immigrants. See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.135, Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, pp.120-126, Carter, B, and Joshi, S, 'The Role of Labour in the Creation of a Racist Britain', pp.53-69 and Carter, B, Harris, C, and Joshi, S, 'The 1951-55 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration', pp.335-346.

<sup>149</sup> See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.65.

<sup>150</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.214.

<sup>151</sup> MacKenzie, N, (ed.), Senior, C, & Manley, D, 'The West Indian in Britain', Fabian Colonial Bureau, London, 1956, p.7.

have led to the warmer reception of Black Commonwealth citizens. A Colonial Office report for the Cabinet asserted:

There has not been any definite individual ministerial responsibility for promoting the Commonwealth ideal in this country; only meagre sums have been spent by the Commonwealth Relations Office and Colonial Office.<sup>152</sup>

In the conclusion of her study, Glass emphasised again the importance of the governmental role in immigrant reception and her belief that the present administration were failing to fulfil their responsibilities in this respect.

It is the responsibility of Parliament to give tolerance a push; and to provide a code of standards on matters of race relations. Leaders of opinion will have to give the lead more emphatically than they have done so far.<sup>153</sup>

Other scholars went further than Glass, accusing the government of deliberately neglecting the immigrants in an attempt to create hostility and thus justify restrictive legislation. In an emotive analysis, Foot argued that that the government had left under-funded local and voluntary bodies to absorb and assist the new immigrants in order to deliberately exacerbate 'racial' tension.

While these organisations tackled, unaided, problems with which they were not equipped to deal, the Conservative Party prepared to reap political gain from the resentment and squalor which their own neglect had created.<sup>154</sup>

Whilst Foot's case is hyperbolic and exaggerated, the government clearly did not 'do enough' in the eyes of most analysts to smooth the path into the UK for Commonwealth immigrants. Criticism from Glass, Foot, Dummett and Dummett and

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<sup>152</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Report for the Cabinet, June 1958.

<sup>153</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.229.

<sup>154</sup> Foot, P, *Immigration and Race in British Politics*, p.133.



others has notably centred on the political reaction to 1958 racist rioting in Nottingham and Notting Hill Gate in London. Whilst the government condemned the violence, analysts argued that their reaction appeared to focus on a renewed determination to exclude Black people, not to educate the public or entrench 'race'-equality legislation. Glass contended, regarding the rioting, that 'a firm policy for racial equality in Britain could break into the vicious circle of tension between white and coloured at all levels and in all spheres'.<sup>155</sup> Foot concluded that 'a considerate and coordinated effort by politicians to assist assimilation, to isolate and punish the racialist minority would have been decisive'.<sup>156</sup>

Care must be taken regarding the idea that the government's lack of initiative in promoting good 'race' relations was part of a deliberate attempt to achieve restrictive legislation. Hansen has heavily criticised earlier analysts of the period for assuming 'the state's construction of racism with reference solely to unrepresentative quotations from marginal figures'.<sup>157</sup> However, there is enough evidence to suggest that some ministers indeed wanted the public to take responsibility for restrictive legislation that they themselves desired to enact.

In 1954, as the government were considering the idea of restriction, Cabinet minutes argued that the public would need to be educated in favour of such a measure.<sup>158</sup> The Home Secretary proposed that a committee should be formed 'to focus public opinion on this question' and 'help to gain support for legislation to deal with it'.<sup>159</sup> Minutes from a 1955 Cabinet meeting reveal a governmental desire to actually create public disquiet over rising numbers of immigrants. Discussing the possibility of establishing a public enquiry, the minutes are worth citing at length:

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<sup>155</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.237.

<sup>156</sup> Foot, P, *Immigration and Race in British Politics*, p.234. Recent scholars have reinforced Foot's conclusions concerning the government's perception that it was the presence of a Black community (and not of white racists) that had caused the rioting. See Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, p.59, Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.100 and Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.126. For an alternative analysis see Layton Henry, Z, *The Politics of Race in Britain*, pp.35-37.

<sup>157</sup> Hansen, R, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post War Britain*, p.13.

<sup>158</sup> Some scholars have emphasised a governmental desire to 'educate' public opinion in favour of 'racial' restriction. See Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.109 and Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.166.

<sup>159</sup> PRO, PREM11/824, Cabinet Minutes, 24/11/54.

The first purpose of an enquiry should be to ensure that the public throughout the country were made aware of the nature and extent of the [immigration] problem. Until this was more widely appreciated the need for restrictive legislation would not be recognised. And it could not be certain that the committees report would be such as to rally public opinion in support of restrictive legislation. An authoritative statement of the increasing volume of immigration, and of the social and economic problems to which it was likely to give rise, might prove a better basis for action.<sup>160</sup>

Records of a report by a Committee of Ministers in 1956 confirm the existence of governmental concern that there was a lack of public support for action on the 'race' issue:

...in a controversial matter of this kind the government would wish to be able to count on a satisfactory volume of public support for any step which they decide to take. It is doubtful whether this support would be forthcoming at present.<sup>161</sup>

Whilst 'race' rioting and more pronounced disaffection with Black immigration later in the decade provided the government with a very real constituency to enact legislation, it is revealing that there seems to have been a desire in some government quarters to pursue 'race' policy in advance of this heightened public disquiet. Certainly, in the climate of what Dummett and Dummett have termed the 'slow deterioration of public attitudes' that characterised the end of the 1950s, the government did not act decisively against the prevalence of 'racial' thinking.<sup>162</sup> Even after the rioting and up to the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, public opinion seems to have been much divided on the issue of Black immigration, leaving the government with the scope to influence and set the direction of British policy regarding restrictive legislation.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> PRO, PREM11/824, Cabinet Minutes, 14/6/55.

<sup>161</sup> PRO, CAB129/81, Meeting of Committee of Ministers, 22/6/56.

<sup>162</sup> Dummett, A, and Dummett, M, in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, p.99.

<sup>163</sup> Glass, R, in *Newcomers*, argued that even in the wake of the rioting, ambivalence towards the immigrants was the most common public response, p.123.

The Committee for Commonwealth Immigration in 1959 concluded (regarding Black immigration) in the minutes of one meeting that 'apart from pockets of opinion in areas particularly concerned – no marked public view has yet developed on this subject'.<sup>164</sup> As late as 1961, this committee remained unconvinced that the coming legislation would be publicly popular. The minutes questioned whether immigration control 'would...have the support of public opinion generally?'<sup>165</sup> It is certainly true that similar minutes and comments could be cited to make the opposite argument, that the government thought that restrictive legislation was necessary to placate public opinion. Unarguably, hostility within parts of the press and amongst some of the general public grew as Black immigration increased in the 1950s. However, the argument of this study is not that hostility did not exist, but that it indeed existed in some quarters alongside other perspectives. Glass's analysis neatly summarises the ambivalence of popular responses towards Black immigration.

The majority have an attitude which can be called 'benevolent prejudice' – a combination of passive prejudice and passive tolerance. One or other of these elements becomes predominant in different situations.<sup>166</sup>

Glass's report on West Indian immigration presented throughout this image of public opinion as divided and uncertain. She cited a 'Gallup' poll conducted after the 1958 riots which recorded that only one in ten people felt that the disturbances had been the fault of Black people and that only one in six felt that Black immigration should be restricted.<sup>167</sup> Glass concluded that:

It is, moreover, because British attitudes and behaviour towards coloured people are so rarely equivocal – positively and negatively – that they cannot easily be classified. And when the attempt is made, it

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<sup>164</sup> PRO, CAB21/4335, Committee Minutes, 6/11/59.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. 11/4/61.

<sup>166</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.217.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p.123.

often reflects the all pervasive ambivalence. Instead of providing an account of British prejudice, it tends to be an apologia for it.<sup>168</sup>

It seems inadequate to explain away the Commonwealth Immigrants Act as an unwanted measure forced upon the government by a baying public and more accurate to argue that amongst the government, parliament and the public alike, attitudes towards Black immigration were generally ambivalent.<sup>169</sup> A more sophisticated explanation needs to be offered for the 'racial' restriction of this Act. This chapter will argue that the legislation should be understood within the context of lingering 'racial' discourses. Perceptions about the potential impact of Black settlement in Britain on housing, employment and most importantly and ambiguously on the fabric of the nation, remained rooted in presumptions about the racial 'nature' of the newcomers. It was the potency of these discourses, and not simply the effects of any tangible problem or issue, which led to a governmental desire to exclude Black people from the UK and provided the case for their doing so.<sup>170</sup>

Perhaps the most frequently voiced fears about Black immigration to Britain concerned beliefs about the spread of Black 'racial' stock and Black sexual activity in general. These concerns generated and fed a desire to prevent 'racial' mixing between Black and white people. Learie Constantine observed the social significance of 'racial' mixing in Britain in the 1950s, when he recorded that 'no one can deny that there are unpleasant consequences for the man or woman who marries someone of another colour'.<sup>171</sup> Glass has noted the significance of 'miscegenation' fears in her survey of West Indian immigration. 'As might be expected, the question which evoked the strongest segregationist tendency was on intermarriage: 71% said that they disapproved of marriages between white and coloured people'.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.214.

<sup>169</sup> See Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, pp.59-63.

<sup>170</sup> 'Racial' discourses concerning Black people enabled the construction of a case for restriction not based on the present but on what Spencer has described as 'dire predictions about the future'. See Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.115.

<sup>171</sup> Constantine was an ex-West Indies cricket star and Colonial Office employee who was charged with ironing out local hostility to the employment of Black people. See Constantine, L, *The Colour Bar*, Anchor Press, Essex, 1954, p.23.

<sup>172</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, pp.123-124.

It is important to notice that Glass not only recorded the prevalence of 'miscegenation' fears amongst white Britons, but that she also commented that the level of these fears were as high 'as might be expected'. To Glass and others who worked in this period surrounded by the prevalent discourses on 'racial' mixing and stock, popular hostility to 'miscegenation' was no surprise. Other analysts have confirmed the power of these discourses in post-war 'race' relations. Senior and Manley (social scientists commissioned by the Jamaican government) highlighted the strength of this hostility in their survey of employment prospects for Black people in Britain. They recorded that:

White workers were much more likely to object to the hiring of coloured workers in situations where they might be thrown into contact with white women, than where the jobs involve only males.<sup>173</sup>

A 1951 conference of the British Council of Churches, addressing the issue of Black immigration, similarly argued that it was the fear of miscegenation (and not employment competition), which formed the main barrier to achieving Black assimilation in Britain. The conference agreed a motion that 'the consequences of social mixing, even if it involves marriage, must be accepted if there is to be genuine assimilation'.<sup>174</sup>

Concerns about 'racial' mixing existed within governmental circles. Analysis of a 1956 report by a Committee of Ministers confirms that fears of 'miscegenation' were prominent within government discussions of immigration policy. The report (considering immigration restrictions) argued: 'On present evidence a trend towards miscegenation can neither be forecast nor excluded. If such a trend were to occur it would be an important factor'. It ambiguously concluded that further Black immigration could lead to 'broader problems of social assimilation'.<sup>175</sup> It seems reasonable to consider that it was 'race' mixing that was perceived as the heart of

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<sup>173</sup> Senior, C, and Manley, D, 'The West Indian in Britain', p.16.

<sup>174</sup> Liverpool Central Archive, British Council of Churches, Informal Conference on Coloured Workers, Liverpool, 2-4<sup>th</sup> April, 1951, File H325.

<sup>175</sup> PRO, CAB129/81, Report by Committee of Ministers, 22/6/56.

these 'future problems'.<sup>176</sup> The idea that immigration would lead to undesirable mixed 'race' relationships was again prominent within a Working Party Report the following year.

In most districts where there is a coloured community of a few years standing, many coloured men are married to or living with white women of low social standing or low morals. The number of half-caste children in these districts is increasing and many are thought to be illegitimate.<sup>177</sup>

As has already been noted, 'racial' thinking was at many levels considered taboo in this period. In this context, government remarks that overtly condemned the idea of mixed 'race' relationships were rare. Fundamentally, though, there is no reason to consider that opinion in Westminster and Whitehall differed significantly from that of the general public. A brief analysis of fears surrounding the sexuality of immigrants in fact highlights the similarity between public and governmental concerns.

Black immigrants were widely perceived as being responsible for a disproportionate amount of sexual crime.<sup>178</sup> Glass's report has highlighted the prevalence of this belief: 'The stereotype of the coloured man, who induces white girls to become prostitutes and who lives on their earnings, was frequently mentioned'.<sup>179</sup> The sexual behaviour of Black men became the focus of much anti-immigrant hostility during the 1950s. Analysis of the 1958 Notting Hill riots has interestingly highlighted that the main demand of the white vigilante street squads was the extradition of Black men who had been convicted of sexual 'offences'.<sup>180</sup> Correspondence sent to government minister Edward Boyle by some of his

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<sup>176</sup> See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.123-129 and Kay, D and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, pp.122-124 for the importance placed on the perceived 'racial' stock of potential immigrants.

<sup>177</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Inter-Departmental Working Party Report on the Immigration of Indians and Pakistanis, 17/4/57.

<sup>178</sup> Some analysts have argued that anti-Black discourse in the U.S.A. and South Africa contributed to allegations of Black sexual criminality. See Phillips, T, and Phillips, M, *Windrush*, pp.163-164.

<sup>179</sup> Glass, *Newcomers*, p.150.

<sup>180</sup> See Pilkington, E, *Beyond the Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill White Riots*, Tauris, London, 1988, pp.92-94.

Handsworth constituents was typical of much of the popular hype surrounding the image of the Black sexual criminal. One hysterical letter included a newspaper extract and described a Black man 'attempting apparently to coerce a citizen to consort with a woman, and even attacking the man'.<sup>181</sup> Whilst Boyle was troubled and irritated by these letters, it is clear that this image of the Black man as a sexual criminal also permeated some areas of government thinking and decision-making.

As early as 1953, the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK reported the 'marked number of convictions of coloured men for living on the immoral earnings of white women'. These crimes, the Committee minutes recorded, were 'far more widespread than the few prosecutions indicate'.<sup>182</sup> Four years later, the same Committee that had warned of the dangers of 'race' mixing highlighted that the Indian and Pakistani immigrants under investigation 'display a tendency to engage in brothel keeping and living off the immoral earnings of women'.<sup>183</sup> A report prepared for a governmental response to an adjournment motion repeated the allegation, that 'certain types of immigrant possess a propensity to live on immoral earnings of women'.<sup>184</sup> Whilst many government members, such as Boyle, did not buy deeply into these accusations, the sustained allegations regarding the sexual impropriety of Black immigrants within parliamentary committees goes some way to indicate the agency of 'racial' discourses in shaping government agendas.

Likewise, the popular belief that Black immigrants were bringing sexual diseases to Britain was entertained at length within the government. A 1955 report by the Home Secretary argued that there was 'some suggestion that there is a high incidence of venereal disease among West Indians'. The report admitted though that 'no statement to that effect could be supported by figures'.<sup>185</sup> Three years later, there was still no evidence of a disproportionate prevalence of sexual diseases amongst

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<sup>181</sup> Boyle MSS, 660/14401, Cress to Boyle, 5/9/58.

<sup>182</sup> PRO, CO1028/22, Draft Report of the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK, 28/10/53.

<sup>183</sup> See footnote 58. PRO, CO1032/195, Inter-Departmental Working Party Report on the Immigration of Indians and Pakistanis, 17/4/57.

<sup>184</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Report prepared for government response to adjournment motion by H Hynd, 3/4/58.

<sup>185</sup> PRO, PREM11/824, Home Secretary's Report, 22/8/55.

Black immigrants.<sup>186</sup> A 1958 Working Party report recorded that within the medical establishment 'information about the incidence of venereal disease amongst coloured people was incomplete and they were in the process of conducting a survey into the matter'.<sup>187</sup> However, this lack of information did not prevent the committee from concluding that 'there are indications that the immigrants have added to the work of the venereal disease clinics'.<sup>188</sup> It seems that it was temerity about expressing 'racial' discourses in government documents (and not any lack of belief in these discourses), that led to the removal of a line in the draft report which had argued that V.D. amongst the coloured population was 'increasing and out of all proportion to that amongst white people'.<sup>189</sup> Ultimately, the fact that references to Black sexual diseases occurred frequently amid the absence of any substantial evidence highlights the power of 'racial' discourses and their place in informing government thinking.

Beliefs in sexual differences between Black and white people permeated thinking at all levels of British society. A key aspect of these ideas was the belief that Black male immigrants were more sexually liberated, attractive and promiscuous than white British males.<sup>190</sup> An investigation into the level of penetration of these ideas throughout society reveals that belief in the 'super-sexual' Black male was deep set within the mind frames of most people. Many of those who would have described themselves as having no 'racial' prejudices still believed black sexual difference to be a matter of obvious fact.

One of the best examples of this ambivalent attitude comes in the writing of novelist Colin MacInnes. MacInnes' novels, mostly set in 1950s urban Britain, were overtly critical of anti-Black racism. In *Absolute Beginners*, MacInnes worked to deconstruct many 'racial' myths about Black people. Through the narrator, he challenged the view that Black immigrants all worked 'on the London transport or on building sites' arguing that 'stacks of them are business and professional men'.<sup>191</sup> He

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<sup>186</sup> The government's inability to 'prove' a case against Black immigrants regarding the spread of venereal disease has been highlighted in Spencer, I, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, p.78.

<sup>187</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Working Party on the Immigration of Coloured People, Minutes, 24/1/58.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Record of Draft Report, January, 1958.

<sup>190</sup> See Hoch, P, *White Hero Black Beast*, pp.43-64 and Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, pp.196-197 for analysis of perceptions of Black super-masculinity.

<sup>191</sup> MacInnes, C, *Absolute Beginners*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1959, p.208. For similar characterisations see MacInnes, C, *City of Spades*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1957, pp.173-175.



also criticised government inaction after the Notting Hill riots and mocked the racist elements of the press through the character of the grotesque correspondent 'Amberley Drove'.<sup>192</sup> However, it is clear that MacInnes still accepted the 'racial' image of the Black man as a super-sexual being. The author's challenge to sexual hostility towards Black people was made in *Absolute Beginners*, not by challenging the notion of sexual difference, but by shifting the emphasis onto white women. The narrator argued: 'And what about white chicks?...Don't they like it? I mean, hasn't everybody seen them hanging around the Spades?'<sup>193</sup> This white weakness for Black sexual prowess was indeed epitomised in the lead character 'Suzette', who was (the reader was told) 'Spade-crazy'.<sup>194</sup>

MacInnes' views on this subject were reinforced in his non-fiction analysis of Black British life, *English, Half English*. In this study, the author showed a clear belief in differences of sexual morality between Black and white people rooted in the 'primitive' nature of Black character. 'If coloured men or women seem, to our eyes, more happily amoral, we should perhaps remember that the Christian conceptions are still incredibly novel to them'.<sup>195</sup> MacInnes further argued:

An article of faith among racials is that every coloured man is longing to embrace a white woman. It is somewhat disconcerting to discover that there seems much truth in this.<sup>196</sup>

MacInnes was far from alone as a pro-immigrant who was still chained to the 'racial' idea of Black sexual difference. Paul Foot outlined that V.D. was indeed more common among the Black community due to 'their free and easy attitude towards sex' and their being 'less inhibited about prostitutes than the indigenous

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<sup>192</sup> MacInnes, C, *Absolute Beginners*. Criticism of government reaction post-rioting on p.228. For his description of 'Amberley Drove' who writes for the 'Mrs Dale Daily', pp.193-195.

<sup>193</sup> MacInnes, C, *Absolute Beginners*, p.197.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* p.15.

<sup>195</sup> MacInnes, C, *English, Half English*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1961, p.26.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* p.24. The author finally confirms his belief in 'race' difference in this text as he comments on the question of whether white and Black people can be friends with one another. 'One hastens to say "Yes"; but then, remembering the distant look that sometimes comes into the opaque brown eyes – that moment when they suddenly depart irrevocably within themselves far off towards a hidden, alien, secretive, quite untouchable horizon – one must ultimately, however reluctantly, answer, "No"...', p.29. MacInnes voiced this perspective in almost the same words through the character of Theodora in *City of Spades*, pp.271-284.

population'.<sup>197</sup> Likewise, sociologist Anthony Richmond argued that Black men had trouble settling in Britain due to their belief in 'promiscuous sexual relations...as normal behaviour'.<sup>198</sup> Richmond concluded that 'sexual maladjustment is sometimes at the bottom of the criminal behaviour found among some West Indians'.<sup>199</sup> Another sociologist, Sheila Patterson, concurred in her analysis of the 'new' Black community, *Dark Strangers*: 'Real differences emerged particularly strongly in the matter of values and norms associated with sex and family life'.<sup>200</sup>

If, as has been suggested here, even liberal academic and generally pro-immigrant theorists did not always challenge 'racial' ideas of Black super-sexuality in this period, it is perhaps unsurprising that beliefs in Black promiscuity and deviancy were common currency amongst the general public and policy makers. Glass recorded the potency of these beliefs in her 1960 research.

There is no doubt that a tangle of sexual images about the coloured man, and of sexual competition with him, strongly affects attitudes to coloured people, in general, outside the place of work.<sup>201</sup>

Despite his own ambivalent opinions on the subject, Richmond too noted the obsessive public interest in Black sexuality. In a 1950 analysis of stereotypes, he cited the existence of 'strange beliefs about Negro sexuality, his high fertility and promiscuity' along with 'the belief that once a woman has had sexual relations with a Negro she will never return to a white man'.<sup>202</sup>

Views of this kind seemingly permeated government thinking on Black immigrants. Eden, in a paper for Cabinet in 1955, echoed a belief in Black promiscuity. Describing the Black family, he argued:

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<sup>197</sup> Foot, P, *Immigration and Race in British Politics*, p.239.

<sup>198</sup> Richmond, A, *Colour Prejudice in Britain*, p.79.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. p.80.

<sup>200</sup> Patterson, S, *Dark Strangers*, p.338.

<sup>201</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.86.

<sup>202</sup> Richmond, A, 'Economic Insecurity and Stereotypes as Factors in Colour Prejudice', p.154.

In some cases the woman does not even know the name of the father, who frequently contributes nothing to the support of his children and probably scarcely knows of their existence.<sup>203</sup>

This idea, that Black people were especially prone to dysfunctional family life, was not only an individual view but permeated the outlook of government agencies with direct responsibilities for the new immigrants. A report from the National Assistance Board in May 1958 highlighted how 'racial' discourses influenced thinking within government bodies. The report contended that the majority of Black people were 'living communally, in the fullest sense of the term, a form of living which is their natural way of life'.<sup>204</sup> These attitudes indicate that the old 'racial' image of the Black man as a 'monstrous penis', still impacted widely on thinking in post-war Britain.<sup>205</sup>

Specific hostility towards Black immigration was often rooted in a fear that 'blackness', by mixing, would alter the 'racial' makeup of the nation. Cabinet minutes from 1955 highlighted this feeling, expressing the concern that 'there would be a significant change in the racial character of the English people'.<sup>206</sup> A Committee of Ministers Report, the following year, reiterated the point. 'We clearly cannot undertake to absorb in such a densely populated island inhabited by a different racial strain all the coloured immigrants who may wish to come here'.<sup>207</sup> The colour of the immigrants, and the character traits perceived through this colour, were seen as an insurmountable barrier to assimilation.<sup>208</sup> Simply, to many, 'blackness' was not British and could not be British. Sivanandan has argued, regarding perceptions in the period, 'that a Black citizen was not completely a British citizen when he was a black British citizen'.<sup>209</sup> Glass similarly noted:

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<sup>203</sup> PRO, PREM11/824, Cabinet Paper by Eden, 28/10/55.

<sup>204</sup> PRO, AST7/1614, Report from the National Assistance Board, 21/5/58.

<sup>205</sup> The characterisation of Black masculinity in this way is presented in Doane, M.A., *Femmes Fatales*, p.225.

<sup>206</sup> PRO, PREM11/824, Cabinet Minutes, 2/11/55.

<sup>207</sup> PRO, CAB129/81, Report by Committee of Ministers, 22/6/56.

<sup>208</sup> Paul has argued: 'Skin colour was considered to be an unmodifiable racial characteristic', in Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.129. Also see Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, p.117 and Goulbourne, H, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post Imperial Britain*, pp.122-125.

<sup>209</sup> Sivanandan, A, *A Different Hunger: Writings on Black Resistance*, Pluto Press, London, 1982, p.108.

Although the coloured migrant is a British citizen by law, it is still true that he is set apart in this society – officially and privately; subtly or crudely; positively or negatively.<sup>210</sup>

The deliberate exemption of the Irish from the 1962 legislation seems to suggest that it was 'blackness' which was perceived as inherently foreign, 'alien' and undesirable.<sup>211</sup> Dummett and Dummett argued, regarding the Commonwealth Immigrants Act that:

...anyone genuinely concerned about total numbers, irrespective of colour, would be bound to seek control of the largest section of immigrants, the Irish, and, when a ceiling was imposed on Commonwealth immigration, to demand a similar ceiling for European immigration.<sup>212</sup>

The government decision to exclude the Irish from the legislation can be seen as a 'racial' one. The Irish needed separate consideration, G.Lloyd George argued in a 1955 note, as 'the Irish are not – whether they like it or not – a different race from the ordinary inhabitants of Great Britain'.<sup>213</sup> This view was not shared by everyone and indeed many scholars have noted that Irish immigrants were very much 'racialised' separately from Anglo-Saxons.<sup>214</sup> Ultimately, however, in 'racial' hierarchical thinking, the Irish were perceived by many as acceptable and assimilable immigrants.<sup>215</sup>

It is significant that the desire to preserve the British 'racial' character was not seen as threatened by the Irish who were perceived as insiders within the 'fence' of

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<sup>210</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.119.

<sup>211</sup> See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.90-110, Goulbourne, H, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post Imperial Britain*, p.115, Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, pp.251-254, Miles, R, *Racism and Migrant Labour*, pp.121-150 or Solomos, J, *Race and Racism in Britain*, pp.40-43.

<sup>212</sup> Dummett, A, and Dummett, M, in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, p.102.

<sup>213</sup> PRO, CAB129/102, Note by G.Lloyd George, 18/8/55.

<sup>214</sup> See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, Curtis, L, *Nothing but the Same Old Story*, Swift, R, and Gilley, S, (eds.), *The Irish in the Victorian City*, Croom Helm, London, 1985 and Hickman, M, *Religion, Class and Identity: the State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain*, Avebury, Aldershot, 1995, pp.3-16.

<sup>215</sup> This point has been emphasised by Paul: '...though perceived as a distinct community of Britishness, inferior to the domestic, Irish migrants apparently ranked higher on the imperial scale than British subjects of colour'. See Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.107.

British 'racial' preservation. In this context, the Irish government were approached by the British administration, not as part of a request to prevent the movement of their own citizens (as was the case with Black Commonwealth governments), but to join Britain in an attempt to exclude other (Black) immigration.<sup>216</sup>

...the Home Office expect to be able to make arrangements with the Republican authorities whereby such people (and especially coloured immigrants) would not be allowed to enter the Republic except on terms similar to those prescribed by our proposed bill. It is thus hoped that Britain and Ireland will form what would amount to a continuous immigration ring fence, as is at present the case in respect of aliens.<sup>217</sup>

Black immigrants were perceived as permanently un-British within this mind frame and to 'racially' threaten both British appearance and British character. As a Working Party report in 1953 concluded: 'Such a community is certainly no part of the concept of England or Britain to which people of British stock throughout the Commonwealth are attached'.<sup>218</sup>

In a 'racial' sense, Black immigrants were seen as essentially 'alien' and unassimilable. These beliefs mingled with perceptions of Black sexual difference to create a powerful hostility to Black absorption in the UK. Other 'racial' discourses led to further hostility towards the immigration of Black communities, notably setting attitudes towards Black people as workers and neighbours.<sup>219</sup> In a time when Britain badly needed workers, these ideas prevented many people from perceiving that Black people could be utilised to fill needed labour roles.

A government report in 1948 made the argument that whilst workers were needed in the UK, Black 'colonials' could not be used to solve these labour problems. 'Colonial' workers, the report argued, were unsuited to fill the vacancies in the British

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<sup>216</sup> For details of this agreement see Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, p.109.

<sup>217</sup> PRO, DO175/121, Report by D.M. Cleary on a memorandum by the Home Secretary, 28/9/61.

<sup>218</sup> PRO, CO1028/22, Report of the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK, 4/12/53.

<sup>219</sup> See Freeman, M.D.A., and Spencer, S, 'Immigration Control, Black Workers and the Economy', *British Journal of Law and Society*, Vol: 6, No: 1, 1979, pp.53-81.

economy. It was asserted that Black women could not be utilised in the nursing profession due to concerns about their 'qualifications as regards education, health and general suitability'.<sup>220</sup> Likewise, they could not be used in domestic service as this 'would not', the report argued without further explanation, 'be a satisfactory career for coloured colonial women'.<sup>221</sup> As for men, 'no case could be made out in the present circumstances for the importation of male colonials for any industry', the report contended.<sup>222</sup> It concluded that 'while there are still deficiencies in individual industries, in general these do not, for various reasons, provide opportunities for absorbing Colonial workers on any substantial scale'.<sup>223</sup>

It is reasonable to consider that these ill-argued rejections of Black labour were fuelled by characterisations of Black worker inferiority. Whilst the report did not ultimately settle the future of Black employment in the UK, it neatly reveals some sustained attitudes about Black workers.<sup>224</sup> Black workers were often perceived as suitable only for menial work and as not being capable of the same levels of diligence and professionalism as 'local' white workers. A 1953 note from the Ministry of Labour and National Service argued that Black labour could not be utilized in industry as 'the speed of work in modern factories is said to be quite beyond their capacity'.<sup>225</sup> Similarly dismissive of Black ability, a 1957 report argued that immigration restriction was necessary as there 'is a scarcity of semi-skilled and unskilled jobs which generally speaking are the only ones for which coloured people are suitable'.<sup>226</sup> Glass has recorded the prevalence of these stereotypes across wider society. 'Their [black workers] conduct and performance are heavily criticised – quite often by firms which have had no experience or very little experience, of

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<sup>220</sup> PRO, HO213/868, Report of the Working Party on the Employment in the United Kingdom of Surplus Colonial Labour, October, 1948, p.6.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. p.4.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>224</sup> It is worth noting that that this report was produced under a Labour administration. Whilst the Conservative Party are usually held responsible for the beginnings of post-war 'racial' immigration restriction, this report shows that Labour politicians were also susceptible to 'racial' thinking and that 1950s 'race' politics should not be seen as being divided along party lines. For analysis of left wing racism in this period see Carter, B, and Joshi, S, 'The Role of Labour in the Creation of a Racist Britain', pp.53-69 or Phizacklea, A, and Miles, R, *Labour and Racism*, pp.224-229. Also see Bevan, V, *The Development of British Immigration Law*, p.79.

<sup>225</sup> PRO, CO1028/22, Note from Ministry of Labour and National Service, 4/12/53.

<sup>226</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Working Party Report on Indian and Pakistani Immigration, 17/4/57.

employing coloured people'.<sup>227</sup> Likewise, Wright's analysis of managerial behaviour seems to indicate the impact of Black worker inferiority discourses. He argued that 'some managers made considerably exaggerated claims concerning the lack of diligence and amenability to discipline of the West Indian workers they had employed'.<sup>228</sup>

Views on Black worker inferiority were overtly expressed in sections of the media. The *Sunday Graphic* recorded that employers 'find the coloured man... is inefficient compared to his English workmate'.<sup>229</sup> MacInnes, in *English, Half English*, offered a similar perspective: 'They aren't responsible in the way so many Englishmen are'.<sup>230</sup> Amid these discourses of Black worker inferiority, it is perhaps unsurprising that white British workers were often hostile to the employment of Black colleagues and even more so to the idea that they should work under Black people. Banton, in an analysis of Black/white labour relations, recorded the status fears felt by white workers where black employees were taken on. Workers often did not want to feel that their work was 'coloured men's work', Banton argued.<sup>231</sup> Wright similarly asserted that the white British worker 'tends to become anxious over his status and job security when a high proportion of immigrants are employed on his job'.<sup>232</sup> Additionally, Wright noted 'white' hostility to the idea of Black seniority. 'British workers are often reluctant to accept coloured workers in positions directly above themselves in the status hierarchy'.<sup>233</sup>

Perceptions about the respective weaknesses of Caribbean and Asian workers were often slightly different. Although it is fair to include both within a more general understanding of Black worker inferiority discourses, many people articulated different characterisations of inadequacy more specifically, according to the origin

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<sup>227</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.90.

<sup>228</sup> White, P, *The Coloured Worker in British Industry*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968, p.215.

<sup>229</sup> *The Sunday Graphic*, 26/10/52.

<sup>230</sup> MacInnes, C, *English, Half English*, p.23.

<sup>231</sup> Banton, M, *White and Coloured*, p.165.

<sup>232</sup> White, P, *The Coloured Worker in British Industry*, p.24. Also see Pilkington, E, *Beyond the Mother Country*, pp.87-89.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.* p.214. Peach has argued: 'Because of the shortage of labour, there was a grudging acceptance of the necessity for coloured labour, but generally on the basis of "thus far and no further", that is, in colour quotas, in the reservation of certain skills and supervisory categories for white workers and so on'. See Peach, C, *West Indian Migration to Britain*, p.95.

(and appearance) of the Black person in question.<sup>234</sup> The most repeatedly asserted differences which were said to exist between Asian and Caribbean immigrants held that Asian workers were harder working and more reliable, whereas Caribbean workers were more capable and intelligent. Again, Wright has recorded these perceptions within his study of 'coloured' workers. Whilst Caribbean workers spoke English and had more 'industrial sophistication', the Asians had 'greater diligence and amenability to discipline'.<sup>235</sup> Implicit within this discourse was the idea that Asians were inherently subservient and natural followers of authority. Sociologist Ruth Henderson's description of the Asian work ethic is comprehensible in this context.

They tend to work in large groups with a leader, sometimes known as a 'Big Uncle', who interprets for them, and often looks after them outside working hours as well.<sup>236</sup>

Caribbean immigrants were often perceived as less disciplined and more volatile than Asians, though these negative traits were tied to the belief that Caribbean workers were more capable than their Asian counterparts. There was indeed reluctance among some officials to restrict Black immigration on the grounds that legislation would affect 'superior' Caribbean workers in the same way as Asian ones. Ian Watt, of the Colonial Office, made this a repeated theme within his correspondence on immigration.

What has, I think, made ministers take a sharper look at the problem has been the great increase in arrivals from India and Pakistan, nearly all of them feckless individuals who have neither the 'British' background of the West Indians, nor their abilities.<sup>237</sup>

Watt repeated this argument in a memorandum sent to West Indian governments in 1958 asking for help with voluntary restriction:

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<sup>234</sup> See Hiro, D, *Black British White British* for an analysis which focuses on the differences between the way in which Caribbean and Asian workers were perceived.

<sup>235</sup> White, P, *The Coloured Worker in British Industry*, p. 214.

<sup>236</sup> Henderson, J, 'A Sociological Report: Race Relations in Britain', in Long, H, (ed.), *Coloured Immigrants in Britain*, Oxford University Press, London, 1960, p.67.

<sup>237</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Watt minute, 1/5/58.



The Indians and Pakistanis are, it is readily admitted, hardly fit to compare to the West Indians either socially or as industrial workers; nevertheless they are lumped together with the West Indians as 'coloured immigrants'.<sup>238</sup>

Whilst 'racial' discourses regarding worker inferiority had a substantial impact on the fate of the new Black immigrants, discourses regarding Black living standards were even more significant in setting public responses to Black people. These perceptions, perhaps more than any other, hampered Black integration into British communities.<sup>239</sup> Glass argued that 'racial' thinking was most significant as a social force where housing matters were concerned: 'In general, resentment of coloured people in Britain is shown most openly and clearly in the field of housing'.<sup>240</sup> A report for ministers by the Working Committee on Coloured Immigration in 1958 concluded: 'Housing is the most serious problem at present arising from coloured immigration and there is no doubt that the situation in the affected areas continues to be acute'.<sup>241</sup> Even reports designed to present a positive outlook regarding Black immigration highlighted housing as an area of concern:

Although the coloured population are not on the whole being assimilated into the life of this country, they are nevertheless tolerated and little friction has occurred except occasionally over housing difficulties.<sup>242</sup>

Many writers on 'race' issues in this period observed the difficulties faced by Black immigrants as they attempted to gain accommodation in Britain.<sup>243</sup> 'Racial' discourses played a major part in creating these difficulties, as stereotyped images of

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<sup>238</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Memorandum sent to West Indian Governments, 1958.

<sup>239</sup> See Peach: 'Of the twin difficulties facing the West Indians of breaking into the white reservations of jobs and housing, housing is the greatest' in Peach, C, *West Indian Migration to Britain*, p.100. Also see Pilkington, E, *Beyond the Mother Country*, pp.77-83.

<sup>240</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.124 (footnote).

<sup>241</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Report to Ministers by the Working Committee, 5/2/58.

<sup>242</sup> PRO, AST7/1535, Report prepared by Miss Hornsby-Smith to respond to an adjournment motion in the House of Commons by Hynd, 3/4/58.

<sup>243</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, pp.55-67, Patterson, S, *Dark Strangers*, p. 335, Carey, A.T., *Colonial Students: A Study of the Social Adaptation of Colonial Students in London*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1956, p.54 and Rose, E, (et al.), *Colour and Citizenship*, pp.120-138.

the Black 'primitive' mitigated against white acceptance of Black neighbours. Common reasons for white rejection were that Black immigrants were dirty, odorous and did not have the same 'standards' as other British people. In a Home Office meeting after the Notting Hill riots, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner articulated the white resentment that he saw as causing the riots in terms of perceived Black living standards.

Local white residents felt that the coloured immigrants reduced the amenities of the neighbourhood, and, in particular, that they lived in conditions which the local and public authorities would not tolerate for white people.<sup>244</sup>

In this meeting, a report provided from interviews with Notting Hill MPs offered the same explanation for rioting. Discontent had arisen, it argued, as 'white people in the area felt they have been subjected to long provocation by coloured people living disreputable lives in appalling conditions'.<sup>245</sup>

These explanations for the rioting indicate that some parliamentarians and government members shared beliefs about Black poor living standards. At least, there is little sign that the perceptions of 'provocation' described above were challenged in post-riot investigations. Other evidence more explicitly indicates governmental views. A report from a 1953 Working Party described how Black immigrants lived in conditions 'described variously as primitive, squalid and deplorable'.<sup>246</sup> Another investigation conducted four years later by Conservative Party officials concurred: 'Because of hygienic and certain racial considerations, tenement tenancies had been reluctantly abandoned by the original tenants. This applied particularly to Asians because of their very different habits'.<sup>247</sup>

As has been argued regarding Black immigration in general, if the government did not share popular prejudices it certainly did not work actively to eradicate

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<sup>244</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Minutes of meeting between Home Secretary and A Robertson, 3/9/58.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. Report compiled by Renton after meeting with MPs Tomney and Rogers.

<sup>246</sup> PRO, CO1028/22, Report of the Working Party on Coloured People Seeking Employment in the UK, 28/10/53.

<sup>247</sup> PRO, CO1028/195, Report of Conservative Party Officials under the Chairmanship of Mrs Henry Brooke, 7/6/57.

them.<sup>248</sup> Ultimately, restrictive legislation was employed nominally to prevent the exacerbation of these tensions. Using restriction as a solution to housing disputes exposed a mind frame in which Black people were considered culpable for creating 'race' problems. As Jim Rose (Director of the Race Relations Survey) argued in retrospective correspondence with Edward Boyle, government provision of sufficient housing, not 'racial' restriction, was the needed action. 'There's been no planning. There's been no thought given to this at all. We have a colossal housing shortage here and housing is political dynamite'.<sup>249</sup> Government failure to challenge housing discrimination through legislation or even substantive education played a significant part in creating a 'vicious circle' regarding Black living standards in Britain.<sup>250</sup> Simply, racist refusal to let or sell property to Black people often created the overcrowding and exploitative tenancy arrangements which led to resentment and prejudice. As Glass argued: 'While high rents, overcrowding and sharing are in part caused, and certainly accentuated, by colour prejudice, such conditions, in turn, create prejudice'.<sup>251</sup>

However, the prejudices described here by Glass were not only caused by the realities of Black living in Britain, they also owed much to the traditional 'racial' discourses highlighted above. This perhaps becomes most evident amid a consideration of some of the more graphic caricatures of Black standards and attitudes, which emerged in this period. The myth that Black people, either as tenants or owners of property, bullied white neighbours into leaving in order to create 'all Black' areas, serves as a good example of perceptions of the Black man as an uncivilised danger. A report from a 1957 Working Party commented: 'The attitude of some coloured landlords in London towards white tenants is described as vicious; it is said they will go to any lengths to evict white persons'.<sup>252</sup> More dramatically, a Conservative councillor described the behaviour of immigrants in an address to a Birmingham Conservative group:

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<sup>248</sup> For analysis of this government inaction see Paul, K, *Whitewashing Britain*, pp.135-141 or Carter, B, and Joshi, S, 'The Role of Labour in the Creation of a Racist Britain', pp.55-69.

<sup>249</sup> Boyle MSS, Rose to Boyle, 22534, 17/11/64.

<sup>250</sup> For a sophisticated analysis of inter-'racial' housing conflict see Back, L, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and Multi-Culture in Young Lives*, University College London Press, London, pp.42-72.

<sup>251</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.55. Peach has similarly concluded regarding this 'vicious circle' in Peach, C, *West Indian Migration to Britain*, p.100.

<sup>252</sup> PRO, CO1032/195, Working Party Report on Indians and Pakistanis, 17/4/57.

He told us of an old lady living in Smethwick alone aged 84. Indians both sides of her coming into her house and stealing from her and telling her to get out. The terror she experienced from these caused her death.<sup>253</sup>

Even some 'race'-relations analysts bought into these images. Judith Henderson described how Black tenants were not above using bullying tactics 'to get rid of the whites and make room for their own friends'.<sup>254</sup> Whilst she conceded that Black people genuinely suffered over the issue of housing, she concluded amid some ambivalence that Black problems had 'been strengthened by the behaviour of recent immigrants'.<sup>255</sup>

The idea that liberal analysts of British 'racial' issues in the post-war period were not exempt from the potent lure of 'racial' discourse has been a repeated theme of this chapter so far. The aim is not to discredit these scholars but to show the level of penetration of 'race' thinking, even in this nominally post-'racial' period. In issues like housing and employment, perceptions regarding the inherent qualities of Blackness undoubtedly shaped policy and most responses to Black immigrants. This kind of thinking reflected deeper fears about the potential impact that Black immigration could have on Britain as a society, as perceived in a deeply 'racial' sense.

#### d) Jewish & Black Immigrants: The Discourse of Undesirability

Sivanandan has argued that 'racial' thinking in the post-war period should be considered more as a heightened exclusive nationalism emerging from World War Two and that in this context, post-war anti-Black racism needs to be understood as a symptom of a more general xenophobia.

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<sup>253</sup> Minutes of Birmingham Conservative and Unionist Association, Reservoir Joint Branch Meeting, held at Birmingham Central Archive. Speech by Mr Finney from Smethwick Council, 9/9/65. Interestingly, the speech which famously forced the resignation of Enoch Powell during the 'Race' Relations Act Commons Debate of 1968 echoed both Finney's tone and sentiments. For analysis, see Shepherd, R, *Enoch Powell*, Hutchinson, London, 1996, p.348.

<sup>254</sup> Henderson, J, 'A Sociological Report: Race Relations in Britain', p.61.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

The basic intention of government, one might say, was to anchor in legislation an institutional system of discrimination against foreign labour, but because the labour happened to be black, it ended up by institutionalising racism instead.<sup>256</sup>

Sivanandan's notion of British 'discrimination against foreign labour' can be deconstructed within the comparative analysis of Jewish and Black immigration experiences in post-war Britain. Although this scholar has rightly recognised the potency of xenophobia in this period, this chapter has argued that British hostility towards Black labour (and for that matter towards Jewish labour) cannot be explained away as an almost coincidental aspect of a general xenophobia.<sup>257</sup> Jewish and Black immigration met with a particular British reaction which, contrary to Sivanandan's analysis, did not simply occur 'because the labour happened to be Black'. Instead, this chapter has argued that 'racial' discourses shaped the reception of certain perceived 'racial' groups leading to different immigration experiences for different communities. Popular and political reactions towards specific immigrant groups never equated to a monolithic response.<sup>258</sup> It is arguable, however, certainly in terms of policy decisions and the focus of public attention, that Jewish and Black immigrants were 'racially' imagined as undesirable to a greater extent than other immigrants, notably other white Europeans and white people from the Empire/Commonwealth.

'Racial' discourses shaped images of the Black and the Jew as particularly undesirable immigrants. Both groups were perceived as unsuitable workers to solve the British labour crisis. Jews were 'racially' rejected as inherently cosmopolitan, parasitical and work-shy, whilst Black labour was deemed unusable amid 'racial' perceptions of Black unreliability and mental inferiority. 'Racial' discourses also contributed to wider images of Jews and Blacks as poor citizens and neighbours. Whilst perceptions of Jewish and Black undesirability were very different, they were

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<sup>256</sup> Sivanandan, A, *A Different Hunger*, p.113.

<sup>257</sup> Other analysts have emphasised the increase in nationalistic feeling in the wake of the war. See Calder, A, *The Myth of the Blitz*, pp.196-201, and Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.223.

<sup>258</sup> See Holmes, C, *John Bull's Island*, for a study that has stressed variety and ambivalence in popular responses towards immigrants, pp.295-314.

similarly 'racial', concerned with supposed inherent truths about Black and Jewish types and behaviour. In both cases, these immigrant groups were widely perceived as 'unassimilable' within British society, as permanently different and threatening.<sup>259</sup> Glass's contention (regarding the reactions of white Britons to the prospect of a significant Black population) that 'multi-racialism in Britain is treated like a security risk', equally well describes fears concerning the perceived 'racial' impact of further Jewish immigration to the UK.<sup>260</sup> Ultimately, amid negative 'racial' perceptions, the British government went to great lengths to prevent the immigration of Jews and Blacks whilst actively encouraging the immigration of other ethnic groups.<sup>261</sup>

Another similarity between the histories of Black and Jewish immigration in this period concerns the desire of the British government to cloak 'racial' immigration policies. The chapter has noted the importance of international discourse on 'race' in the wake of the Holocaust in creating an environment where 'racial' decision making was taboo. However, Gilroy's contention that any 'special moral political climate that arose in the aftermath of National Socialism and the death of millions was a transitory phenomenon' is pertinent.<sup>262</sup> Whilst changes in international discourse signalled the abandonment of 'race' as a respectable concept in British science, the history of post-war Black and Jewish immigration exposes that this new climate translated across wider society into little more than a shift in semantic niceties. British society learnt new manners in the post-war period, notably that articulating difference in explicitly 'racial' terms was unacceptable. However, 'racial' thinking in a variety of disguised and re-worded forms still permeated popular thinking and was influential in government decision making, especially as regards to immigration policy. As Gilroy has concluded, there were indeed 'many subtle shadings between the biological and the cultural'.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> See Carter, B, *Realism and Racism*, pp.117-121, Cesarani, D, *Justice Delayed*, p.70 and Kay, D, and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers*, pp.169-178.

<sup>260</sup> Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.112.

<sup>261</sup> Kay and Miles have stressed that for some European groups 'racial' categorization led to positive discrimination, rendering them extremely desirable as immigrants in Kay, D and Miles, R, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, p.175.

<sup>262</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.25.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.* p.34.

This chapter has argued that in policies involving Jewish and Black immigrants and minorities, the government often shrouded 'racial' rejection in a variety of ostensibly non-'racial' words and policies. In both the European Voluntary Workers Scheme and in the Commonwealth Immigrants Act the government effectively managed to restrict the immigration of 'racial' groups which it perceived undesirable, whilst managing to leave the door to Britain open for other 'racially' preferred communities. In both cases, 'racial' restriction was achieved surreptitiously, without any acknowledgment from the government that an agenda of this nature was operating in immigration policy. It is significant to note that this tendency of attempting to control the 'racial' make-up of the nation through debates surrounding immigration has been a feature of British policy ever since this time, setting a precedent which has enabled politicians 'to represent the problem as being about immigration, rather than about race'.<sup>264</sup>

Both regarding Jewish and Black immigration, the government attempted to covertly restrict entry to Britain by utilising non-legislative, administrative means. This too enabled 'race' restriction without the need for any overt governmental justification of 'race' thinking. This chapter has argued that Jewish Holocaust refugees, supposedly eligible for immigration to Britain in the Distressed Relatives Scheme, were in reality prevented from utilising the programme because of deliberately obstructive administrative restrictions. Similarly, Black immigrants were prevented secretly from entering Britain in the 1950s and 1960s by the government's decision to subtly issue African travellers with 'British Travel Certificates' instead of passports and by negotiations with Asian and Caribbean governments. In the wake of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, inequitable distribution of immigration vouchers to 'Black' Commonwealth countries similarly ensured restriction without the need for 'racial' legislation.<sup>265</sup>

Whilst popular hostility towards Black and Jewish immigration did exist as a force within public opinion, in both cases the government did not do enough to positively influence popular attitudes. Kushner's pertinent reading of governmental

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<sup>264</sup> Dummett, A, and Dummett, M, in Husband, C, (ed.), *Race in Britain*, p.101. Also see Bevan, V, *The Development of British Immigration Law*, p.78.

<sup>265</sup> Fryer, P, *Staying Power*, pp.381-385.

reactions to wartime anti-Semitism (that leaders were too quick to misread public 'ambivalence' as 'antipathy') also rings true for government behaviour regarding post-war public attitudes towards Black immigrants.<sup>266</sup> Kushner has merely argued that the government misjudged the public mood and were too hasty to restrict immigration in order to avoid an increase in racism. However, analysis of the decisions to restrict Jewish and Black post-war immigration (and especially of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act), has led to a further contention here, namely that government members sometimes cynically used the threat of public hostility in order to achieve the 'racial' restriction that they themselves desired.

Governmental willingness to act to ease tensions between Britons and European Volunteer Workers reinforces the point. Seemingly, when the government perceived that immigrants were desirable, they were prepared to take an active role in helping these communities to settle and in ensuring that the workforce and wider public shared their perspective regarding the desirability of the presence of the new workers. However, where immigrants were seen as undesirable by the government, the executive claimed it was powerless to prevent the growth of public hostility and took no such measures to ease the absorption of the new populations.<sup>267</sup>

It is clear that Jews and Blacks shared much in this period in terms of the way in which they were 'racially' perceived by the British government and by much of the wider population. Ultimately, despite changes in international discourse on 'racial' thinking both groups encountered hostility towards their entry to Britain, based substantially in 'racial' discourse. The potency of these ideas played a crucial role in ensuring that Blacks and Jews were most often seen as undesirable immigrants to the UK in the post-war period.

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<sup>266</sup> Kushner, T, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p.276.

<sup>267</sup> Some analysts have indeed recorded similarities in Black/Jewish 'racial' discourses in this period. Richmond recorded that 'colour prejudice was closely related to other forms of ethnocentrism such as anti-Semitism', in that it was 'of similar social and psychological origin' in Richmond, A, *The Colour Problem*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1955, p.240. Glass likewise made a comparison between the nature of Jewish and Black persecution, highlighting how the nature of both prejudices enabled perceptions of good Jewish or Black individuals but only as exceptions to the general behaviour of their communities. The racist, Glass recorded: '...is not prepared, however, to regard the "good" Jew or "white" Negro as anything but exceptional; he does not change his generalisations about Jews or Negroes on the basis of his experience with individuals from these groups' in Glass, R, *Newcomers*, p.126. Also see Bevan, V, *The Development of British Immigration Law*, p.77 and Pilkington, E, *Beyond the Mother Country*, pp.42, 45 and 88.



## Conclusion

Historical analysis of 'race' as a factor in British societal affairs has often been dominated by Marxist/non-Marxist academic disputes concerning the causal primacy of economics and ideology in shaping majority-minority relations. By assessing the role of scientific thinking in shaping popular attitudes towards 'race', this thesis has offered a fresh focus to the discussion, stressing the importance of diverse and autonomous intellectual and ideological theory in the formation of British 'racial' identities. Scientific and popular 'racial' thinking concerning Black and Jewish immigrants and minorities in Britain has been considered throughout in order to develop this analysis and probe the formation of 'racial' ideas in twentieth century British society. By illuminating similarities and differences between the Black and Jewish experiences of 'race' thinking, this thesis has enabled a more sophisticated understanding of the role of 'race' in societal affairs, especially concerning immigration policy and implementation.

It has become clear that 'racial' theory seriously affected both the entry (or refusal of entry) and the assimilation of Black and Jewish people in British society throughout the period under consideration. Whilst substantial differences of experience existed, and although Blacks and Jews were 'racially' imagined in different ways, discourses surrounding both these perceived 'racial' groups played a substantial role in setting policy and attitudes towards them at all levels of British society. This thesis has not contended that only Black and Jewish minorities were affected by 'racial' theory. Nevertheless, it has argued that the potency of Semitic and anti-Black 'racial' discourses ensured specifically targeted responses in terms of state policy and public opinion which have merited this scholastic approach, focusing on Blacks and Jews in their own right.

In terms of legislation, the thesis has argued that Aliens Acts in 1905 and 1919 were targeted primarily at preventing the immigration of European Jews and that the Special Restriction Order of 1925 and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962

were subtly designed to prevent further Black immigration to Britain.<sup>1</sup> Around these legislative measures, the study has outlined that quiet diplomatic and administrative mechanisms were utilised throughout the twentieth century to further limit and discourage Jewish and Black immigration.<sup>2</sup> Throughout, the British government considered that allowing large numbers of Jewish and Black newcomers to enter Britain would lead to an increase in 'racial' tension and violence. This belief translated into political decisions to operate a system of 'racial' restriction within British immigration and refugee policy, limiting at many points the number of Jewish and Black immigrants allowed to enter the UK.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst economic rivalry over jobs and houses has not been dismissed as a cause of anti-Semitic and anti-Black feeling and of restrictive legislation, this thesis has argued that opposition towards both Jewish and Black immigration and settlement in Britain was significantly based in deeper 'racial' perceptions concerning the nature of Jewish and Black people. Traditional 'racial' images of the Jew as an economic parasite, a subversive and a traitor blended into contemporary thinking and ensured a constant high level of opposition across society towards the idea of allowing more Jews to settle in Britain, even in the face of Nazi persecution. Similarly, hostility towards the immigration of Black people and governmental action to prevent Black settlement was often 'racially' rooted in perceptions of Blacks as mentally inferior and primitive, as sexually predatory and physically dangerous.<sup>4</sup> As has been shown in chapters three and four, Black British military service and positive perceptions of Empire mostly did little to alter these images.

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<sup>1</sup> For analysis of the 1905 Act see chapter one. 1919 Aliens legislation and the 1920 and 1925 Seamen's Orders have been considered in chapter two whilst the Commonwealth Immigrants Act is assessed in chapter four.

<sup>2</sup> Notably, the thesis has recorded the 'excuse culture' which emerged and prevented active steps being taken to assist more Jewish refugees during the war (see chapter two) and governmental attempts to secure informal agreements with Caribbean and Asian governments to restrict Black immigration to Britain in the 1950s (see chapter four).

<sup>3</sup> The thesis has outlined that the tendency of seeing immigrant numbers as the cause of 'racial' tension was also prevalent within minority communities themselves and notably conditioned British Jewish opposition to the government restriction of the immigration of Jewish refugees from Nazism in the years preceding the Second World War. The 'restriction to prevent racism' idea remains the primary governmental explanation for its refusal to allow larger numbers of refugees to enter the UK in the present day.

<sup>4</sup> Most notably the 1925 Coloured Alien Seaman Order (see chapter two).

At some significant points, the 'racial' demonisation of Jewish and Black people overlapped. Both groups were often considered as potential subversives, as sexual deviants and crucially as unassimilable communities in Britain.<sup>5</sup> Many British 'race' thinkers argued that 'miscegenation' with either of these outsider groups would cause the deterioration of superior British 'racial' stock.<sup>6</sup> In this context, this thesis has argued that fears concerning both Jewish and Black settlement were not only based in concerns about work place and housing competition but in deeper rooted anxieties about the 'racial' fabric of the nation.

This study has aimed to emphasise differences as well as similarities in the ways in which Jews and Blacks were 'racially' perceived. In chapter four it has been argued that Jews were rarely considered as a physical danger in the same manner that Black newcomers were. Where hostility towards Black settlement usually centred on visions of Black people as a physical menace (especially to women), opposition to Jewish immigration centred more on imagined potential Semitic threats to the welfare of the state and on concerns about Jewish economic domination and exploitation (see chapters one and two). Fanon's insightful analysis of anti-Black 'racial' discourse as a 'racism of contempt' highlights the difference between this racism and Semitic discourses.<sup>7</sup> Ambivalent perceptions of Jewish ability and intelligence were crucial within the make-up of the perceived Jewish 'racial' threat and were also important in ensuring that anti-'miscegenation' fears mostly focused on Black communities. Hostility towards mixing with Jews, whilst far from uncommon within British 'racial' thinking, was often based on perceptions of the Jewish choice not to assimilate within British society, on the idea that Jews stood aloof and apart from the body of the nation.

One revelation of the Black/Jewish comparison in this thesis has concerned the importance of skin colour in setting reaction and attitudes towards immigrants and minorities in Britain. Whilst it became clear through the period considered that non-

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<sup>5</sup> The thesis has noted that the reasoning behind beliefs in Black and Jewish inability to assimilate was often different. Whilst sometimes both groups were considered to be inferior to British 'racial' types and thus unsuitable to mix sexually with Britons, at other times images of Jewish superiority meant that perceptions of the Jewish inability to assimilate were linked to beliefs in Jewish clannishness and reluctance to mix with gentiles (see chapter one).

<sup>6</sup> Most notably Robert Knox and Reginald Ruggles Gates (see chapters one and two).

<sup>7</sup> Fanon, F, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.132.

British white immigrants were preferred in many ways to Black British immigrants by both British governments and the bulk of the general public, the running comparison with Jewish refugees has revealed that there was more to perceptions of 'whiteness' than meets the eye. This thesis has argued that the 'whiteness' of European Jews did not elevate them into the category of desirable immigrants in many cases: indeed they were not unanimously viewed as white.<sup>8</sup> In this context, it has been demonstrated in chapter four that governmental schemes (after the Second World War) created to encourage other white European immigration generally excluded Jews and that Jews often had more difficulties with aspects of their assimilation than other white European immigrants. Thus, the Jewish/Black comparison in this thesis provokes the idea that British attitudes towards immigrants in the twentieth century cannot be understood in simple terms of colour prejudice and need instead to be considered as being rooted in more complex 'racial' thinking, as was argued in chapter one.

This thesis has set the views of British scientists against wider British society in order to assess the importance of scientific 'race' theory within more general British thinking between 1918 and 1962. This approach has raised some interesting questions concerning the interaction of science and society and the origins and dissemination of 'racial' ideas. Leading analysts of 'race' and science have emphasised flaws in objectivity within the British scientific approach to 'race' in this period.<sup>9</sup> This thesis has generally concurred with these analyses, in that it has been made clear that scientific attitudes towards 'race' were deeply influenced by the political and social climate and crucially by the political inclinations of scientists themselves.<sup>10</sup> Especially from the 1930s onwards, this thesis has emphasised the politicisation of science, arguing that British academic critiques of 'race' thinking need to be understood in the context of reformist scientific opposition to Nazism, colonialism and conservative eugenics. Similarly, the thesis has contended that scientific intransigence over 'race' from the 1930s onwards was generally only a

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<sup>8</sup> Recently, Klug has addressed issues of Jewish 'whiteness' in Klug, B, 'The Language of Race', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol: 33, No: 3, 1999, pp.5-18.

<sup>9</sup> Stepan has argued for example that the history of 'racial' science was a history of 'accommodations...to the demands of deeply held convictions about the "naturalness" of the inequalities between human races'. See Stepan, N, *The Idea of Race in Science*, p.xx.

<sup>10</sup> In recognition of the interaction between science and social and political discourses, this thesis has argued that British scientific 'racial' thinking needs to be considered as a unique phenomena, essentially different from American and continental European 'race' thinking (see chapters two and three).

prominent tendency amongst those scholars of a conservative and radical right political perspective.

One of the key ideas of the thesis has been to explore the influence of scientific 'racial' theory on wider societal and governmental attitudes towards Jewish and Black immigrants. Whilst it has been asserted that science was influenced by society, the thesis also contends that societal attitudes towards 'race' were at many points influenced by science. The importance of scientific ideas concerning 'racial' mixing and 'racial' type have been highlighted as influential to immigration debates and to the nature of restrictive policy and legislation as it emerged. However, the thesis has argued that from the Second World War onwards a gap appeared between increasingly non-'racial' scientific opinions and popular sustained beliefs concerning 'race'. The idea was thus introduced that society lagged behind the cutting edge of science as far as 'race' thinking was concerned and that popular thinking on 'race' followed scientific non-'racial' thinking only slowly and inconsistently. Nonetheless, even amid this divergence, it has been argued that scientific opinion continued to have some impact on popular discourses concerning 'race', especially regarding the transformation of language which occurred in post-war 'race' debates. Specifically, the widespread political and media abandonment of 'race' as a descriptive term and of overtly articulated notions of hierarchical 'racial' difference betray the impact of new scientific discourses on wider society and international governmental thinking. Whilst science did not push society into any immediate repudiation of 'race' thinking, this study has argued that the changing academic perspective did stimulate caution and revision outside the scientific community.

There was a constant momentum within scientific and popular understandings of 'race' between 1918 and 1962. Whilst change was not uniform and was constantly subject to challenge, it did have an overall direction as the concept of 'race' gradually lost hold over scientists and then society in this period. From early interwar reformist scientific criticism to the abandonment of 'race' as a term itself in post-war political discourse, this was unarguably a period where concepts of 'race' and 'racial' difference changed significantly. However, this thesis has used the examples of Black and Jewish immigrants and minorities in Britain to stress that despite these changes 'race' remained an influential factor in majority-minority relations even into the post-

war period. Whilst the term itself may have been surpassed by seemingly less essentialist ideas of cultural and ethnic difference, this study has outlined that post-war policy and attitudes in British society retained an obvious if covert 'racial' dimension.

Although this thesis concludes its analysis with the passing of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, it is important to realise that this legislation was by no means the last to cloak a 'racial' rationale in British politics.<sup>11</sup> In fact, in many ways, the passing of this legislation triggered a resurgence of 'racial' policy making, armed with the Act as a post-war precedent.<sup>12</sup> Whilst Black and Jewish minorities along with other immigrants have made enormous progress in establishing themselves in Britain and in the British imagination and whilst 'race' as a concept has been the subject of all kinds of challenges over the last century, it is important to recognise the enduring lure of 'race' thinking in British societal relations.<sup>13</sup> Gilroy has contended that the 'order of active differentiation that gets called "race" may be modernity's most pernicious signature'.<sup>14</sup> This thesis concurs with this analysis amid recognition of the importance of scientific and societal 'race' thinking in shaping the histories of Black and Jewish immigration and settlement in Britain between 1918 and 1962.

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<sup>11</sup> Analysis in this thesis could be developed to consider later immigration legislation, notably the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts of 1968 and 1971 and the 1983 Nationality Act.

<sup>12</sup> See Bevan, V, *The Development of British Immigration Law*, pp.77-79, Carter, B, and Joshi, S, 'The Role of Labour in the Creation of a Racist Britain', pp.55-70 or Holmes, C, *A Tolerant Country?:* 'Once the 1962 Act had appeared on the statute-book, restraint in matters of immigration control quickly disintegrated', p.54.

<sup>13</sup> See Kushner, T, 'Meaning Nothing But Good: Ethics, History and Asylum-Seeker Phobia in Britain', in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol: 37, No: 3, 2003. Kushner has argued: 'The allegations and language used against today's asylum-seekers are indeed painfully, one might add tediously, familiar to those who have studied past reactions and responses', pp.257-258.

<sup>14</sup> Gilroy, P, *Between Camps*, p.53.

## Biographical Glossary

*These brief biographical sketches provide a guide to the lives of some of the main protagonists within British 'racial' science. This list is restricted to only the most popular and socially significant figures within science and should not therefore be seen as a definitive guide to the British scientific 'racial' thinkers considered within the thesis.*

### Forerunners

Francis Galton 1822-1911

Galton was a notable geographer, meteorologist and explorer; a half cousin of Charles Darwin who achieved scientific fame in his own right. He is credited with coining the term 'eugenics' and his 1869 book *Hereditary Genius* was a pioneering text of the discipline. Britain's first eugenics society met in 1908 as the Eugenics Education Society under his leadership. Karl Pearson (see below) wrote a biography of Galton and in the post-war period the Eugenics Society was renamed the Galton Institute after its first leader.

John Beddoe 1826-1911

Anthropologist and physician John Beddoe famously conducted detailed physical 'ethnological' research into the 'racial' make-up of the British Isles. This research culminated in the 1885 publication of *The Races of Britain*. Beddoe worked as a physician in the Bristol Royal Infirmary and the Bristol Children's Hospital and was very much at the centre of European anthropological thinking, serving as Chairman of the British Anthropological Society between 1869-70. Repeatedly cited in the work of later 'race' thinkers, Beddoe's studies were notably taken on by H.J. Fleure in the early parts of the twentieth century.

Robert Knox 1791-1862

Knox was an anatomist who worked in the Medical School of the University of Edinburgh. He became conservator at the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1824. Whilst Knox's association with 'body snatching' scandals undoubtedly damaged his reputation as a scientist, his 1850 study *The Races of Men* became a key text for a later generation of extreme 'race' thinkers notably Arthur Keith and Reginald Ruggles Gates. Knox was unequivocally hostile towards 'racial' mixing and was convinced that there was a strong 'racial' basis to modern nations. Interestingly, his work displayed hostility towards colonial settlement which Knox perceived as a foolish battle against nature's wishes.

Joseph Jacobs 1854-1916

Jacobs lived in Britain until 1900 when he re-located to the United States to edit a revision of the Jewish Encyclopaedia. He was a pioneering voice of Jewish resistance

against anti-Semitism, attempting to defend the community very much in 'racial' terms. Far from challenging the notion of 'racial' difference, Jacobs argued that Jews were indeed a 'race' but an advanced and capable one, with a clear role to play in western society. He cited both Galton and Beddoe in his analysis, which became the benchmark for later communal defences from Israel Zangwill and Philip Roth amongst others. His most significant works in this respect were *Studies in Jewish Statistics* in 1891 and *Jewish Contributions to Civilisation* in 1919.

### Interwar 'Racial' Scientists

Reginald Ruggles Gates 1882-1962

Having gained his qualifications as a botanist in Canada, Reginald Gates became Professor of Botany in 1922 at King's College London where he remained until 1942 when he moved to the United States. Between 1942 and 1950, he conducted his research at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Gates worked as an Honorary Research Fellow at Harvard between 1950 and 1954. His most notable contribution to 'racial' science was the 1923 study *Heredity and Eugenics*. An intransigent voice of 'racial' thinking, Gates harnessed genetic theory to support a staunch racist agenda. In a later work, Gates coined this idea as 'racial genetics'. Whilst being a notable academic figure in Britain, his work and ideas fitted most neatly into the conservative American school of 'racial' analysis and he was heavily influenced by scholars such as Charles Davenport. In Britain, he was a key ally of Arthur Keith who did much to popularise Gates' scientific thinking on 'race'.

H.J. Fleure 1877-1969

Fleure was Professor of Anthropology and Geography at the University of Aberystwyth and later Professor of Geography at the University of Manchester. A fan of Beddoe, he wrote *The Nations of England and Wales* in 1923 and was commissioned by the Eugenics Society to conduct a 'race crossing' investigation in Liverpool centred on the children of Chinese and English families. Hostile towards simplistic and dogmatic 'racial' thinking and allegations of 'racial' superiority and inferiority, Fleure never essentially challenged the idea of 'race'. Throughout his career he maintained a moderate centrist stance within scientific discussions of 'race', sympathetic to aspects of both conservative and reformist thinking.

J.B.S. Haldane 1892-1964

Geneticist, biologist and populariser of science, John Burdon Sanderson Haldane wrote numerous studies concerning 'racial' issues including *Science in Everyday Life* in 1939 and *Science Advances* in 1947. He was considered a pioneer in the field of 'population genetics', a reputation sealed by his 1933 publication *The Causes of Evolution*. In the interwar period, Haldane taught genetics and biometry in several higher education institutions notably University College London. His work was greatly influenced by his Marxist beliefs and he was a regular contributor to the *Daily Worker* newspaper. However, Haldane later became disillusioned in the face of Stalinist excesses and withdrew from politics, retiring to India. He was a well known



and popular public figure, famous not only for his scientific work but as a novelist and even as a children's author.

#### Arthur Keith 1866-1955

Anatomist and physical anthropologist Arthur Keith trained as a doctor before working as a structural anthropologist specialising in primates. He was later made President of the Royal Anthropological Institute and was knighted by King George in 1921. Keith's reputation has been somewhat blighted by association with the Piltdown Man forgery. Although not directly involved in the 'discovery', its implications were highly conducive to Keith's ideology, and his fierce defence of Piltdown has led scholars to question his role in the affair. Keith defended 'racial' thinking throughout his career and wrote numerous studies claiming that nationalism and national aggression were rooted in natural 'racial' feelings. His most significant work in this respect was *The Place of Prejudice in Modern Civilisation* in 1931. An ally of Ruggles Gates, Keith was undoubtedly the most famous face of conservative British 'racial' thinking in the inter-war period.

#### Lancelot Hogben 1895-1975

Lancelot Hogben was a zoologist and geneticist who went further than any other mainstream scientist to discredit the idea of 'racial' difference in the interwar period. A notorious free thinker, Hogben was imprisoned as a conscientious objector during World War One. He held various academic positions in the interwar period before becoming Professor of Social Biology at University College London in 1930. During the Second World War Hogben was responsible for medical statistic records for the British Army. After the conflict, he became Professor of Medical Statistics at the University of Birmingham. His most famous contribution to the 'race' debate was perhaps *Dangerous Thoughts* in 1939.

#### Karl Pearson 1857-1936

Statistician and mathematician Karl Pearson became the first Galton Professor of Eugenics at University College London, holding the Chair from 1911-1933. Pearson was a pioneering biometrician believing that problems of evolution were essentially solvable through statistical analysis. His hostility to Mendelism distanced him both from biologists and from the Eugenics Society, leaving him a somewhat isolated figure in the scientific community. With Margeret Moul, Pearson conducted a famous investigation into the intelligence of immigrant Jewish children in 1925. The report concluded that the mental and physical inferiority of Jewish children could be shown through statistical analysis.

#### Julian Huxley 1887-1975

Perhaps the most famous of all the scientific 'racial' reformers Julian Huxley was a zoologist and biologist, most notably working as Professor of Zoology at King's College London. Huxley's reformist views were formed during research in Southern Africa where he became disillusioned with white colonial attitudes towards Black communities. Huxley's *Africa View* in 1931 showed signs of his changing attitude to 'race' but by far his most famous reformist work was *We Europeans*, written in 1935

with A.C. Haddon. This text offered a seminal challenge to traditional 'racial' thinking set in the context of Hitler's rise to power. After the war Huxley became the first director of UNESCO and founder of the World Wildlife Fund.

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