

THE RESPONSE OF THE ENGLISH CHURCHES  
TO THE NAZI PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS  
1933-1945

TERENCE IAIN ROBERT TASTARD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the University of Hertfordshire  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The programme of research was carried out in the Department of History, Faculty of  
Humanities, University of Hertfordshire

August 2006

## ABSTRACT

The background to this thesis is the scholarly debate about bystanders to the Holocaust. Also pertinent is the debate about the conduct of Pius XII in relation to the persecution of the Jews.

During the 1930s the Church of England's focus on the persecution of the Jews was complicated by Bishop George Bell's campaign for what were called non-Aryan Christians. He continued his campaign despite being warned that he had exaggerated the numbers of such refugees who would be seeking assistance. The churches in England were challenged to respond to persecution of the Jews by helping fellow-Christians deemed to be of Jewish descent, which confused the understanding about who was being helped. Bell side-stepped calls for him to condemn in outright terms what was happening in Germany.

When the Church of England did seek to use its influence with the government, the church had very little suasive force. Specific instances are cited where Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang sought government action, but was rebuffed.

The persecution of the Jews led to high-profile public meetings and other forms of protest. However, the liberal culture of the times tended to present antisemitic persecution as a challenge to liberal values. This effectively downplayed the persecution's targeting of Jews and its racist basis. Even Jewish requests for church involvement stressed the importance of making the issue a humanitarian one and not a specifically Jewish one.

The Council of Christians and Jews also stressed the threat to civilization rather than the threat to Jews. Even so, the CCJ's formation was in itself a response to

antisemitism and showed a desire for Christian-Jewish co-operation and respect. Missionary societies continued to seek to convert the Jews and saw the crisis of the times as an opportunity. Indeed, some missionaries believed it might be the fulfilment of prophecy. The pioneer in Jewish-Christian dialogue, James Parkes, strongly opposed such conversionism.

Lang's successor at Canterbury, William Temple, treated the Jewish situation as urgent. He also saw it as challenging Europe's claims to a Christian heritage. Temple's high-profile campaign helped create a wave of Christian support for the Jews, and a flood of petitions.

There was a strong tradition of English Catholic antisemitism. Cardinal Arthur Hinsley broke with this to condemn antisemitism with increasing force, though he always mentioned persecution of the Jews in tandem with persecution of Catholics. Evidence suggests that Hinsley may have been compensating for reticence on the part of Pius XII.

The thesis also provides a briefer survey of the response of the Quakers, the Methodists and the Baptists.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE	i
ABBREVIATIONS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND 1933-1938	18
Initial responses in the Church of England	20
The Church of England and ecumenical action on Germany	33
Bell, non-Aryan Christians and Jewish Refugees	42
Headlam and the Confessing Churches	65
The <i>Church Times</i> on the persecution of the Jews 1933-1938	74
CHAPTER 2: THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND 1938-1942	82
Bell, Henson and Anglican Responses to <i>Kristallnacht</i>	83
Christian antisemitism and Christian-Jewish solidarity: contrasting attitudes	90
The limitations of establishment: government indifference to Cosmo Gordon Lang	93
The Albert Hall meeting and Jewish-Christian co-operation	99
The <i>Church Times</i> on the persecution of the Jews 1938-1942	107

CHAPTER 3: ANGLICAN AND ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENTS, 1942-1945

111

William Temple and fresh approaches to the Government 113

Public meetings and petitions, 1942-1945 133

The founding of the Council of Christians and Jews 137

The *Church Times* on the persecution of the Jews, 1942-1945 151

CHAPTER 4: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS: THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES AND

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN SELF-SCRUTINY 156

The missionary societies 156

James Parkes 178

William Simpson 185

CHAPTER 5: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 192

Catholic centralism and fascination with fascism 194

The protests of Cardinal Hinsley 207

Excursus: The Debate over Pius XII 227

Catholic non-Aryan Christians 235

A. C. F. Beales and *The Pope and the Jews* 240

CHAPTER 6: THE CATHOLIC PRESS ON THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS,

1933-1945 244

*Catholic Herald* 244

<i>Blackfriars</i>	254
<i>The Tablet</i>	262
CHAPTER 7: THE FREE CHURCHES	269
The Quakers	269
The Methodist Church	285
The Baptist Church	298
CONCLUSION	308
BIBLIOGRAPHY	325

## PREFACE

My biggest debt is to my supervisor Dr Susan Tegel, whose wisdom, patience, and encouragement were crucial, as were the probing questions that she asked. This thesis has also benefitted from a second supervisor, Dr Tony Shaw, who provided an invaluable further scrutiny of what I had written, both at the beginning and at the end of the process.

A word is necessary about two problems of nomenclature. The word *antisemitism*, and its cognates, can be spelt in several different ways. In my own writing I have used the form 'antisemitism', but when quoting other writers have cited the word in the spelling they adopted.

The phrase *non-Aryan Christians* has been more difficult to resolve, and more troubling, because it seems to play into racial classification as promoted by the Nazis. 'Non-Aryan Christians' refers to Christians deemed to be of Jewish descent, that is to say, Christians with Jewish ancestry, but who had been brought up as Christians. (Full Jews who had converted to Christianity would have been classified as Jews by the Nazi racial machine, and not as of mixed race.) 'Non-Aryan Christians' was widely used by refugee organisations and by advocates for refugees during the period under consideration. I tried using the term within quotation marks to indicate dissent from what it implied, but this seemed to slow down the reading of the text. I experimented with euphemisms such as 'Christians deemed to be of Jewish descent', but these alternatives were even more clumsy. In the end, the simplest solution seemed to be to use non-Aryan Christians. Nothing should be read into this.

With regard to the *umlaut* accent, in quotation I have kept to the form used by the author. When it is my own writing, I have rendered names *oe* where I believe it to be common use in English (eg Goering) and otherwise used the accent.

Any researcher is only as good as his or her sources, and I would therefore like to thank those libraries and archives whose safe keeping of records made my research possible. In no particular order, I thank the librarians, archivists and staff of the following: Lambeth Palace Library; Southampton University Library; Public Record Office, Kew; London Metropolitan Archive; the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies; Friends House Library; Baptist Archives at Regents Park College, Oxford; John Rylands Library, University of Manchester; Leo Baeck College Library; the Institute for Jewish Policy Research; Downside Abbey; Westminster Diocesan Archives; the archives of the British Province of the Society of Jesus; the Newspaper Library at Colindale; the British Library; the Wiener Library, London; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the Catholic Central Library.



## ABBREVIATIONS

BBC WA	British Broadcasting Corporation Written Archives
BoD	Board of Deputies of British Jews
CAP	<i>Church Assembly Proceedings</i>
CBMS	Conference of British Missionary Societies
CCJ	Council of Christians and Jews
CH	<i>Catholic Herald</i>
CFR	(Church of England) Council for Foreign Relations
CMJ	Church Mission to the Jews
CT	<i>Church Times</i>
FHL	Friends House Library
GEC	Germany Emergency Committee (of the Society of Friends)

ICCAJ	International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jew
IMC	International Missionary Council
LBY	<i>Leo Baeck Yearbook</i>
LYM	London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends
LMA	London Metropolitan Archive
LP	Lambeth Palace
MA/JRL	Methodist Archives, John Rylands Library
MR	<i>Methodist Recorder</i>
SUA	Southampton University Archives
WDA	Westminster Diocesan Archives

## INTRODUCTION

In January 1941 Sidney Salomon of the Board of Deputies of British Jews wrote a frank letter to the ecumenist Joseph Oldham. Salomon was secretary to the Jewish Defence Committee, set up by the Board. Oldham, a Presbyterian layman, was secretary to the Conference of British Missionary Societies. Salomon did not pull his punches. After criticising the churches of Europe for a platitudinous response to the crises of the times, he focussed on Christian attitudes to Jewish suffering:

We are faced today with probably the most dreadful forces of evil which the world has had to fight for centuries. That this evil has so prospered has sprung largely ... from the indifference, apathy and worse of the Christian churches and Christian peoples, many of whom have done nothing to oppose it and many of whom have found excuses for it on the ground that ... all the Nazis were doing was to attack the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

The thesis begins with this quotation because it illustrates the depth of feeling in Jewish circles, and the desire that the Christian conscience should be challenged. The letter shows wartime concern that Jewish suffering under the Nazis had left the churches relatively unmoved. More recently the same criticism has been voiced by historians, following the work of Raul Hilberg who put forward the idea of bystanders as part of a triad: perpetrators, victims, bystanders.<sup>2</sup> Bystanders are those who saw or heard of the persecution of the Jews but were not directly involved.

---

<sup>1</sup> BoD, C15/03/20 Salomon to Oldham, January 21<sup>st</sup> 1941. (All papers cited from the Board of Deputies also carry the prefix ACC/3121. The full citation would thus be ACC/3121/C15/03/20.)

<sup>2</sup> Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1995).

The bystander debate forms the broad context of this dissertation. Bystanders are said to bear some responsibility; for example through their lack of protest, or their unwillingness to help refugees. Hilberg puts occupied nations, neutral countries, the Allies and the churches of Europe in the category of bystander.<sup>3</sup> David Wyman criticises the American record in these matters and blames Christians more than others: 'The perpetrators, where they were not actually Christians, arose from a Christian culture. The bystanders most capable of helping were Christians.'<sup>4</sup> Franklin Littell holds that 'Among Jews, Christian complicity is widely assumed. The gentiles, called "Christians", were either perpetrators or guilty bystanders with a record of centuries of the teaching of contempt ...'<sup>5</sup> The debate over churches as bystanders gained impetus from recent historical inquiry about the role of the Catholic Church. Sustained scrutiny began after Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* in 1962, with its depiction of an aloof Pius XII uninterested in news of genocide.<sup>6</sup> In the 1960s scholars began to examine the Catholic Church's wartime attitude to the Holocaust.<sup>7</sup> The term 'bystander' comes from the 1990s, but the thrust of criticism was that the Catholic Church had been a bystander, and research on this theme has continued.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* pp xi-xii.

<sup>4</sup> David Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York: The New Press, 1998) p xi; cf p 313.

<sup>5</sup> Franklin Littell, 'Inventing the Holocaust: A Christian's Retrospect' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9.2 (1995) p 174. Littell may be right, but there is something troubling in a Christian claiming to speak the Jewish mind.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Bentley, ed., *The Storm over the Deputy* (New York: Grove Press, 1964) brings together many documents of the time that give the feel of the controversy.

<sup>7</sup> For the 1960s, see Guenther Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Carlo Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* (London: Faber, 1970; original Italian edition, 1965); Saul Friedländer, *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Susan Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy* ((London: Yale, 2000) and John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London: Viking, 1999). The literature will be examined in more detail later.

Michael Marrus highlights two historiographical problems in writing about bystanders. The first is that analysis in this area tends to take the form of centring on what did *not* happen – which is ‘an awkward approach for the historian’. The other problem is that ‘there is a strong tendency in historical writing on bystanders to the Holocaust to condemn, rather than to explain.’ He suggests that the way forward is to try to enter into the minds and sensibilities of the bystanders, bearing in mind that the events unfolding in Europe were unprecedented.<sup>9</sup> Any discussion of bystanders must, therefore, examine the attitudes which helped to determine the actions and omissions of those bystanders at the time. Paul Levine believes that recovering such attitudes, on a collective and individual level, is not only possible but necessary if we are to understand the decisions of bystanders.<sup>10</sup>

However, there are difficulties with the concept of bystander itself. Like Marrus, Richard Evans has criticised the way that recent historians of Nazism have mixed moralising with historical analysis. He points out that talk of perpetrators, victims and bystanders comes from criminological discourse and carries ‘a heavy moral charge’. At its worst, this has created a tendency to judge rather than explain, a fear that explanation is a form of collusion, and a belief that historians should be partisan.<sup>11</sup> The very concept of ‘bystander’ can too easily assume moral judgement, concluding that the bystanders in question have failed to intervene. For example, in an article exploring Sweden’s record as a bystander nation, Sven Nordlund regrets that some previous studies ‘failed to make the

---

<sup>9</sup> Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987) pp 156-157.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Levine, ‘Attitudes and Action: Comparing the Responses of Mid-level Bureaucrats to the Holocaust’ in David Cesarani and Paul Levine (eds) *‘Bystanders’ to the Holocaust: A Re-Evaluation* (London: Frank Cass, 2002) p 215.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Evans, ‘Introduction’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 39.2 (2004), pp 164-166.

Holocaust an issue of public morality.’<sup>12</sup> But as Tony Kushner points out, assuming indifference on the part of bystanders can be misleading, because ‘it masks the mixture of sympathy and disdain that characterized most responses to persecuted Jewry. At varying levels, people became involved, even if, as was the case with the majority, their dominant response was silence and inaction.’<sup>13</sup>

Given these difficulties with the concept of bystander, I shall utilise it indirectly rather than directly. The churches of England, along with the people of England, were bystanders in the sense that they were affected by the persecution of the Jews. Although the unfolding events on the Continent took place ‘over there’, they challenged and disturbed people ‘over here’. This is the context within which I explore the response of the English churches to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. In particular, I want to see how events seized, or did not seize, the attention. Attention necessarily precedes response. I also hope to show that the response of English Christians was more complicated than a typology of helpers and the hard-hearted. As Kushner has said, it is ‘the ambiguities and contradictions of human nature’ that make study of bystanders so fascinating.<sup>14</sup>

There has been limited research into the English Christian response. A brief survey was undertaken by Richard Gutteridge in 1987.<sup>15</sup> More recently Tony

---

<sup>12</sup> Sven Nordlund, ‘“The War is Over – Now You Can Go Home!” Jewish Refugees and the Swedish Labour Market in the Shadow of the Holocaust’ in Cesarani and Levine (eds) *‘Bystanders’ to the Holocaust* p 173. For a more polemical look at the bystander concept, see Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000) pp 179-80. Novick says that the effect of designating ‘Righteous Gentiles’ is to condemn the vast majority of others.

<sup>13</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) p 274. Kushner has continued to question the reductionism that sometimes attends the concept of bystander: see ‘Britain, the United States and the Holocaust: In Search of a Historiography’ in Dan Stone, ed, *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) pp 253-275.

<sup>14</sup> Kushner, ‘Britain, the United States and the Holocaust’ p 257.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Gutteridge, ‘The Churches and the Jews in England, 1933-1945’ in Otto Dov Kulka and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National Socialism* (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1987) pp 353-378.

Kushner examined Christian attitudes and responses during the war.<sup>16</sup> Two research articles by Andrew Chandler in the *Leo Baeck Yearbook* gave a good survey of the 1930s from an Anglican perspective, but Bishop Bell's campaign for the non-Aryan Christians would seem to call out for a more nuanced reading.<sup>17</sup> There has been one denominational study: Hans Schmitt has recorded the help given to Jews by American and British Quakers.<sup>18</sup> However, a recent book, *The Holocaust and the Christian World*, contains virtually nothing about the English churches despite being published in London.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, Chana Kotzin's research into English Christian responses to Jewish refugees provided a wealth of new information and analysis.<sup>20</sup> However, she excluded the Catholic Church and the Baptist Union from her survey. Kotzin also stopped at the outbreak of the war and thus did not cover how the churches responded to the news of genocide. More generally, her main focus was on refugees and this excluded other aspects of the Christian response.

There is therefore room for further examination of the response of the churches during the years of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis. This dissertation will seek to understand the ways in which Christian denominations in England responded to the Nazi persecution of the Jews, both before and during the war. The focus will be limited to England, because in both Scotland and Wales the churches relate to their national communities in distinctive ways. The Church of

---

<sup>16</sup> Antony Kushner, 'Ambivalence or Antisemitism? Christian Attitudes and Responses in Britain to the Crisis of European Jewry during the Second World War' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5.2 (1990) pp 175-189.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Chandler, 'A Question of Fundamental Principles: The Church of England and the Jews of Germany 1933-1937' *LBY* Vol 38 (1993) pp 221-261; 'Lambeth Palace and the Jews of Germany and Austria in 1938' *LBY* Vol 40 (1995) pp 225-247.

<sup>18</sup> Hans Schmitt, *Quakers & Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Carol Rittner, Stephen Smith & Irena Steinfeldt, eds., *The Holocaust and the Christian World* (London: Kuperard, 2000).

Scotland is not only Presbyterian but also established in a less formal way than the Church of England and has been a vehicle for asserting Scottish identity against the English. In Wales the Anglican Church was disestablished in 1920, and was not the largest church in terms of numbers. It would be impossible to do justice to these factors here.<sup>21</sup> Within the British nation, several national communities co-existed, with their own religious sensibilities. This created a difficulty for the Church of England, which had to operate within one of the nations (England) while subject to the parliament of the larger national entity (the United Kingdom) while MPs from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland could and did vote on occasional Church of England legislation which came before the House of Commons.

One recent historian believes that in the period under consideration here, the relationship between the United Kingdom and its constituent parts was still undergirded by Protestantism: ‘The patriotism in question drew strength rather than division from the unresolved tensions between ‘England’ and ‘Britain’, associated respectively with Anglican and Protestant frameworks of belief.’<sup>22</sup> By contrast, Keith Robbins points out that the Church of England and the Church of Scotland continued their established (if different) roles in the life of their national communities without any ‘Church of Britain’ emerging. However, by 1945 ‘it was no longer possible ... to equate “Britishness” with “Protestantism”.’<sup>23</sup>

‘Churches’ is an ambiguous word covering national organisations with their hierarchies, as well as individual churches and congregations. The emphasis here

---

<sup>20</sup> Chana Revell Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees from Europe: 1933-1939’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southampton, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> For an exploration of the churches and national identities in Britain, see Keith Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993) chapter 7.

<sup>22</sup> John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (London: Routledge, 1994) p 260.

<sup>23</sup> Keith Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (London: Longman, 1998) p 237.



will be on the national picture, since the evidence is more accessible. Where possible the dissertation will also seek to cover the views of clergy and active church members, especially as reflected in church newspapers. However, more attention is paid to the official leadership of the churches. I do not cover the question of how Christian values might have influenced the response of politicians who were committed Christians. Philip Williamson, for example, has argued that Christian values played a key role in hardening Lord Halifax's attitude to Nazi Germany in 1938.<sup>24</sup> It would be fascinating to follow this through with regard to how faith might have affected the response of politicians to Nazi antisemitism, but it would require another dissertation. Nor do I cover in any extensive way the refugee work of the churches, as this has already been researched by Kotzin.

This dissertation contains considerably more about the Church of England than the other churches. The weight given to Anglican considerations reflects the prominent role of the Church of England generally in English life. It also reflects the care given to archives in the Church of England, which has a long and distinguished record in this respect. London features prominently partly because so many church institutions had national headquarters or leadership based in London. However, there is material in the dissertation from other regions, notably in chapter four, where popular meetings and petitions in the later war years are considered.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Philip Williamson, 'Christian Conservatives and the Totalitarian Challenge, 1933-40', *English Historical Review* 15.3 (2000) pp 637-638. Andrew Roberts takes a different view: 'Halifax's religious convictions played little or no part in his day-to-day politics', Andrew Roberts, *The Holy Fox: The Life of Lord Halifax* (London: Phoenix, 1997) p 50.

<sup>25</sup> Another limitation results from the deliberate destruction of material when invasion was feared in 1940. It seems that the Catholic diocese of Westminster destroyed records relating to its refugee work. That same year the Revd James Parkes destroyed letters and papers relating to Christian-Jewish relations, fearing that it might be compromising. See Thomas Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican: The Role of Cardinal Hinsley 1935-43* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1985 p 15); also SUA MS 60, Parkes Papers, Parkes to Charles Singer, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1940 16/717.

The historical debate about bystanders has included discussion about whether anything could have been done to help the Jews. William Rubinstein has argued that little could have been achieved. Before the war, Britain and other countries could not have foreseen that genocide would develop. Once war broke out, the Jews were prisoners, not refugees. All talk of rescue was inappropriate, since the Nazis had no intention of letting them go.<sup>26</sup> Rubinstein says that ‘Both contemporaries of the Holocaust in the democracies and, more disturbingly, many later historians, have simply failed to understand this distinction between refugees and prisoners’.<sup>27</sup> Rubinstein’s thesis precipitated considerable debate, including criticism of Rubinstein’s methodology with its heavy reliance on secondary material.<sup>28</sup> His contention that countries like Britain and the US could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis is particularly open to criticism. For example, the Allies do not seem to have encouraged resistance movements in Western Europe to disrupt the deportation of the Jews.<sup>29</sup> This is not discussed by Rubinstein. Nor does Rubinstein mention the efforts of individual rescuers like Nicholas Winton and Varian Fry. Fry’s example, from the Vichy period, is particularly significant. If individuals could make a difference, there was arguably a potential rescue role for governments, as well as churches and other

---

<sup>26</sup> W. D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London: Routledge, 1997; paperback edition, with new introduction, 1999) *passim* but see especially pp 79 & 84.

<sup>27</sup> Rubinstein, *Myth of Rescue* pp 127 & 139.

<sup>28</sup> For a critique of Rubinstein, see Robert Edwin Herzstein, ‘Is it Time to Stop Asking Why the West Failed to Save More Jews?’ *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12.2 (1998) pp 326-338.

<sup>29</sup> One rare example of a resistance attack on a transport was the attack on a train near Mechelen (Malines) in Belgium on April 19<sup>th</sup> 1943, when 231 Jews escaped (Dan Michman, ‘Belgium’ in Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Vol 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1990, p 167). Michael Curtis comments that ‘Minimum attention to the plight of Jews, if not virtual silence, was also noticeable in the...[French] Resistance movements’ (*Verdict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime*; London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002, p 245). Encouraging resistance movements to frustrate the deportations could have been particularly viable from early 1944 onwards, when German control was starting to fray.

organisations.<sup>30</sup> And Rubinstein does not discuss how the Jews who managed to escape, did so, to see if there might be a wider lesson.<sup>31</sup>

In terms of this dissertation, it seems regrettable that much of the debate seems to conflate *rescue* and *response*. Response is sometimes a moral imperative, regardless of efficacy. Rubinstein ignores the power of the symbolic. For example, he discusses the potential bombing of Auschwitz in terms of its feasibility. He concludes that even after December 1943, when the complex came within reach of the Allied bombers for the first time, they could only have inflicted temporary damage on its extermination capacity.<sup>32</sup> But this is too dismissive: such an act would have symbolised Allied awareness of Auschwitz's importance, and their condemnation of its deadly work.<sup>33</sup> Symbols are often seen in a religious context. This is where the churches could have come into the picture, especially in the crucial years before the outbreak of war. Symbolic rejection of the persecution of the Jews would have been one way of responding to the crisis. Although it is not made explicit, much of the criticism of Pius XII rests on his *symbolic* power. A forthright condemnation of Nazi antisemitism might have brought his arrest and silencing, and achieved nothing in practical terms; but it would have been a powerful response to what later generations would call genocide.

---

<sup>30</sup> On Winton, see Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation*, London, Vallentine Mitchell, 2001; on Fry, see Andy Marino, *A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Walter Laqueur, *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2001, pp 42-44 and 52-55. Ruth Zaviz has also said that the continuity of limited emigration of Jews from Germany even after October 1941 raises the question of whether more could have been done to help the remaining Jews escape. See her article, 'Officially Approved Emigration from Germany after 1941: A Case Study' in *Yad Vashem Studies* Vol 18 (1987) pp 275-291.

<sup>32</sup> Rubinstein, *Myth of Rescue*, chapter 4.

<sup>33</sup> There has been considerable debate on the feasibility of bombing Auschwitz. See especially Michael Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum (eds) *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies*

The English churches, with their awareness of the power of symbol, and their role in shaping conscience, were well-placed to undertake a similar response. As Kushner points out, in the 1930s Christianity was still an essential ingredient of national identity in Britain.<sup>34</sup> The established status of the Church of England in particular meant that it was often seen as a guarantor of national values. British values were sometimes seen as Christian values, and the struggle in which the country was engaged as a struggle of Christian virtue against evil.<sup>35</sup> When the *Methodist Recorder* editorialised about the war in June 1942, it quoted with pride the Statement on the National Situation adopted by the Methodist Conference of 1941:

The Conference believes it to be both a great responsibility and a high privilege that the British Commonwealth of Nations is charged with securing, by the blessing of God, the triumph of righteousness and truth, of freedom and humanity so brutally outraged at the present time. The Conference is confident that Methodist people will steadfastly uphold the sacred cause until complete victory is achieved.<sup>36</sup>

It makes sense, then, to ask where, in the Christian consciousness, concern about the Jews at this time was to be found.

---

*Have Attempted It?* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000); and Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> Kushner, *Holocaust and Liberal Imagination* p 148.

<sup>35</sup> For a discussion see Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* Chapter 14, 'Britain, 1940 and "Christian Civilization"'. Robbins notes the fluctuation of fervour around 1940, and the comparative absence of explicit religiosity in the government.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in the *Methodist Recorder* June 25<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 6.

Nazis were generally contemptuous of traditional Christianity.<sup>37</sup> But they retained an acute awareness of the wider European context. Some at least in the Nazi leadership were aware of how churches could shape perceptions of Germany. Before the war the German embassy in London regularly informed Berlin about the speeches of bishops in the Lords and in convocation, about their letters to *The Times*, and even their diocesan pastorals.<sup>38</sup>

Any examination of wartime Christian attitudes to Jews needs to include an awareness of Christian antisemitism. Many historians argue that the role of Christian teaching has been crucial in spreading contempt and fear of Jews.<sup>39</sup> It is said that after this initial stigmatising of Jews, antisemitism became protean, clothing itself in the most secular of disguises. For example, under the Nazis it took a sinister positivist turn and presented itself as eugenic science. Robert Wistrich acknowledges pre-Christian antisemitism, but argues that Christian antisemitism was crucial because Christians and Jews were locked in

sibling rivalry ... two antagonistic monotheisms sharing a common Holy Book (the Hebrew Scriptures) and a similar set of symbolic references.

There was an important sense in which the legitimacy of Christianity came to depend on its successful usurpation of the Jewish heritage and its

---

<sup>37</sup> cf Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), in which he argues that many Nazis believed the war against Germany's enemies to be a war waged in the name of Christianity. However, Christianity in this Nazi sense was either the new German 'positive Christianity' shorn of 'degenerate' elements, or a mythological paganism mixed with some Christian traditions.

<sup>38</sup> Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945* (London: SCM, 1986) p 188.

<sup>39</sup> The literature about Christian antisemitism is considerable. See, for example, Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Pantheon, 1991) chapters 2 & 3; William Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate* (Northvale NJ: Aronson, 1995); Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Hate* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, revd edn, 1985); Charlotte Klein, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (London: SPCK, 1978); Robert Chazan, 'Medieval Anti-Semitism' in David Berger (ed) *History and Hate: The*

attempted demonstration that Judaism had betrayed the divine message which had originally been granted to it.<sup>40</sup>

Jesus was Jewish, of course, but this did not prevent anti-Jewish polemic in Christian scriptures. Jews were blamed for his death which was said to have brought retribution on the Jewish people. Some of the most hostile references are to be found in the gospel according to John, which refers repeatedly to ‘the Jews’ as plotting against Jesus, and also describes them as children of the devil.<sup>41</sup> Wistrich points out how in the medieval period especially, Jews were linked with satanic motifs, and this, ‘whether in the visual arts, literature, passion plays, sermons or folk legends, offered a way of explaining why Jews had so stubbornly and arrogantly rejected Jesus. By depicting the Jew as embodying the will of Satan, medieval Christendom would inaugurate an inexorable process of dehumanisation.’<sup>42</sup> The churches had created a mythical ‘Jew’ on to whom evil was projected. Shmuel Ettinger comments that Jews were portrayed by the Church as

the sum total of all negative characteristics ... this negative stereotype became embedded in Christian Europe’s consciousness ... finding expression in theological writings, sermons, the plastic arts, drama and

---

*Dimensions of Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: JPS, 5747/1986); Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).

<sup>40</sup> Wistrich, *Antisemitism*, pp 12 and 27-28.

<sup>41</sup> For example, 1 Thessalonians 2.15-16, especially verse 16: ‘God’s wrath has come upon them at last.’ See also Matthew 27.25 and John 8.44.

<sup>42</sup> Wistrich, *Antisemitism* p 30.

ballads. Thus the negative stereotype penetrated geographical and cultural areas where there were no Jews ...<sup>43</sup>

This picture of Jews negating the values around them was to change again as Europe became less consciously Christian and more secular. This allowed contradictory characteristics to be projected on to Jews, who were said to be both capitalistic exploiters of the masses, and Bolshevik atheists working to overthrow capitalism. What had begun as Christian anti-Judaism had become what in the 19<sup>th</sup> century would be labelled antisemitism, a stream of thought and influence with a life of its own. Christian antisemitism had demonised the Jews, but Nazi antisemitism developed out of a far wider range of influences. These included romantic writers reaching back into pagan mythology, evolutionists with a positivist view of human nature, and scientists influenced by social Darwinism.<sup>44</sup>

The churches in England shared in the history of Christian hostility to Judaism. In the blood libel of the Middle Ages, Jews were said to murder Christian children to use their blood. Sometimes the child whose death was laid at the Jews' door was hailed a martyr and his cult promoted by the Church, as happened in England with William of Norwich in 1144.<sup>45</sup> Finally the Jews were expelled from England by Edward I in 1290, partly out of a desire to please the church until they were

---

<sup>43</sup> Shmuel Ettinger, 'Jew-hatred in its Historical Context' in *Antisemitism through the Ages*, Shmuel Almog, ed. (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988) pp 10-11. For more detail on each of the categories mentioned by Ettinger as medieval ways of spreading antisemitism (plays, architecture, sermons, etc) see Leon Poliakov *The History of Anti-Semitism Vol 1 From Roman Times to the Court Jews* (London: Routledge, 1974) chapter 7, 'The Image of the Jew'.

<sup>44</sup> Uriel Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1975) pp 302-305.

<sup>45</sup> M. D. Anderson, *A Saint at Stake: The Strange Death of William of Norwich* (London: Faber, 1964); also, A. J. Jessop and M. R. James, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich* (Cambridge: CUP, 1896). Israel Zangwill criticised Jessop and James for believing it possible that the child William might have been killed by Jews for a ritual purpose (Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, New York, Macmillan, 1921, pp 193-194). For an account of an Italian ritual murder trial, which led to the torture of Jews and the destruction of their community, see R. Po-

enabled to return by Cromwell who, while not officially approving their presence, raised no objection.

At first the Jewish population of England grew slowly. It has been estimated that by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Jewish population of Britain was 30,000-35,000, the great majority living in London.<sup>46</sup> Legal discrimination against Jews gradually waned. Alderman considers that by 1850 most legal disabilities suffered by Jews had been removed, including (in 1858) the laws which had hitherto excluded them from Parliament. Alderman also says that this legal equality was complemented by economic as well as social emancipation.<sup>47</sup> Anglo-Jewish leadership wanted to maintain a discrete Jewish identity while at the same time seeking to make it possible for Jews to play a full part in British life. The picture changed, however, with the addition of some 150,000 Jews from Eastern Europe in the years 1881-1900, driven out by poverty and persecution. This wave of immigration 'dismayed and at times terrified the Anglo-Jewish leadership'. The poorer, more strictly Orthodox new arrivals, often clinging together in regional groups of *Landsmannschaften*, challenged 'the acculturative tendencies' of post-emancipation Jewish leadership.<sup>48</sup> This reinforced any tendency to think of Jews as foreign, or even alien to the English way of life. Many of the new Jewish immigrants lived in the East End of London, which led to severe overcrowding. They were forced to take jobs which were in effect sweated labour, leading to criticism of Jewish employers for exploitation, and of Jewish workers for undercutting wages.<sup>49</sup> The resulting anti-alien agitation led to the

---

Chia Hsia, *Trent 1474: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial* (Princeton, NJ: Yale University Press/Yeshiva University, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992) p 3.

<sup>47</sup> Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* p 55.

<sup>48</sup> Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* pp 120 and 138.

<sup>49</sup> Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* pp 120-132.



passing of the Aliens Act in 1905, which while designed ostensibly to exclude paupers and criminals, had the effect of discouraging Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe.

Early Jewish historiography tended to interpret Jewish experience in Britain as progress towards full acceptance. This was the approach adopted by the pioneer historian Cecil Roth. His *History of the Jews in England* ends in 1858, when the House of Commons reworded its oath to allow Lionel de Rothschild to take his seat.<sup>50</sup> Roth did not ignore antisemitism but his overall view was of Jews in England benefiting from tolerance and growing acceptance, and hence his choice of 1858 as an end-point is significant. Todd Endelman says of early historians of Anglo-Jewry that ‘Their version of communal history was Whiggish, apologetic, and triumphalist, emphasizing the harmony between Jewishness and Englishness, while minimizing the discordant aspects of the assimilation process.’<sup>51</sup> From the 1970s onwards historians began to question this account. David Cesarani concluded that accounts of Jewish history had been too defensive, keen to show how Jews had justified their place in English society: ‘The construction of the Anglo-Jewish past, its heritage, was to stress the rootedness of Jews in English society and their positive contribution to politics, culture, and the economy. The discussion of anti-semitism was to be avoided because to raise it as an issue risked the appearance of ingratitude.’<sup>52</sup> Hence more recent writing about the Jewish experience in Britain has looked at issues such as the medieval blood libel, the marginal position of Jews, lingering antisemitism towards both rich and poor

---

<sup>50</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: OUP, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn 1964; 1<sup>st</sup> edn 1941).

<sup>51</sup> Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) p 5.

<sup>52</sup> David Cesarani, ‘Dual Heritage or Duel of Heritages? Englishness and Jewishness in the English Heritage Industry’, in Tony Kushner, ed., *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* (London: Frank Cass, 1992) p 36.

Jews, and the rise of Mosley-led Fascism. This change of emphasis also shifted the focus away from traditional Jewish leaders towards social history, which examined the living conditions and experiences of the whole community.

Was antisemitism to be found in the English churches? The answer to this question forms part of this dissertation, but it is important to list at this point the typical antisemitic stereotypes. Jews were variously said to be cosmopolitan, rather than rooted in their own society; capitalist exploiters in league with international finance; communist agitators; grossly materialist; agents of a liberalising modernity; rigid legalists; morally decadent; prone to promote one another's interests to the detriment of non-Jews.<sup>53</sup> Of course, these stereotypes are often mutually contradictory, but this does not seem to lessen their suasive power. Some of these stereotypes may be seen operating in 1930s England. In her survey of how civil servants and politicians handled the Jewish refugee crisis of the 1930s, Louise London has argued that the prevailing attitudes to Jews helped determine the official response. She reports a 'widely diffused anti-Jewish prejudice within the governing classes', which took the form of stereotyping Jews as 'members of a group that was difficult, even dangerous to help.' Difficult, because of their allegedly hedonistic tastes and flashy behaviour; dangerous, because they were suspected to be profiteers.<sup>54</sup> Hence the greater openness to child refugees: they could be more easily assimilated.<sup>55</sup>

Tony Kushner has argued that British Christian responses to the persecution and extermination of European Jewry cannot be fully understood without reference to past Christian discourse on the Jews. In particular, the emancipation

---

<sup>53</sup> I take this list with modifications from Jocelyn Hellig, *The Holocaust and Antisemitism: A Short History* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003) pp 75-76.

<sup>54</sup> Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) pp 276-277.

of the Jews was based on an implicit understanding that the Jews would remove their differences and assimilate completely, often including conversion to Christianity.<sup>56</sup> This was not the racial politics of Nazism: in England, removal of what was seen as self-imposed difference would bring acceptance. Kushner goes further, to argue that a weak Christian response to the plight of the Jews made it easier for the government to refuse to do more to help.<sup>57</sup>

What *was* the Christian response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews? To answer this question involves asking other questions. For example, there was an early focus in the churches on what were called 'Non-Aryan Christians'. Did this allow the churches to find their way into responding to the crisis, or did it divert Christian attention away from the Jewish mainstream? To what extent were Christian leaders active and prominent in raising English awareness of what was happening to the Jews? Did the knowledge of the persecution of the Jews lead to any re-assessment of Christian-Jewish relations - or was there still a desire to convert the Jews to Christianity? What images or concepts of Jews are shown by church leaders and Christian publications, and did such images influence the Christian response? Are there differences in approach shown by the different denominations or even within denominations? Did Jewish leaders seek to co-opt the help of the churches, and what was the response? These questions are at the heart of this dissertation.

---

<sup>55</sup> London, *Whitehall and the Jews* p 281.

<sup>56</sup> Kushner, 'Ambivalence or Antisemitism?' pp 175-177.

<sup>57</sup> Kushner, 'Ambivalence or Antisemitism?' pp 180-182.

## CHAPTER ONE:

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, 1933-1938

Once Hitler came to power on January 30<sup>th</sup> 1933, the Nazis moved swiftly to implement their intentions against the Jews. A boycott of Jewish-owned business was planned to begin on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1933. As that date approached, a Nazi manifesto called for restrictions on Jewish numbers in the medical and legal professions, and in the universities. It amounted, says Leni Yahil, to 'a full program to dispossess the Jews by ousting them from all spheres of intellectual and public life together with the threat to their economic status.'<sup>1</sup> On April 4<sup>th</sup> Goebbels announced that the boycott was over. Its economic and political repercussions, were, at this stage, too risky. By contrast, notes Lucy Dawidowicz, violence against Jews in public life offered few risks. Even before the boycott, 'a combination of violence and administrative action had already forced hundreds of Jews from their positions as judges and lawyers in the courts, journalists on newspapers, conductors and musicians in orchestras, professors in universities.'<sup>2</sup> After the boycott ended, the social isolation of the Jews gathered pace. The antisemitic actions reached deep into German society: in Berlin, for example, 32 deaf Jews were expelled from the local deaf organisation. In some places the names of Jewish war dead were erased from war memorials. The atmosphere of hatred that was created easily spilled over into harassment and violence. By the end of 1933, 36 Jews had been murdered, at least six the victims of

---

<sup>1</sup> Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry* (Oxford: OUP, 1990) p 63.

<sup>2</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews 1933-1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975) p 54.

mob lynchings.<sup>3</sup> The Board of Deputies of British Jews tried to raise awareness in Britain about what was happening in Germany. For example, the Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association published a pamphlet in 1933, *The Persecution of the Jews in Germany*. But public indignation quickly evaporated and the government's priority was the pursuit of disarmament and collective security.<sup>4</sup> Britain was still nursing memories of the blood-letting of the First World War, and was slowly recovering from devastating economic recession. Events in Germany tended to be seen in the context of the past war and of the ongoing search for international peace and security.

The Church of England was well-placed to make representations in response to the crisis enveloping German Jewry. Numerically it was the largest church in England. Admittedly, a slow decline in churchgoing had begun before the First World War and accelerated rapidly thereafter.<sup>5</sup> Even so, in the mid-1930s nearly two-thirds of the children born in England were still baptized into the Church of England. Its network of dioceses and parishes fanned out across the land, giving it a presence everywhere. The numbers who practised might be a minority, but in absolute terms those numbers were still considerable. On Easter Sunday 1931, some 2,280,000 people made their communion in the Church of England; during that year there were 418,000 baptisms and 1,700,000 children in Sunday School.<sup>6</sup> In addition the Church played a part in the structures of leadership of the nation, most clearly symbolised by the role of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985) pp 40-41.

<sup>4</sup> David Cesarani, 'Great Britain' in David Wyman (ed), *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) p 602.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Hylson-Smith *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II* Vol 3 (London: SCM, 1998) pp 8-9. For a different account of the decline in church attendance, see Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001) pp 162-169.

<sup>6</sup> *Official Yearbook of the Church of England 1933* (London: Church Assembly/SPCK, 1933) p 402.

monarch as Governor of the Church. Close ties to institutions such as public schools and Oxford and Cambridge universities afforded the church real influence in the governing elite. John Wolffe comments that ‘The Church of England ... was intertwined with the structures of social and political power at a range of different levels.’<sup>7</sup> Twenty-one of its bishops sat in the House of Lords. At many levels, clergy and prominent lay people had access to decision-makers in politics, newspapers, civil service and local government. And the Church of England claimed to speak for a Christian nation. When Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke at a protest meeting in June 1933 to voice his support for the Jews, he said he ‘represented the Christian citizenship of this country’.<sup>8</sup> The Church of England still had the ability to create an agenda, to draw attention to causes, and to create a debate.<sup>9</sup>

### Initial responses in the Church of England

In 1933 Cosmo Gordon Lang was probably the most familiar Christian leader in Britain. His familiarity came from his status as Archbishop of Canterbury: but it was also a feature of his longevity. He was appointed Archbishop of York in 1909, and by the time the Nazis came to power in Germany, Lang had already been a primate of the Church of England for 24 years, having been elevated to Canterbury in December

---

<sup>7</sup> John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain* p 128.

<sup>8</sup> From the transcript of the occasion, BoD BO4/Q002.

<sup>9</sup> To give just one example, covered later in this thesis: when *The Times* published a letter from Lang on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1934 expressing his revulsion at a cartoon in *Der Stürmer*, his action prompted politicians and others to follow suit.

1928. His swift rise through the ranks of the church he owed partly to the ease with which he moved in royal circles.<sup>10</sup>

Given the national role of the Church of England, it is surprising that Lang had only a small staff at his disposal. The Bishop of Fulham had responsibility for Anglican churches (known as chaplaincies) in north and central Europe. He was not a diocesan bishop, but a suffragan (ie assistant) bishop in the diocese of London. In the scheme of things he was also expected to cultivate contacts with Protestant Churches in those countries, and on his travels abroad to act as the eyes and ears of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bishop of Fulham at the time of the Nazi accession to power was Basil Batty. In March 1933 he wrote to Lang:

I am leaving home this week for a tour and am rather worried by the reports reaching me of the campaign against the Jewish nation in Germany.

I am asking for further information from those I can trust. One of the great difficulties about work amongst the Jews is their recollection of the unworthy part the Christian Church has often played in persecutions of their nation. It may be that the Hitler regime will give us a chance of making some reparation. ...

My object in writing is to suggest that if I can stir up the Church in Germany to protest against any persecution on religious grounds, and this will not be

---

<sup>10</sup> J. G. Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* chapter 14, especially pp 132-133 and also pp 389-390.

easy as I have to avoid politics, we might have some pronouncement in England which would show that we stand behind them on this matter.<sup>11</sup>

This early approach to Lang reveals some of the tensions facing the Church. There is the note of needing further information (despite the press coverage of the events in Germany). There is the desire to act on a matter of pressing concern, without seeming to be 'political'. There are also two interesting points: admission of Christian complicity in past persecution, and the desire to stir up the German Church to take a stand. In the meantime, Lang also contacted Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. Vansittart replied: 'The German Government is now doing its best to prevent acts of violence against Jews, although I fear that the campaign for removing them from their positions may continue.'<sup>12</sup> Vansittart's reply was written even as the verbal and physical violence against Jews increased due to the impending boycott. Vansittart was in effect head of the Foreign Office civil establishment. He would soon become an outspoken opponent of any accommodation with Nazi Germany. Yet in March 1933 even he believed in the good intentions of the Nazi government. The Church of England was not alone in finding it difficult to make sense of events over the water.

Batty duly reported back at the end of March 1933. His report read as follows:

## GERMANY AND THE JEWS

---

<sup>11</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 1, Batty to Lang, March 12<sup>th</sup> 1933. Batty's passing reference to the Jewish 'nation' is striking, seeming to imply a highly distinct ethnic identity to German Jews.

<sup>12</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 13, Vansittart to Lang, March 24<sup>th</sup> 1933.



For many years there has been a strong prejudice against the Jews. Few Jews would work on the land or in factories, the majority settled in the villages becoming money lenders to the area and gradually absorbing the property of the peasants.

In the popular mind they are held responsible for

1. The low standard of the Press
2. The failure of the Theatre
3. The commercialisation of music
4. The exaltation of Karl Marx.

Hitler, without responsibility of office, freely proclaimed that they were a menace to the national life and their expulsion was always held to be an article of Nazi policy. ...

My own opinion is that protests should be made by the Lutheran Church and that the Christian Church throughout the world should support it, but I fear the Lutheran Church will not take action through fear of Hitler. ... I believe self-preservation is the real motive behind this silence.<sup>13</sup>

The memorandum purveys stereotypes about Jews: swindling the poor, deracinated, immoral, Marxist. Batty is presumably repeating what he heard about Jews during his trip to visit chaplaincies in Germany. It seems that the Protestants to whom he had spoken – probably Lutheran – had repeated the Nazi line about Jewish degeneracy. The Weimar Republic had seen an exploration of new forms of self-expression, in the arts and social sciences. These often challenged conventional

---

<sup>13</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 ff 14-15, Batty to Lang, March 31<sup>st</sup> 1933.

decencies, creating a backlash which the Nazis were quick to exploit. One German historian says that ‘The Nazis and their sympathizers branded the whole of modern art as degenerate “cultural Bolshevism”.’<sup>14</sup> Batty had gone out concerned for the welfare of the Jews, and came back repeating antisemitic stereotypes. The fact that he wanted Anglican protests to the German Evangelical Church indicate that Batty was simply reporting what he had heard. Perhaps, however, he associated the ‘popular mind’ too easily with Nazi propaganda. The stories he had heard about the Jews were the stuff of Nazi myth-mongering. It was a sign of Anglican confusion about Germany. So, too, is Batty’s reference to *the* Lutheran Church, as if German Protestants belonged to a single entity rather than to a confederation of 28 *Land* Churches containing both Lutheran and Reformed traditions.

Lang spoke during a debate in the House of Lords on March 30th 1933, initiated by Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, who drew attention to violence against Jews in Germany and their dismissal from employment. The debate was given added urgency by the boycott due to begin the next day. However, Lang’s contribution was brief and unfocussed. He claimed to speak for ‘the Christian citizenship of the country’, and then immediately threw the opportunity away. Apart from a vague expression of concern for the German Jews, his main words in support of them were to say that he associated himself with the earlier speech of the Marquess of Reading, drawing attention to Germany’s discrimination against its Jewish citizens.<sup>15</sup> Lang’s brief contribution – it was hardly a speech – was a tepid statement.

---

<sup>14</sup> Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) p 85.

<sup>15</sup> *House of Lords Hansard* Vol 87 March 30<sup>th</sup> 1933 p 225. The Marquess of Reading, Rufus Isaacs, was a leading Jewish peer who had served as Lord Chief Justice of England and Viceroy of India. For

Lang continued to be uncertain how to respond to events in Germany. He accepted an invitation to speak at a protest meeting at the Queen's Hall, London, on June 27th, arranged by Jewish leaders. He wavered over what line to take. He wrote to Canon Tissington Tatlow of the Student Christian Movement: 'I know so much about the real situation in Germany that it will be impossible I fear to speak with the vehemence with which the Jews might expect. I know well how sensitive the new German National spirit is and I do not want to offend it. But I feel that we owe it to all to make some appeal to it.'<sup>16</sup> Lang had, it seems, been influenced by a curious memorandum drawn up by Dr Walter Kotschnig, Chief Secretary of the International Student Service based in Geneva, and forwarded by Tatlow to Lang. Kotschnig had said that

Above all it is important that the outside world should show some real sympathy with the plight of the younger generation in Germany. For them national Socialism is a last attempt to acquire the right to live ... there is an overwhelming mass of German youth which is craving for a new social order, for a community within which they can live and for which it is worth living.<sup>17</sup>

Returning the memorandum to Tatlow, Lang described it as 'very remarkable and impressive ... It confirms all that I had heard from both the German Ambassador and

---

his speech see pp 210-211. Cecil of Chelwood was an Anglican layman active in politics who played a key role in the creation of the League of Nations.

<sup>16</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 31, Lang to Tatlow, June 7<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>17</sup> Kotschnig Memorandum; LP Lang Papers Vol 38 ff 19 and 27-28. In her mention of the Kotschnig Memorandum, Kotzin does not include its antisemitic aspect (Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees', p 207).

from friends of my own who have just been visiting Germany ... ' <sup>18</sup> Lang's comment seems to indicate that in his uncertainty about what was happening in Germany, he was prepared to give the Nazis the benefit of the doubt. As it happened, at this time James Parkes was staying with Tatlow. Parkes was working for an international student organisation in Geneva, and was an advocate of a Christian *rapprochement* towards the Jews. He was also well-informed about Germany. Parkes told Tatlow about the anti-Jewish measures in Germany and showed him the official texts of the German laws. Many years later he recalled that Tatlow was amazed:

He told me that he had been with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Lang) earlier in the day, and that Lang had assured him that the allegations that Jews were persecuted in Germany were largely false; that he [Lang] had been to see Ribbentrop – the German Ambassador – himself, and that Ribbentrop had assured him that all the stories of persecution and violence were fabrications.<sup>19</sup>

Tatlow immediately arranged for Lang's chaplain, Alan Don, to meet James Parkes on June 7th 1933 at Lambeth Palace. After the meeting Parkes wrote to Don to stiffen Lang's sinews:

This is a unique opportunity for a declaration of fundamental Christian principles. We are all watching Germany with great anxiety because we know

---

<sup>18</sup> LP Lang Papers, Vol 38 f 31, Lang to Tatlow, June 7<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>19</sup> James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Gollancz, 1969) p 106.

that within the National Socialists ... there is a great deal of real idealism, of self sacrifice and of passion – to build a better and healthier Germany. ...

But it lies unanswerably within the competence of the Primate of a great Christian community to affirm as categorically as possible at such a juncture that a better life cannot be founded upon a lie, that, so long as they tolerate the inclusion of that lie within the very framework of their society, they are insuring the failure of their hopes. It is surely a moment when from one holding the office which the Archbishop holds there should come a deep and serious appeal to German Christianity, for the sake of Germany itself, to have the courage to dissociate itself from that lie.<sup>20</sup>

The 'lie' he refers to here is the myth of Aryan superiority. He then responds to 'three special questions' that Don had put to him. Parkes patiently rebuts the following propositions. First, 'that the Jews took advantage of the financial break-down of Germany after the War to amass large fortunes'. Second, that they dominated in certain professions even although they were a small proportion of the population. Third, that the Jews were behind much of the immorality in Germany (although in rebutting this, even Parkes believed much of the vice in Berlin to be Jewish-controlled).<sup>21</sup> All this shows that in June 1933, Anglican responses to the Nazi persecution of the Jews were ambivalent and even prone to grant credence to lurid

---

<sup>20</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 32, Parkes to Don, June 9<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>21</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 ff 36-37, Parkes to Don, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1933.

antisemitic stereotypes. In the end, though, Lang spoke out at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London, on June 27<sup>th</sup> 1933.

This meeting was organized by the Board of Deputies of British Jews to protest at the treatment being meted out to Jews in Germany. In his speech, Lang seems to have found his voice. Possibly he was strengthened by the presence of five other Anglican bishops, various theologians, the President of the Free Church Federal Council and the General Secretary of the Baptist Union.<sup>22</sup> Lang was asked to move the painfully cautious resolution, which asserted friendship with Germany, before stating: 'The discrimination now being exercised against the Jews in Germany is contrary to the basic principles of tolerance and equality which accepted by the modern world in relation to the treatment of religious and racial minorities.'<sup>23</sup> The wording reflected the style of presentation favoured by the Board. The Board tended to shy away from direct accusations about Germany's appalling treatment of Jews, preferring appeals to universal norms which Germany was flouting, what would later be called human rights. The Board seemed to be afraid to place too much emphasis on the fact that it was *Jews* who were suffering. Lang himself admitted that the resolution was 'not distinguished by fire and force of language'. But then he gave it some fire, referring to 'how, at this moment, as we all sit here in peace and security the members of the Jewish community in Germany are being driven from all the state services ... even from the concert room where music was supposed to be the common

---

<sup>22</sup> The official record kept by the Board indicates its concern that the protest should be seen to be representative of English society. The list of attendees includes 51 MPs, 10 peers, and 12 members of London County Council, as well as authors, lawyers and 'other distinguished people' (see BoD BO4/Q002).

<sup>23</sup> The wording of the resolution, and the quotations given here from Lang's speech, come from a typescript prepared by shorthand-takers hired for the occasion. Again, see BoD BO4/Q002.

language of all mankind.’ He referred to ‘families now hiding from persecution and proscription’ adding that he thought ‘with particular indignation’ of Jewish children ‘being kept apart from other children as if they were something unclean.’ What was said to be happening in Germany violated the ‘elementary instincts of our common humanity’. Lang was immediately followed by J. Scott Lidgett, a leading Methodist minister, who said that he came to speak ‘the earnest and profound indignation of all the Free Churches of this country’. However, unlike Lang, Lidgett only once uttered the word ‘Jew’. He accused Germany of violating ‘principles of civil and religious freedom’. Another speaker on behalf of the churches was the Earl of Iddesleigh, a prominent Catholic peer who spoke with the support of the English Catholic bishops. Iddesleigh worked in close co-operation with Arthur Hinsley, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and acted as a link between the Catholic Church and the English establishment.<sup>24</sup> Iddesleigh condemned Nazi antisemitism forthrightly - ‘these acts have shocked our consciences’ - and condemned its racial basis. However, he also articulated what was to be the standard Catholic line: that the main problem was ‘the worship of the state’. Jews were said to be suffering state oppression in Germany, in the same way that Christians were suffering at the hands of the state in Russia and Mexico. Catholic condemnation of antisemitism during this period would frequently bracket it with the sufferings of the Catholic Church, thus robbing the Jewish situation of its particularity.

The Jewish communal leadership in Britain had asked for, and received, support from the churches for this protest against Nazi persecution of the Jews. The Queen’s

---

<sup>24</sup> Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican* pp 125-126. See also p 68: ‘The opinions held by Hinsley and the majority of his bishops on issues of ideology and official policy were reflected far more faithfully through the House of Lords than through the Commons.’

Hall meeting was widely reported in Britain. It was an English protest on behalf of the Jews, with Christian representatives playing a key role. But it was also careful to locate the protests of British Jews in the context of their loyalty. The Marquess of Reading contrasted the unfortunate situation of German Jews with the situation of British Jews: ‘We know what it means to have status of equality and of citizenship. We understand and have been educated to know what the British characteristic is: fair play, liberty, tolerance, and, above all, justice and equity.’<sup>25</sup>

The protest meeting and the ambivalence at Lambeth Palace illustrate what Tony Kushner has suggested was the dilemma of liberalism. Liberal values were based on a belief in toleration and in the power of human reason. Liberalism had no category for unremitting evil and found it difficult to accommodate the reality of Nazi behaviour. Hence voices were heard within the liberal democracies saying that the Nazis could not be that bad, or that the Jews must be partly responsible. Kushner says that there was ‘a wide range of opinion which could accept neither the extremism of Nazi antisemitism nor the irrelevance of Jewish activities in the stimulation of such hostility.’<sup>26</sup> Batty’s report and Don’s questions to Parkes show just such a suspicion that Jews might have been guilty of something to produce such a reaction against them. Belief in liberal values, too, is shown at the Queen’s Hall meeting in the appeal to the Nazis to be reasonable. Neither approach was anchored in the reality of the situation.

At the Queen’s Hall Lang had used his office as Archbishop of Canterbury to condemn Nazi antisemitism. There was, in these early years, one more occasion

---

<sup>25</sup> For the quotations from Lang, see the verbatim typescript pp 6-8; for Lidgett, pp 12-13; for Iddlesleigh, pp 17-19; for the Marquess of Reading, p 21.

<sup>26</sup> Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* p 40. See also pp 34-36



when this happened. In May 1934 George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, sent Lang an issue of the virulently antisemitic Nazi periodical *Der Stürmer*, which was edited by Julius Streicher. *Der Stürmer* has been described as a 'Nazi weekly newspaper with a wide circulation that addressed itself to man's basest and most primitive instincts'.<sup>27</sup> The cartoons in the issue read by Lang portrayed sinister Jewish figures in a blood libel setting.<sup>28</sup> Lang was appalled. He wrote immediately to Geoffrey Dawson, Editor of *The Times*, asking him to publish a letter: 'I have been moved by such indignation on looking at this revolting publication that I cannot keep silent'.<sup>29</sup> Dawson duly published the letter in which Lang's language crackles with the strength of his feeling: '[*Der Stürmer*] rakes up legends and lies .... It contains a series of gruesome and disgusting illustrations.' Such 'medieval fanaticism should not have been permitted in any civilized country', and if Germany's government wanted goodwill abroad then it should 'promptly disown ... this odious incitement to religious bigotry and, it may well be, to renewed and brutal persecution.'<sup>30</sup> The letter was picked up by other newspapers and its contents reported widely not only in British newspapers but in Germany as well. The letter elicited a message from the Chief Rabbi, Dr J. H. Hertz, to Lang, expressing 'warmest thanks' and 'profound gratitude' on behalf of the Jewish community.<sup>31</sup>

The incident showed how the Archbishop of Canterbury could rouse public awareness of what was being done in Germany. Lang's response here is impressive, especially in view of the uncertainty about how to respond to Germany only a year

---

<sup>27</sup> Jacqueline Rokshar, 'Der Stürmer' in Gutman (ed) *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Vol 4, p 1420.

<sup>28</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38, ff 83-84, Pages from *Der Stürmer*.

<sup>29</sup> Lang Papers Vol 38 f 86, Lang to Dawson, May 15th 1934.

<sup>30</sup> *The Times* May 16<sup>th</sup> 1934 p 17.

<sup>31</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 89, Hertz to Lang, May 16th 1934.

previously. But the response by Church of England leaders during the 1930s was fitful and issue-led. Despite his sudden eruption over the cartoon, Lang had little to say about the situation of the Jews as the crisis in Germany deepened between 1934 and 1938. There were two reasons for the relative silence of Lang and other church leaders. It was not lack of news. The 'quality' dailies contained considerable news about German antisemitism, and *The Times* 'began to give a noticeably greater amount of space to German Jewish matters from 1935.'<sup>32</sup> But during these years the economic slump bit deeply into Britain. Some urban or mining areas saw unemployment and poverty on a daunting scale. There were demonstrations like the 1936 Jarrow Hunger March. Britain was preoccupied by its own economic and social problems.

The Church of England also had to pay close attention to the king, its nominal head. News in 1936 was dominated by the relationship of King Edward VIII and Mrs Wallis Simpson, culminating in the King's abdication on December 11th. Lang's counsel was sought by the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, and Lang himself made a broadcast two days after the King abdicated.<sup>33</sup> Thereafter Lang was absorbed in the preparations for the coronation on May 12th 1937 of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Yet Lang did not ignore Germany completely. His interest in Germany, and that of the Church of England generally, tended to be in the fate of the non-Aryan Christians and in the struggle for control of the Protestant Church. Before turning to those issues, however, it is necessary to say something about George Bell.

---

<sup>32</sup> Andrew Scharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (London: OUP, 1964) p 11.

<sup>33</sup> Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang*, chapter 32, where Lockhart describes the widespread criticism of the broadcast. Things were not helped by Edward VIII's loathing of Lang; see Philip Ziegler, *King Edward VIII: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1991) p 217.

### The Church of England and ecumenical action on Germany

George Bell was Bishop of Chichester from 1929 to 1958. Bell was widely recognised as an outstanding leader. When William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, died unexpectedly in 1944, Bell was seen by many as the best choice to succeed him. Here, however, Bell's record worked against him. He had opposed the government's insistence on an unconditional surrender by Germany and had also strongly criticised Allied carpet bombing of big German cities. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, passed over Bell and chose instead the relatively unknown Geoffrey Fisher.<sup>34</sup>

Bell was also a pioneer ecumenist. The ecumenical movement hardly existed at the beginning of the 20th century. A breakthrough occurred in 1910, when representatives of many Protestant missions met in conference at Edinburgh and discovered that they could, after all, work together. A further conference at Stockholm in 1925 led to the creation of the Life and Work movement. Bell played a major role in the Stockholm conference, when 500 delegates met from 37 nations. He emerged as a key figure in this developing ecumenical movement which brought together many Protestant denominations and some Eastern Orthodox churches. He was the chairman of the committee that drafted its constitution, and from 1932-1934 was chairman of the Executive Committee. For a longer period he was one of the movement's presidents.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Paul Welsby *A History of the Church of England 1945-1980* (Oxford: OUP, 1984) pp 7-8.

<sup>35</sup> Roland Jasper *George Bell Bishop of Chichester* (London: OUP, 1967) pp 58-61 and 95.

This leading ecumenical role gave Bell many contacts with German church leaders. The executive committee of Life and Work was worried by the authoritarian drift in Germany, and by German Protestant willingness to co-operate with the state under those circumstances. In September 1933 the Prussian Synod adopted the Aryan Paragraph.<sup>36</sup> Bell wrote to German church leaders three times between May 1933 and January 1934, criticising the German churches. The first time he wrote he mentioned action against Jews. In the second and third letters he did not criticise antisemitism *per se*, but the fact that German churches were using the Aryan Paragraph to dismiss people of Jewish descent from their employment.<sup>37</sup> After this correspondence the Life and Work Council met at Fanö in Denmark in August 1934. Germany was so concerned to counter criticism that it sent a fresh delegate by air half-way through the meeting, to bolster the presentation of the German case.<sup>38</sup> Germany did indeed come up for criticism. The main focus of the central resolution on Germany was the Nazi government's policy towards the Protestant churches. In the long resolution adopted, the main protest was 'anxiety ... lest vital principles of Christian liberty should be endangered or compromised at the present time in the life of the German Evangelical Church.'<sup>39</sup> The Jews had disappeared completely. There was no mention even of the Aryan Paragraph.

Bell, in writing to the German Protestants, and in leading the Life and Work movement, was the servant of an international ecumenical group, and thus his

---

<sup>36</sup> The Aryan Paragraph provided for the dismissal of all those deemed to be of Jewish descent. It will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> See LP Bell Papers, Vol 4 f 18, Bell to Hermann Kapler, President of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Protestant Churches, and Bell to Kapler, nd but probably May 17th or 18th 1933; also Vol 4 ff 254-255, Bell to Reichsbishop Müller, October 23rd 1933; and Vol 5 ff 115-116 Bell to Müller again, January 18th 1934.

<sup>38</sup> Jasper, *Bell* pp 116-117.

<sup>39</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 1 ff 267-268, Fanö minutes.

response could be said to represent an ecumenical forum rather than that of an English church leader. But it might have been expected that Life and Work would be interested in the Jewish situation because the movement was created specifically to give the churches a voice in social issues. Life and Work had been founded partly out of revulsion at the impotence of the churches when the world was drifting towards war in 1914. The Stockholm conference declaration affirmed 'the duty of all Churches to apply the Gospel to all realms of human life - industrial, social, political and international.'<sup>40</sup> In a pamphlet about the movement, Bell himself declared that the movement was intended to apply Christian ethics to contemporary problems.<sup>41</sup> Certainly Bell threw his energies into this ecumenical movement, so it is not unfair to draw attention to the fact that somehow, Life and Work's concern for Germany in the mid-1930s had become largely intra-church. Bell had written to his fellow-Christians about antisemitism; this concern then became more narrowly focussed on the dismissal of non-Aryan Christians from church employment; finally, this concern became one for the freedom of the church.

What had happened in the interim was that Bell, like other Christian leaders in England, had become increasingly aware of the situation of the Confessing Church in Germany. At the end of May 1934, 138 delegates from 26 regional churches in Germany met at Barmen to discuss government interference in Protestant church affairs. This was subsequently regarded as the meeting which launched the Confessing Church, which would work within the existing churches to resist Nazi attempts to control Protestant Christianity. In June 1934 Bell moved a resolution in

---

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Jasper, *Bell* p 62.

<sup>41</sup> Bell *The Stockholm Movement*, pamphlet, LP Bell Papers Vol 1 f 111.

the Convocation of Canterbury associating the house with the Barmen Declaration which came out of that meeting.<sup>42</sup> The Barmen Synod made no mention of the Jews. As Richard Gutteridge puts it, 'The Jewish problem ... was certainly not on the agenda of the Synod.' There was, he adds, no expression of solidarity with the Jews in their suffering.<sup>43</sup>

Life and Work held an ecumenical conference at Oxford July 12-26, 1937. It drew hundreds of delegates from Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches in Europe and North America. Hastings calls it 'The central ecumenical event of the 1930s'.<sup>44</sup> The conference issued a high-minded 'Message to the Churches' which mentioned race in passing: 'The Christian sees distinctions of race as part of God's purpose to enrich mankind with a diversity of gifts ... national egotism tending to suppression of other nationalities is, no less than individual egotism, a sin against the Creator of all peoples and races.'<sup>45</sup> Such sentiments were incompatible with Nazism, but expressed so generally they hardly amounted to a defence of the Jews. In fact in a letter to Archbishop Lang from the conference, Bell said that the group producing the message was determined to be positive and 'would not attack Rosenberg or National Socialist Philosophy as such.'<sup>46</sup> While it is difficult to say where Bell's influence ends and where that of others begins, we can say that he expresses no dismay about

---

<sup>42</sup> LP Bell Papers, Vol 1 f 199, Resolution adopted by Upper House of Convocation of Canterbury, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1934

<sup>43</sup> R. Gutteridge, *Open thy Mouth for the Dumb! The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1879-1950* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976) p 125. Much of the text of the Barmen Declaration can be found in P. Matheson (ed) *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) pp 46-47). On the Barmen Synod, see E. C. Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1979) pp 162-163.

<sup>44</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 304.

<sup>45</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 2 Part 1 f 469, *Message to the Churches*, Printed booklet on conference.

<sup>46</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 2 Part 1 f 394, Bell to Lang July 16th 1937.

this omission. Other evidence will be adduced later in this chapter to show Bell reluctant to voice public condemnation of the Germans.

There was, however, one piece of plain speaking to come by Bell, when he encouraged the Church Assembly to condemn Germany. Like so much of the Church of England's responses in the 1930s to the Nazi persecution of the Jews, it came during a surge of antisemitic activity. During 1935 harassment of German Jews increased. Several causes have been suggested for this: the propaganda of Goebbels, attempts by the SA to reassert itself following the purges of 1934, and initiatives by local officials keen to make a good impression with the Nazi authorities.<sup>47</sup> In May, Jewish-owned shops in Munich were destroyed by the SA, and in July there were anti-Jewish riots in Berlin.<sup>48</sup> On September 15th 1935 Hitler announced new laws during the annual Nazi rally at Nuremberg. The Reich Citizenship Law said that only those of German or related blood would enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship, which effectively stripped Jews of their citizenship. The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour forbade marriage or sexual relations between Jews and Germans. The effect of the laws was even greater exclusion of Jews from German society. The laws also provided a rationale for local and regional action against them.<sup>49</sup> The pace and fury of this drive against the Jews disturbed Bell. He moved a resolution in the Church Assembly on November 20th 1935. It read:

---

<sup>47</sup> M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (London: Macmillan, 2000) p 288. The SA or *Sturmabteilung* were the paramilitary Brownshirts.

<sup>48</sup> Yahil, *The Holocaust* pp 68-69.

<sup>49</sup> David Bankier, 'Nuremberg Laws' in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Vol 3 pp 1076-1077.

That this Assembly desires to express its sympathy with the Jewish people and those of Jewish origin in the sufferings which are being endured by many of their number in Germany, and trusts that Christian people in this and other countries will exert their influence to make it plain to the rulers of Germany that the continuance of their present policy will arouse widespread indignation and prove a grave obstacle to the promotion of confidence and good-will between Germany and other nations.<sup>50</sup>

In his speech, Bell said that he was compelled to introduce the motion because German policies were 'a wrong done to humanity'. German antisemitism 'was unworthy of a great civilised nation'. In the tendency noted by Kushner, Jews were seen as partly to blame. Bell said that some Jews 'of a low type' might have 'exercised a subversive influence', but Germany had launched an indiscriminate attack on all Jews. Bell drew attention to the way that the original Aryan legislation, together with the Nuremberg Laws, had driven Jews out of professional life and the civil service. He called on Christians in England and Christians in Europe to make their protests known.<sup>51</sup>

Hensley Henson, Bishop of Durham and one of the most senior bishops, also threw his weight behind the motion in a fiery speech. Henson said that when he heard the news from Germany about anti-Jewish acts, he felt 'a kind of blind rage within him'. He gave three reasons: first, the solidarity of civilisation required it. Second, the German fixation with racial purity was a nonsense, for 'the Jews were just

---

<sup>50</sup> *Church Assembly Proceedings (CAP)* Vol 16 1935 p 467.

<sup>51</sup> *CAP* Vol 16 1935 pp 467-469. The official proceedings, while a verbatim record, are put in the form of recorded speech throughout.



as mixed a race as the Germans'. Third, Christianity owed an immense debt to Judaism: 'It was preposterous, almost incredibly mean, that the children of Christendom should turn on the ancient people of God, to whom they owed, religiously, spiritually and morally, almost everything they valued....'<sup>52</sup> The resolution was carried (the majority was not noted). Owen Chadwick says that Henson did not care whether Bell would think it wise to be so outspoken.<sup>53</sup>

Jewish leaders and others were delighted that the Church of England had spoken up in defence of Germany's suffering Jews. The next day the Chief Rabbi, Dr J. H. Hertz, wrote to Bell: 'Your words at the Church Assembly yesterday ... will come as a ray of hope to hundreds of thousands whose annihilation seems to have been decided upon by the Nazi rulers'. From the East End of London came a letter from Basil Henriques, a leading Jewish social worker and community organizer, who wrote: 'I cannot refrain from thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the magnificent stand that you took at the Church Assembly yesterday. Throughout the whole of this ghastly persecution you have proved yourself over and over again to be a true friend of the Jews'. Neville Laski, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews wrote on November 26<sup>th</sup> to express the Board's thanks, adding that he doubted whether anything would deflect the Nazis from their aims.<sup>54</sup> This stance taken by the Church of England in its most representative body was widely reported in the press,

---

<sup>52</sup> *CAP* Vol 16 1935 pp 474-475

<sup>53</sup> Owen Chadwick, *Hensley Henson: A Study in the Friction between Church and State* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1994) p 254. Henson had changed from an earlier Anglo-Catholicism to a broader churchmanship, and changed again when he became a critic of the establishment of the church following the defeat of the 1928 Prayer Book. It has been suggested that this latter change meant that he could not hope to become Primate, and hence could be more outspoken.

<sup>54</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28: Hertz to Bell, f 35, Nov 21 1935; Basil Henriques to Bell, f 38, Nov 21 1935; High Commissioner Macdonald to Bell, f 53, Nov 22 1935; Laski to Bell, f 75, Nov 26 1935

both the national dailies and the provincial ones.<sup>55</sup> It was reported further afield too. Bell heard from various correspondents that reports had appeared in the *New York Times*, Polish Jewish newspapers, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (which had accused Bell of 'superficial knowledge'), and the *Danziger Echo*, among others.<sup>56</sup>

Henson soon found himself stirring controversy again, as he responded to the reality of Nazi antisemitism. Early in 1936 he heard that British universities were proposing to send representatives to join the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the founding of the University of Heidelberg. Henson wrote a letter to *The Times* drawing attention to how 'The savage persecution of the Jews ... has borne severely on the numerous German professors and lecturers in the German universities. Large numbers ... have been expelled from office and driven into exile.' He described how at Heidelberg itself German science had been said to be incompatible with Jewish science. He called on British universities not to send representatives there.<sup>57</sup> He then heard that his local University of Durham was being encouraged to send representatives to the bicentenary celebrations of the University of Göttingen. Henson regarded Göttingen as 'a Jew-baiting university'. By that point 22% of its staff had been dismissed. Henson was Visitor to Durham University, and wrote privately to the Vice-Chancellor, Canon Henry Ellershaw, threatening to make public his disapproval if the university persisted. It decided not to send delegates.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Chadwick, *Hensley Henson* p 254.

<sup>56</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28 ff 33-34, 69, 78 and 89

<sup>57</sup> *The Times* February 4<sup>th</sup> 1936, p 13.

<sup>58</sup> Chadwick, *Henson* pp 261-262. The issue was complicated by the fact that the university's Chancellor was Henson's friend the Marquess of Londonderry. Londonderry had asked the university to send representatives.

These moves by Henson were an important counter-statement against Christian academics flirting with Nazism. Sir Edwyn Hoskins was a priest, baronet and Dean of Chapel of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was an influential teacher and writer on the New Testament. He was a translator of Barth, but was not a Barthian. In fact, Hoskins was friendly with the very different Tübingen theologian Gerhard Kittel. After 1933 Kittel had taken a markedly antisemitic turn. In a notorious public lecture that year on *Die Judenfrage*, Kittel had spoken of German Jews as a decadent element in German society, eating away at Germany through assimilation. He briefly considered extermination as an answer, but thought it impracticable. He recommended removal of all civil liberties from Jews, and a ban on inter-marriage. Kittel specifically called on Christians to be part of this anti-Jewish struggle and not to be soft.<sup>59</sup> Hoskins wanted this lecture published in England and supervised a translation, which Kittel did not allow to be published. Hoskins also persuaded Cambridge to invite Kittel to give two lectures in October 1937. Kittel disgusted many in the audience by wearing his Nazi Party membership badge.<sup>60</sup> It was hardly a major stream, but there was some sympathy for the Nazis in English theology. When Paul Tillich, then in exile from Germany and living in New York, gave a lecture at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Manchester, he noticed ‘a number of questions with detectable Nazi tendencies.’<sup>61</sup> Richard Griffiths argues that clergy who defended Nazi Germany in the 1930s were probably naïve and trying to ‘see the

---

<sup>59</sup> Robert Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch* (New Haven: Yale, 1985) pp 54-61).

<sup>60</sup> Alan Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945* (London: SCM, 1986) p 205. Hoskins died shortly before Kittel arrived for the lectures.

<sup>61</sup> Paul Tillich, *My Travel Diary: 1936: Between Two Worlds* (London: SCM, 1970) p 48.

best'.<sup>62</sup> An example of this would be the article written by Richard Gutteridge in *Theology* after he had spent five months in Germany, asking a fair hearing for those who would bring the churches closer to Nazi ideals and protesting that Hitler and his followers were not cynically manipulating the churches for their own ends.<sup>63</sup> Henson was a counter-weight against this kind of thinking.

Despite its professed concern for social justice, the ecumenical movement Bell spoke for had been reluctant to take a stance on what might be perceived as a political issue, the treatment of the Jews. It preferred to concentrate its fire on church concerns. Bell was a compassionate man, who genuinely hated what the Germans were doing to Jews and others. Despite his Church Assembly motion of 1935, he did not become a leading figure expressing Christian condemnation of Nazi Germany's treatment of its Jews. And yet, paradoxically, Bell believed that he *was* engaged in working for Jews, for around this time he was increasingly engaged in working for 'non-Aryan Christian' refugees, ie Christians of Jewish descent. This was the anomaly that led him away from action for the Jews *per se*.

#### Bell, non-Aryan Christians and Jewish Refugees

On August 4th 1933 Sir Wyndham Deedes, Co-Chair of the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, forwarded to Bell a letter he had received from Helen Bentwich of the German Refugees Hospitality Committee in London. This act by Deedes was in a small way an illustration of how informal social networks overrode

---

<sup>62</sup> Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-39* (Oxford: OUP, 1983) p 177.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Gutteridge, 'German Protestantism and the Hitler Regime' *Theology* 36.12 (1933) p 245. Gutteridge's understanding changed and he became a historian of the German Church struggle.

the lack of formal ties between Christians and Jews. Deedes was a retired soldier who had been a civil secretary in Palestine during the administration of Sir Herbert (later Viscount) Samuel. Deedes (an Anglican) was a strong supporter of the movement for a Jewish national home in Palestine, and was a Christian who was active in Jewish refugee assistance. Later, both he and Samuel would co-chair the Movement for the Care of Children for Germany. In this letter, Helen Bentwich challenged Christians to help refugees who, although Christian by upbringing, were deemed to be Jews by the Nazis.<sup>64</sup> Helen Bentwich came from a prominent Jewish family and at this point she was an organiser in the Children's Inter-Aid Committee, which brought refugee children over from Germany, and also worked with Bnai Brit to establish hostels for refugee children in Palestine.<sup>65</sup> Her husband Norman was an academic lawyer who had served in the Mandate Government of Palestine from 1918-1929, ultimately as Attorney-General. Helen Bentwich wrote to Bell again on September 19<sup>th</sup>:

... I badly need help and advice in dealing with ... the problem of the 'Non-Aryans': the people of partial Jewish ancestry who are today, many of them, orthodox and practising Christians. Their position seems to be almost more tragic than anyone else's. The Jews belong to a community and are assured of the practical help and sympathy of Jews all over the world. ... But these non-

---

<sup>64</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 27, Deedes to Bell, August 4th 1933; copy of Bentwich to Deedes ff 1-2. Deedes was a retired soldier who would become prominent in refugee work.

<sup>65</sup> Norman Bentwich, *They Found Refuge: An Account of British Jewry's Work for Victims of Nazi Oppression* (London: Cresset Press, 1956) p 65. She was also active in the Labour Party and later chaired the London County Council 1956-1957. The Helen Bentwich papers are held in the Women's Library, London, which refuses to allow access to them until they are catalogued. There are currently no plans for the latter to take place.

Aryans are veritable pariahs and belong to no corporate body which unites them and have no political convictions in common to stimulate them.

At present very many of the non-Aryans who find their way to England come to this Committee for assistance. They ... certainly do not come within the scope of any Jewish organisation ... <sup>66</sup>

Who were these refugees mentioned by Helen Bentwich? A surprising number of people in the 1930s, including Bell and the Bentwiches, called them non-Aryan Christians, even although this utilised Nazi terminology. These refugees were also called Jewish Christians, Christian Jews and Hebrew Christians. Most were the children or grandchildren of marriages where one partner had been Jewish, and the children were brought up as Christian. Many were professionals who lost their jobs as a result of the Aryan Paragraph.

Helen Bentwich's letter introduced several themes which would recur later. She said that non-Aryan Christians had no dedicated source of help; that it was the role of the churches, not the Jewish organisations, to help Jewish Christians; and that the position of Jewish Christians seemed 'almost more tragic than anybody else's'. All these themes were picked up by Bell and reiterated by him in much of his own correspondence and campaigning. What motivated Helen Bentwich to approach Bell? Surprisingly, it does not seem to have been lack of funds (though that would change). She first wrote in the autumn of 1933, when the numbers of Jewish refugees

---

<sup>66</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 27 ff 9-11, H. Bentwich to Bell, September 19th 1933

coming to Britain was still quite small. By May 1934 some 3,500 had been registered, and slightly over 1,000 of these had left for other destinations. Writing in early 1936 Norman Bentwich went so far as to say that the money collected by the Central British Fund, the main fund for Jewish refugee work, 'largely exceeded what was required for the assistance of the refugees in the country.' (In 1933 the Central British Fund had raised £203,000).<sup>67</sup> There may have been an understandable resentment that Jewish resources had to be diverted to those who were not Jewish. There certainly was a methodical element in Bentwich's approach. As she pointed out, Jews, Socialists and Pacifists all had groups to turn to for succour. Moreover, there was already a segmented help system for Jewish and political refugees, with academics helping academics, trade unionists helping trade unionists, and Jews helping Jews.<sup>68</sup>

Bell was a man of lively conscience and felt challenged by what Bentwich told him. He made this cause his own. He immediately wrote to *The Times* pleading the cause of the non-Aryan Christians.<sup>69</sup> He threw his efforts into appeals for money to help Jewish Christians. He persuaded the Church of England to launch an appeal at Christmas time, which brought in only £1,000.<sup>70</sup> Undaunted, Bell utilised his ecumenical contacts to create an international organisation to help non-Aryan

---

<sup>67</sup> Norman Bentwich, *The Refugees from Germany: April 1933 to December 1935* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1936) p 121. In April 1933 representatives of the Jewish community had estimated to the Home Office that 3,000-4,000 Jewish refugees might come to Britain (A. J. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933-1939* Ilford: Frank Cass, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 1994 pp 30-31). By the end of 1938 the financial situation would be very different.

<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, professional and labour bodies also tried to restrict entry of Jewish refugees believing it was in their members' interests to do so. See Kushner, *Holocaust and Liberal Imagination* pp 83-88.

<sup>69</sup> *The Times* October 4<sup>th</sup> 1933 p10.

<sup>70</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 27 ff 253-254 for text of appeal. Bentwich, *Refugees from Germany* p 201 for amount raised.

Christians. Groups were formed in Denmark, Britain, the Netherlands and the United States. These nominated delegates for an International Committee for Refugees from Germany, which was constituted at a meeting in London on January 31st, 1936. The international committee decided to raise £125,000 to help 2,500 non-Aryan Christian refugees, to be nominated by the High Commissioner for Refugees. Some £50,000 was to be raised in Britain. Bell formed a National Christian Appeal Committee for the purpose, with Lord Bessborough as its chairman and himself as vice-chairman. J. H. Adam, a retired civil servant of the India Office, was Honorary Secretary.<sup>71</sup>

Two problems quickly became apparent. They were not able to raise the money. And they could not find a substantial number of non-Aryan Christian refugees to help. The financial appeal was launched in March 1936. Bell had written to each bishop in the Church of England commending the appeal, asking him to publicise it within his diocese. Bell felt it was the duty of the Church of England to respond to this appeal. Lang also wrote saying that the appeal would help ‘rescue from hopelessness and destitution *a large number* of refugees from Germany who have no special claim upon the charity of the Jewish community’, and it should thus ‘receive an immediate and ready response from the Christian people in this country.’<sup>72</sup>

The launch of the appeal was covered in the national press. Bell followed it up with a BBC broadcast on September 24th 1936. In the broadcast, which was reprinted in *The Listener*, Bell began by recalling that over the centuries many refugee groups had sought sanctuary in Britain. Now it was the German Jews who

---

<sup>71</sup> The history of the International Christian Committee is reprised in a memo from its Hon. Sec., J. H. Adam, to Bell, nd, but approximately February 1937 (LP Bell Papers Vol 28 ff 211-212.) See also letter from Dr H. S. Leiper to Bell, (LP Bell Papers, Vol 28 ff 201-204).

<sup>72</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28 f 144, Bell to Bishops, February 21st 1936; and Vol 28 f 145, Lang to Bishops, March 9th 1936. Emphasis added.



sought sanctuary. He immediately added, 'I am not going into the reasons for this violent discrimination against the Jewish people, but I will deal with the actual facts of the present unhappy situation'. There were, he reported, already 80,000 Jews who had been forced to leave Germany, and thrown into 'human poverty, suffering, desolation'. Of these 'a substantial minority', perhaps 12,000, were Christian by religion while having 'some mixture of Jewish blood in their veins', and thus subject to discrimination. While full Jews would be helped by Jews abroad, these Jewish Christians had no one to help them. It was therefore a challenge to the churches, to show that 'Christianity is a bigger thing than race', and to help 'their suffering fellow-Christians.'<sup>73</sup> Bell set great store by this appeal. Together with public statements by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and relief work by the Quakers, Bell's work for Jewish Christians was one of the most visible responses of the churches in England to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Yet as his broadcast showed, the whole campaign had questionable aspects.

First of all, near the start of the broadcast, Bell announces that he will not explain *why* the Jews are fleeing Germany. To the uninformed listener there would have been the impression of some vague, unnamed force which made them flee. It pointed to a vacuum at the heart of what Bell was trying to do. He wanted sympathy for the refugees without giving any real context for their plight. (Other examples of this will be given later in this chapter.) The second point is that the campaign by the churches was not truly aimed at helping Jews. Indeed, Bell himself says in the broadcast that 'these people are not Jews'. These were refugees who did not identify

---

<sup>73</sup> Bell, 'Tragedy of the Christian Outcasts', *The Listener* September 30th 1936, p 607.

themselves as Jews but who fell foul of the race laws. By religion they considered themselves to be Christian.

Thirdly, there is the suggestion that they are, none the less, suffering as much as the mainstream Jewish community. This too was a characteristic claim of the campaign. In fact, it was often implied - as in this broadcast - that the Jewish Christians were suffering *more* than the others because they had no worldwide Jewish community to help them. This was widely believed in Christian circles. Adolf Keller of the Life and Work Geneva office had written to Bell in 1933 to say: 'The Christian Churches have a special responsibility for Hebrew Christians who are in a worse position than the Jews.'<sup>74</sup> That same year the Rev H. W. Fox had submitted a report to the Church of England Council for Foreign Relations, in which he had said that 'The position of these [non-Aryan Christians] is far worse than that of those who still belong to the Jewish community.' They could not, he said, expect any support from the German Evangelical Church nor had they been promised the help from overseas that Jews could expect.<sup>75</sup> This was the line Bell took when trying to obtain British government financial assistance. In November 1936 he wrote to Viscount Cranborne, a junior Foreign Office minister, saying that the situation of non-Aryan Christians 'is very much harder than that of Jews who, being Jews by race as well as religion, have the whole Jewish community behind them'. He asked for a grant of £5,000 to help the work of International Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany. Pressing his case, Bell wrote again in December to ask that special consideration be given to a

---

<sup>74</sup> LP Bell Papers, Vol 27 f 46 Keller to Bell, Oct 7 1933

<sup>75</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 27 f 89 'Report on the Position of Jewish and other Christian Refugees from Germany', Church of England Council for Foreign Relations.

grant for the education of German non-Aryan Christian children already in the UK. Cranborne passed the matter to the Treasury for comment, but got short shrift.<sup>76</sup>

This insistence on non-Aryan Christians being worse off than Jews underlines one of the conclusions of Chana Kotzin who says that ‘Christian refugee activists downplayed the needs of Jews and Jewish refugees in order to highlight the needs of ‘non-Aryan’ Christians. In this way they created a hierarchy of suffering, which favoured Christian over Jewish refugees.’<sup>77</sup> Bell’s intention was not to depreciate Jewish suffering, but to prick the Christian conscience. He hoped that the churches would see it as appropriate to look after their own, at a time when the Jewish community was making great efforts to look after fellow Jews.

The ubiquity of the language of race used by Bell and other Christian leaders to describe the Jews is striking. The use of it in his correspondence with Cranborne (‘Jews by race as well as religion’) is only one instance of many. Kotzin also suggests that this enduring language of race may explain the poor response within the churches to appeals for non-Aryan Christians. Bell and others saw the latter as fully Christian, and challenged fellow Christians to give them their support. But, says Kotzin, among the public the logic of race may have trumped the logic of faith, with non-Aryan Christians regarded as ambiguously Christian, ie still in some way Jewish and therefore the responsibility of Jewish organisations. However, as she also points out, Christian leaders like Bell were in a difficult situation, trying to explain why Christians were being persecuted for racial reasons rather than religious.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> PRO: HO 213/1633 Bell to Cranborne, November 23rd & December 17th 1936; HO 213/1633 V. Hopkins to W. Roberts of the FO, January 30th 1937; Cranborne to Bell, February 16th 1937.

<sup>77</sup> Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees’ p 323.

<sup>78</sup> Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees’ pp 224-225, and 262-263.

It is surprising how easily Bell and others used the non-Aryan terminology, unconsciously playing into a Nazi world perspective. This is hardly a sign of covert sympathy with Nazism. It is more likely a reflection of the widespread use of race concepts in European discourse from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Ideas of race became blended with aspects of social Darwinism, biology and anthropology to create a current of thought in which race was widely considered to be a predominant factor in destiny.<sup>79</sup> The language of race was sometimes used, for example, to justify Britain's mission *vis-à-vis* its empire.<sup>80</sup> This is not to say that Bell and other church leaders using the language of race were adherents of race doctrine. But race as a vaguer concept had influenced the wider culture and its use was sometimes taken for granted as a signifier of the ties that bound a nation together. This background, together with Bell's attempts to clarify *why* Christians were being persecuted as Jews, probably explains his use of race-based terminology.

Bell continued to portray the position of the non-Aryan Christians as worse than that of the Jews. Addressing the AGM of the Church's Mission to the Jews in May 1938, he said that 'the non-Aryan Christians have a much harder lot.'<sup>81</sup> Bell's belief that non-Aryan Christians were in a worse position derived from Helen Bentwich's initial letter to him of September 1933 cited earlier. She had engaged his interest by saying that unlike mainstream Jews, non-Aryan Christians had no community abroad to help them, and thus, 'Their position seems to be *almost* more tragic than anyone

---

<sup>79</sup> Yahil, *The Holocaust* pp 35-37.

<sup>80</sup> Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain* p 222. For the mid-Victorian debate on race and nationhood, concluding that 'civilisational values' triumphed over race-based ideas of nationhood, cf Peter Mandler, ' "Race" and "Nation" in Mid-Victorian Thought' in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young, eds, *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) pp 224-244.

<sup>81</sup> *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* Vol 29, June 1938 p 71.

else's.'<sup>82</sup> Bell lost sight of the qualifying 'almost' and became convinced that his fellow-Christians of Jewish descent in Germany were worse off than anyone else.

The situation which aroused the concern of Bell and others had its roots in the Nazi drive to define Jewish identity on a racial basis. On April 11<sup>th</sup> 1933 a Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service provided for dismissal from the civil service of Jews and political opponents of the Nazi regime. It included a paragraph defining a Jew as a person with at least one Jewish grandparent.<sup>83</sup> This 'Aryan Paragraph' was adopted by many other organisations in civil society rushing to copy the Nazi lead.<sup>84</sup> Professional, public and private associations set about excluding Jews or limiting the scope of their work.<sup>85</sup> The effect was draconian on non-Aryan Christians too. One historian puts it thus:

Those with one Jewish grandparent could not remain employed even in the meanest communal jobs such as municipal roadsweepers, abattoir labourers or office messengers, nor were they to be admitted to the most mundane activities connected, however tenuously, with culture, for instance as newspaper vendors or film extras. They were allowed to work in agriculture

---

<sup>82</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 27 f 9 H. Bentwich to Bell, September 19th 1933, emphasis added.

<sup>83</sup> Yahil points out that the law actually uses non-Aryan and Jew interchangeably, which was to lead to later legal difficulties (Yahil, *Holocaust* p 65).

<sup>84</sup> For a summary of 1933 legislation, with dates, see Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews* pp 58-61. The 'Aryan Paragraph' was part of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*).

<sup>85</sup> J. Noakes, 'The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish *Mischlinge*' *Leo Baeck Yearbook* Vol 34 pp 294-299.

but, according to the National Socialists' philosophy of 'blood and soil', could not own a farm that could be passed on to heirs.<sup>86</sup>

The position of the Jewish community in Germany deteriorated sharply with the passing of the Nuremberg Laws announced on September 15th 1935. Paradoxically the position of those of partial Jewish descent improved slightly. Under the Aryan Paragraph, those with at least one Jewish grandparent suffered the same discrimination as those of full Jewish descent. The Nuremberg laws introduced new refinements. Those of full Jewish descent were henceforth distinguished from those of part-Jewish descent, known as *Mischlinge*. There were even said to be *Mischlinge* of the first degree (those with two Jewish grandparents) and those of the second degree (those with only one Jewish grandparent). *Mischlinge* enjoyed some limited protection against discrimination in the workplace as a result of the Nuremberg laws.<sup>87</sup> Büttner says that 'this legislation brought about substantial relief ... Regulations that earlier had applied to all "non-Aryans" were now limited to Jews only.'<sup>88</sup> In subsequent legislation and practice the line shifted to and fro, with those of the first degree excluded again from the professions in 1937, but in general *Mischlinge* were protected by their right to provisional citizenship.

The Nuremberg laws were public knowledge, and in January 1937 Bell visited Germany where he met with leaders of the Paulusbund, which facilitated emigration

---

<sup>86</sup> Ursula Büttner, 'The Persecution of Christian-Jewish Families in the Third Reich', *LBY* Vol 34 (1989) p 272.

<sup>87</sup> Noakes, 'Nazi Policy' pp 311-314 and 327-328. This protection did not apply to the civil service, journalism or teaching. However even in the civil service, quarter-Jews were usually allowed to remain in post; see Noakes p 325.

<sup>88</sup> Büttner, 'Persecution of Christian-Jewish Families' p 275.

of Jewish Christians. In the late 1930s it was simply not correct for Bell to continue saying that non-Aryan Christians were in a worse position than those of full Jewish descent. As *Mischlinge* they were not as vulnerable or as isolated as those of full Jewish descent. Certainly, from 1933-1935, the effect of the Aryan Paragraph had been devastating for those of part-Jewish descent. A whole swathe of people from train-drivers to teachers lost their employment and faced a bleak future because all were employees of the state, or of organisations that had copied the Aryan Paragraph. But from mid-1935 this eased.

This change in the situation of non-Aryan Christians may partly explain Bell's confusion, and perhaps obduracy, over numbers. He had received many requests to help non-Aryan Christians before mid-1935. He might have assumed that this could only continue and might well increase, whereas it turned out otherwise. Possibly the easing of restrictions in Germany had led to fewer non-Aryan Christians emigrating.

Bell's fixation on non-Aryan Christians can be demonstrated through his statements about their numbers. When Helen Bentwich met with him in October 1933 she estimated there were 250,000-300,000 non-Aryan Christians.<sup>89</sup> These figures were soon repeated in a report to the Church of England Council for Foreign Relations which estimated 200,000-300,000, a figure probably supplied by Bell.<sup>90</sup> These estimates are reasonably close to the likely figure. The 1939 census reported 138,500 non-Aryan Christians for the enlarged Reich. However, some partial Jews, like full Jews, would have emigrated by then; and although it was illegal to hide

---

<sup>89</sup> LP Bell Papers, Bell's notes of meeting, with her, Vol 27, f 23 October 1st 1933.

<sup>90</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 27 f 89, H. W. Fox, 'Report [to the CFR] on the Position of Jewish and other Christian Refugees from Nazi Germany', October 14th 1933.

Jewish ancestry there was some degree of concealment.<sup>91</sup> Accordingly, after careful analysis of the available figures, Werner Cohn estimates that in the old Germany of 1933 there would have been at least 228,000 and perhaps even 500,000 non-Aryan Christians.<sup>92</sup>

To the surprise of many in the non-Aryan Christian support group, the numbers they anticipated seeking help did not materialize. This became a source of tension between Bell and J. H. Adam, the honorary secretary of the UK Christian Committee for Refugees from Nazi Germany. In a lengthy memorandum to Bell, Adam drew attention to the disparity between the Committee's aims and the small number it had actually helped. The Committee had been set up believing that there were some 12,000-14,000 non-Jewish refugees outside Germany, of whom 6,000-7,000 were thought to be non-Aryan Christians. Of the latter the UK Committee planned to help 2,500. But the Committee had been given the names of only 1,051. A visit to continental cities by a committee member found that many of these had disappeared and the lists were out of date. He was able to find only 90 non-Aryan Christians needing help. Adam suggested that the Committee might consider winding up as there was no real demand for its services. Bell demurred, replying that the need to help non-Aryan Christians could only grow. Adam accordingly withheld the memorandum from the Committee.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> On the subject of (full) Jews surviving by hiding, see Laqueur, *Generation Exodus* pp 45-50.

<sup>92</sup> W. Conn, 'Bearers of a Common Fate? The "Non-Aryan" Christian "fate-Comrades" of the Paulus-Bund', *LBY* Vol 33 (1988) pp 351-353. Helmreich estimates that in the Old Reich there were some 84,600 *Mischlinge*; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler* p 330.

<sup>93</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28 ff 110-114, Adam to Bell, nd; Vol 28 f 174, Bell to Adam, January 6th 1937; Adam to Bell, f 178 January 12th 1937. This, and the following material on disagreement over the numbers who could be helped, is not discussed by Kotzin.



The problem, however, refused to go away. In May 1937 Adam wrote to Bell: 'I attended a meeting at Lord Noel Buxton's house ... no one present seemed to credit my statement that the number of destitute non-Aryan Christians we had been able to trace was less than 100.'<sup>94</sup> Adam was not the only one alarmed at the facts. The administrator of the American branch of the International Christian Committee for Refugees from Nazi Germany, Dr H. S. Leiper, wrote challenging Bell on the various figures that were given. Leiper pointed out that it had been originally estimated there would be 14,000 non-Aryan Christian refugees seeking help; Bell had revised this downward to 2,500 and then again to 700. Bell's reply was that the invisibility of non-Aryan Christians came about because nothing of a definite character had been done for them as a body and hence they tended to merge into other groups. 'But in view of the really grave increase of anti-Jewish and anti-non-Aryan legislation and administration in Germany, I am sure we must continue our work ... The position of the non-Aryan Christians as I see it is quite heart-breaking.'<sup>95</sup> It might have been thought that the difficulty in finding non-Aryan Christian refugees to help might have given Bell food for thought. It is therefore astonishing to find Bell writing a few months later to Malcolm Macdonald, Secretary of State for the Dominions, telling him: 'It is difficult to obtain precise figures, as you will readily understand, but I think roughly speaking there are about 700,000 non-Aryan Christians in Germany.'<sup>96</sup> He asked Macdonald whether a place could be found for them in the Dominions.<sup>96</sup> Not only was the figure of 700,000 far in excess of anything that Bell had used

---

<sup>94</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28 f 317 Adam to Bell, May 7th 1937.

<sup>95</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28 f 217, Leiper to Bell, February 19th 1937; Vol 28 f 265, Bell to Leiper, March 10th 1937.

<sup>96</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 29 Part 1 ff 66-67, Bell to Macdonald, August 18th, 1937.

previously. He also still assumed that there will be large-scale emigration of young non-Aryan Christians, when in fact his Committee had struggled to find 50 to go to Colombia. Nine months later, in May 1938, he inflated the figures even further, telling the AGM of the Church's Mission to the Jews that there were at least one million Christians of Jewish descent and perhaps as many as two million under the Nuremberg laws. He repeated the latter figure in a letter to *The Times*: 'The total number of "Non-Aryan" Christians suffering in greater or less degree from racial disabilities may be anything up to 2,000,000.'<sup>97</sup>

If it was no more than inflation by a self-interested organisation, then it would be of little significance. However, until Temple became Archbishop of Canterbury, Bell represented probably the most prominent response by the Church of England to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. He poured enormous time and effort into work for non-Aryan Christians, and created a movement within and beyond the Church of England to help him in this task. But it was a campaign that was not based on reality. Another difficulty was that the Committee worked in co-operation with the High Commissioner for Refugees. The High Commission had been established to help refugees who had *already* left Germany. This meant that Bell could not use funds from the appeal to help non-Aryan Christians leave.<sup>98</sup>

Bell's devotion to the non-Aryan Christian cause also inhibited his ability to criticise the Nazis publicly. Bell clearly loathed what the Nazis were doing to the Jews, and yet he seemed to draw back from high profile criticism for fear it might

---

<sup>97</sup> *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* Vol 29, June 1938 p 71; *The Times* July 8<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 12.

<sup>98</sup> Bell to Bessborough, National Christian Appeal Treasurer, November 1st 1937, Vol 29 Part 1 f 210. See also Vol 28 f 226 Gen Sir Neill Malcolm, High Commission for Refugees to Bell, February 22nd 1937.

affect his work with the non-Aryan Christians. He was not afraid of politics, nor of making uncompromising statements, but he always preferred to work across party boundaries and not to be associated with any particular faction. Perhaps this caution did not serve him well at this moment.<sup>99</sup> It has already been noted above that in his broadcast to raise funds for the national appeal in 1936, Bell opened by saying that he was not going to say anything about *why* Jews were fleeing Germany. Two years later, when proposing a resolution at the Church Assembly, he said virtually the same thing. The motion he proposed on June 23rd 1938 read:

That this Assembly records its deep distress at the sufferings endured by 'Non-Aryan' Christians, as well as by members of the Jewish race, in Germany and Austria, and urges that not only should everything possible be done by Government aid to assist their emigration into other countries, but also that Christians everywhere should express their fellowship with their suffering brethren by material gifts as well as by personal sympathy and by prayer.

The motion itself is confusing. It implies that the prime category of suffering people is that of non-Aryan Christians; Jews are tacked on to this as a race. Nor did Bell's speech make things much clearer. His very first words were to say:

He did not want to speak of political matters or of constitutional issues in a country with which they desired to be friends, *nor to attack the leadership of*

---

<sup>99</sup> For examples of Bell's vigorous social action with politicians of different hues, see Jasper, *Bell*, pp 78-80.

*the great German State. He asked the Assembly not to make any protest against a system, but to record its deep distress at the sufferings of Christians and Jews.*<sup>100</sup>

His words could be construed as being diplomatic, wanting to stir up help for the victims of Nazism while avoiding condemnation of their persecutors. Was this possible or, for that matter, logical? To arouse public sympathy for non-Aryan Christians required creating a public understanding of the evil that was being done to the Jews. Not only did he not do this, but in his speech the basic point of Jewish vulnerability was largely lost: 'They must remember the needs of Jews and Christians alike.'<sup>101</sup> In fairness, it should be added that a major thrust of Bell's speech was to plead that the British Government should use the forthcoming Evian Conference on July 6th 1938 to facilitate the international emigration of refugees from Germany. Bell concluded with an appeal for Christians to help non-Aryan Christians, and especially his new Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Christians.<sup>102</sup> The Church Assembly was largely with him; the motion was carried after little further debate.

The motion and Bell's accompanying speech show that non-Aryan Christians formed the prism through which Bell viewed events in Germany. In his earlier BBC Appeal he might have been constrained by the feeling that he must not use an appeal on national radio to rouse controversy. He need have felt no such constraint in his own Church Assembly. But he gave no explicit condemnation of Nazi Germany

---

<sup>100</sup> CAP 1938 Vol 19 p 389, text of resolution and Bell's opening remarks; emphasis added.

<sup>101</sup> CAP 1938 Vol 19 p 391.

<sup>102</sup> CAP 1938 Vol 19 pp 393-394.

while stressing the importance of practical help. There was probably an element of calculation here about how much support he could garner, but he confused the picture by putting non-Aryan Christian and Jewish suffering on the same plane. Here, and elsewhere, my own survey of the material leads me to concur with Chana Kotzin's conclusion that 'Bell's downplaying of the needs of Jews and Jewish refugees in order to highlight the needs of "non-Aryan Christians" may have backfired ... the complexity of explaining the intricacies of Nazi racial divisions was too confusing.' It also created the impression in some Christian minds at least that the non-Aryan Christians were Jews, and as such the responsibility of the Jewish community.<sup>103</sup> Andrew Chandler's well-informed research in this area does not explore the ambiguities of Bell's approach, but comes to a similar conclusion to that of Kotzin: 'It would, perhaps, have been wiser to have repudiated the National-Socialist terminology and campaigned broadly for the "Jews". It might also have proven more effective.'<sup>104</sup>

Loss of the wider picture can be seen in Bell's reluctance to be too outspoken about the Nazis, in order to protect his non-Aryan Christian work. An example here would be the discussion over a proposed film. Early in 1937 the American Committee for Christian Refugees produced a film about the plight of Germany's Jewish Christians. The film consisted simply of two talks from James McDonald, the former League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, an eminent American Protestant minister. When it was shown at Fosdick's own Riverside Church in New York, 2,000 turned up in an atmosphere of 'intense

---

<sup>103</sup> Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' p 283.

<sup>104</sup> Chandler, 'The Anglican Church and Jews in Germany' p 254.

interest.’<sup>105</sup> The subject arose of producing a similar film in Britain, or at least of adding a UK element on to the American film. Dorothy Buxton was particularly keen for such a film to be produced. She was a strong campaigner for justice and peace, and an advocate in England of the German Confessing Church.<sup>106</sup> In October 1937 Gladys Skelton of the Inter Aid Committee of the Save the Children Fund wrote to Dorothy Buxton that she and others at the fund felt that the film would be 'undesirable at the present time', and that Sir Wyndham Deedes felt this 'most emphatically'. Two reasons were given: one was that the film would be 'ineffective' with an English audience. The other reason, which was clearly the main objection, was fear that it might offend the German Government.<sup>107</sup>

When she received this letter, Dorothy Buxton's exasperation boiled over. She wrote to Bell to say that she had heard that Sir Wyndham Deedes was against the production of the film

... on the grounds that it would be irritating to the German Government, who might make difficulties eg about the visas of children to be brought over by the Inter-Aid Committee. I was sorry about this, as I think the position is an untenable one, that one must avoid annoying the German Government; for in the nature of things one cannot draw an adequate picture of the sufferings of

---

<sup>105</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 28 f 218 Leiper to Bell, February 19th 1937, and May 6th 1937, f 315.

<sup>106</sup> K. Robbins, 'Church and Politics: Dorothy Buxton and the German Church Struggle' in D. Baker (ed) *Church, Society and Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975) *passim* but see esp pp 420-425. Her husband was, variously, a Liberal and Labour politician, and served as an MP. He was a Quaker and she joined the Society of Friends on marrying him, but she continued to be involved with the Church of England.

<sup>107</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 29 Pt 1 ff 180-181, Skelton to Buxton, copied to Bell, October 25th 1937. Dorothy Buxton's sister Eglantyne Jebb had been the founder of the Save the Children Fund, and Buxton had assisted her.

non-Aryans, which cause them to become refugees, without saying things which are unpleasant to the German Authorities, who have themselves directly created the situation.

Following the same principle, one could not have any public meetings or speeches on the subject; and how, then, can money be raised on any scale? ...

It makes me feel personally as if I were bowing to the Devil, & collapsing before Hitler's pistol.<sup>108</sup>

Bell was, however, in a difficult situation. He had recruited Deedes to his new Church of England Committee for Non-Aryan Christians. The winding-up of the National Christian Appeal for Refugees in October 1937 had led Bell to create this new vehicle. To have landed Deedes, the *doyen* of refugee assistance, was a considerable coup. Bell wrote back to Buxton saying that Deedes had convinced him that the film was a bad idea, adding: 'One is obliged to pay rather special attention to the considered views of those who have been engaged in raising money for the very people we want to help.'<sup>109</sup> Buxton was not assuaged, and wrote back to Bell to say 'there are many other good authorities who hold exactly the opposite view, i.e. that nothing encourages Hitler so much as the quietness of British public opinion, and British nervousness of offending him.'<sup>110</sup>

The tension between charity and protest, or between care and resistance, is an old one. With this in mind it should be pointed out that by the late 1930s care of refugees

---

<sup>108</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 29 Pt 1 f 193, Buxton to Bell, October 27th 1939.

<sup>109</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 29 Pt 1 f 198, Bell to Buxton, October 28th 1937.

<sup>110</sup> LP Bell Papers Vol 29 Pt 1 f 207, Buxton to Bell, October 29th 1937.

did not necessarily rule out criticism of Nazi persecution. Despite good coverage of Germany in the 'quality' press, refugees seeking sanctuary in Britain sometimes found little understanding there of why they had to flee. Until *Kristallnacht* the wider awareness in England of what the Jews faced was patchy. Tony Kushner has drawn attention to film censorship in the 1930s which suppressed criticism of Nazism and restricted Jewish themes. Popular scepticism about the persecution of the Jews was also fuelled by knowledge of the false atrocity stories of World War I, and distrust of the Jews themselves.<sup>111</sup> Within the churches a strain of Christian pacifism maintained an optimistic view of human nature and could not take on board the reality of Germany. An example would be the prominent Anglican clergyman, Dick Sheppard, who was also one of the founders of the Peace Pledge Union in 1936. In that year he wrote to Hitler asking permission to come and preach peace in Germany. He ignored the translator of the letter who warned that if his request was granted the Gestapo would probably target those who came to hear him.<sup>112</sup>

There is also a wealth of anecdotal evidence showing popular incomprehension of why Jews had to leave Germany. Laqueur says that Jews refugees in Britain found immense ignorance about why they had to leave Germany. Soldiers found that it was 'hopeless to try to explain to their mates why they should be with them rather than fighting with the Germans.'<sup>113</sup> When war broke out Susanne Graham, a *Kindertransport* refugee, was called a Nazi on several occasions at school. Naftali Wertheim was beaten by a teacher in his London school for being a German and thus

---

<sup>111</sup> Kushner, *Holocaust and Liberal Imagination* pp 48 & 42.

<sup>112</sup> Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* p 124.

<sup>113</sup> W. Laqueur, *Generation Exodus* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis Univ Press, 2000) p 190.



a Nazi.<sup>114</sup> The clearest evidence would be the internment of refugees. At the outbreak of war, not all Germans and Austrian civilians were interned because it was recognised that some were refugees and anxious to help Britain. But with the fall of France and the Low Countries, panic set in through fear that the Jews could be a fifth column in the country. Jews from the Reich were rounded up and sent to internment camps, many to the Isle of Man where they were detained alongside hardened Nazis.<sup>115</sup>

There would have been work for Bell to do here, in alerting the country to the truth about Nazi Germany. Bell did not grasp the necessity to articulate the situation of Jews under Nazi rule, because he was distracted by seeking to provide for those non-Aryan Christians who escaped. In July 1937 he was still able to write, 'There is no distress deeper in Germany than that of the "non-Aryan" Christians; and none which makes a stronger appeal on Christian fellowship and on Christian charity.'<sup>116</sup>

To this criticism of Bell's focus on non-Aryan Christians, two qualifications need to be made. One is to say that, although numbers turned out to be less than he anticipated, he was responding to a genuine need. Once it became known in Germany that Bell advocated the cause of non-Aryan Christians, many wrote to him directly asking for help. His papers contain many heart-rending stories.<sup>117</sup> But somehow, he could not take on board that numbers were far fewer, and the urgency less great, than he had first thought. The other qualification is that Bell's reluctance

---

<sup>114</sup> B. Leverton & S. Lowensohn eds *I Came Alone* (Lewes: Book Guild, 1990) pp 128 & 349.

<sup>115</sup> Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe* (London: Institute of Jewish Affairs and Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) pp 84-92.

<sup>116</sup> Bell, Foreword to C. Singer *The Christian Approach to Jews* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937) p 8.

<sup>117</sup> See for example, LP Bell Papers Vol 27 f 134 Salomon to Bell; Vol 28 ff 199-200, 202 & 234; and Vol 28 ff 384-385, Halm to Bell.

to stir up controversy about the Jews arose out of tactical considerations, not out of timidity. Bell was quite prepared to confront the establishment if necessary. This was a man who was prepared to speak in the House of Lords criticising the internment of the Jews, the bombing of Dresden and the Allies' insistence on Germany's unconditional surrender. Generally, however, he preferred to work within the system. A product of the public school and Oxford tradition, and a former chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury, he had many contacts in the governing classes. A compassionate, pastoral bishop of immense integrity, he preferred positive action rather than criticism. It may also be that the links of the Church of England with the state made him prone to work with the government rather than against it. It has been suggested that Jewish leaders too preferred negotiation with the government rather than denunciation of its exclusion of refugees.<sup>118</sup> Bell may have preferred to work within the accepted machinery. This is not ignoble. It might reflect a preference for getting things done, seeking practical achievements that help rather than harrying and protesting. The incident of the film, and his desire to keep Deedes on board, showed that he would not criticise Germany for fear of jeopardizing what he could do to help. And yet, his relative silence during this period on the persecution of the Jews remains puzzling.

---

<sup>118</sup> See Cesarani in Wyman (ed) *The World Reacts* pp 604-605; Richard Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993) *passim* but especially Part II.

### Headlam and the Confessing Churches

It has been said that Fascism had almost no appeal for the clergy of the Church of England.<sup>119</sup> Even so, during the 1930s there were those in the Church of England who were prepared to give Hitler the benefit of the doubt. The most prominent was the Bishop of Gloucester, Arthur Headlam. In 1933 Headlam was already 71 and could look back on a lifetime of achievement. He had been a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, Principal of King's College, London, and Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford. In 1921 he was made a Companion of Honour, and in 1923 became Bishop of Gloucester. This chain of promotion and preferment indicates the esteem in which he was held in the Church of England. As with Lang, part of Headlam's influence came from the classic way he was able to operate within the establishment, able to call upon many connections both inside and outside the Church. Educated at Winchester College, and then at its associated foundation New College, Oxford, he had many contemporaries who moved into important positions in the British political and social establishment.<sup>120</sup> Headlam's renown extended outside Britain, for he attended many international and inter-denominational church conferences. He believed that he had produced a theological formula which could unite separated churches. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* says that he was 'one of the most influential of English prelates in the inter-war years.'<sup>121</sup> He

---

<sup>119</sup> Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers* p 175. See there and pp 251-252 for the names of some clergy with pro-Nazi inclinations.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, the list of some of his contemporaries at Winchester who subsequently rose to high office in R. Jasper, *Arthur Cayley Headlam: The Life and Letters of a Bishop* (London: Faith Press, 1960) p 26; also the list of those with him at New College, p 29.

<sup>121</sup> 'Headlam' *ad loc.*, in F. L. Cross (ed) *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: OUP, 1957).

also helped shape the Church of England response to the persecution of the Jews, by arguing that Nazi Germany should be given the benefit of the doubt.

An early indication of his attitude to the Jews came in his column in the August 1933 issue of the *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*. He described how a large demonstration of Jews at Hyde Park in London, protesting against persecution of Jews in Germany, had held him up on his way to the station. He continued:

We all condemn the folly and the violence of those attacks upon the Jews in Germany ... but to both Jews and Socialists some words of warning are necessary. Many Jews were responsible, particularly at the beginning, for the violence of the Russian Communists; many Jews have helped to inspire the violence of the Socialist Communities; they are not altogether a pleasant element in German and in particular in Berlin life. (...)

Those of alien nationality who receive the hospitality of other countries ought to recognise that wisdom and gratitude alike demand that they should become healthy elements in the population.

He concluded by condemning secularized Jews who 'use their Judaism very largely as a basis for attacking the Christian faith.'<sup>122</sup> The piece is full of stereotypes. Jews were seen as a source of moral corruption, communists, secularists, anti-Christian and rootless aliens in any society.

---

<sup>122</sup> *Gloucester Diocesan Magazine* No. 332 Aug 1933 pp 85-86.

Headlam was an early and consistent defender of Nazi Germany. In October 1933 he wrote to *The Times*. Headlam began by dismissing the Weimar state ('a large number of futile political parties, all of which were unpopular') and proceeded to praise the economic progress made under the Nazis. He held the Nazis had delivered their country from a possible Bolshevik take-over and added:

Germany has by its actions created many enemies, and it has become the fashion to tell us only those things which are discreditable, to misrepresent the German motives, to attack them in every way. Is that really wise? And is it true? (...)

For the first time since the War the people are beginning to be hopeful and happy. A German likes discipline, and they are under a discipline which they think healthy. There is a good deal, perhaps, which may seem foolish in their expression of their feelings, but their whole standard of life is much more wholesome and healthy than it has been ... Berlin has been cleansed in a remarkable way. The great body of the young Nazis is the best element in the country, anxious for self-discipline and self-sacrifice.<sup>123</sup>

One striking feature here is that the suffering of Nazi victims is not taken seriously. It is implied that accounts of their suffering are malicious distortions. He speaks as if there is one nation, comprised of people who like Nazi discipline. Then there is his curious comment about Berlin having been 'cleansed'. What could he have had in

---

<sup>123</sup> *The Times* October 24<sup>th</sup> 1933, p 10.

mind? An obvious possibility is the uninhibited sexual atmosphere of Berlin, celebrated so famously by Christopher Isherwood. For a conservative bishop such a society would have been anathema.

Headlam attributed much of the flamboyance of Berlin to the Jews, and similarly he believed that it was the Jews who were spreading false stories about Nazi Germany. We know this, because when the Jewish writer Philip Guedalla challenged him on the diocesan magazine article, Headlam replied that Nazi-style anti-semitism was quite conceivable in the UK. Jews should therefore be more circumspect. Then he added: 'From the many accounts which I have received Jews in Berlin did not always display that wisdom or consideration.'<sup>124</sup> After his letter was published in *The Times*, Headlam wrote privately to its editor, Geoffrey Dawson. He said that criticism of Germany by *The Times* and other newspapers was foolish and counter-productive, and added that Germany's enemies 'disseminate false and one-sided news against her', among these enemies being 'the Jews, who are clever, malicious and untruthful'.<sup>125</sup> His antisemitism and his sympathy with Hitlerite Germany were closely linked.

Headlam's views did not escape the attention of the Nazi government. Alfred Rosenberg wrote twice inviting Headlam to visit Germany. Rosenberg was one of the chief Nazi ideologues, an early editor of the antisemitic *Völkischer Beobachter*, and at this point Commissioner for the Supervision and Education of the National Socialist Movement. The Anglican Chaplain in Berlin advised Headlam that it would be

---

<sup>124</sup> BoD 3121/BO4/GLO25, Headlam to Guedalla, September 6<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>125</sup> LP Headlam Papers MS Vol 2643 f 58, Headlam to Dawson, October 27<sup>th</sup> 1933.

unwise for him to accept Rosenberg's invitation.<sup>126</sup> But the Nazis did not give up. Rosenberg wrote again on May 19th 1935. The four-page letter, in German, was a rambling fulmination, mostly against the Catholic Church.<sup>127</sup> Headlam's reply of October 29th 1935 was a mixture of the emollient and the abrasive. He reiterated the British desire for peace, lamented the unfairness of the Versailles settlement, and concurred with Rosenberg on the political attitude of the Catholic Church. However, when he turned to the situation of the Jews, Headlam was ambivalent:

The other question is the Jewish question. I believe that there are some of us who understand the real difficulties which have possibly caused this, especially the great influx of Eastern Jews. We have no problem like this in England, but we have always found that the Jews in this country if fairly treated become loyal citizens ... I recognise, however, the difficulties that have arisen through the excessive influence that they had obtained in Berlin, and through their unfortunate activities in village life ... but ... nothing can excuse the anti-Semitism of Streicher and his paper. Moreover we believe that the whole Aryan theory is entirely unscientific and baseless, that in all European nations there is a strong non-Aryan element, and we can find by experience that a strain of Jewish blood may strengthen the race.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> LP Headlam Papers MS Vol 2643 f 135, Cragg to Headlam, October 15<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>127</sup> The German text is in LP Headlam Papers MS Vol 2639 ff 78-81. An English translation prepared for Headlam is in Vol 2643 ff 144-147. The translation is dated June 19th 1935 and Headlam cites this date in his reply, although the original is clearly dated May 19th.

<sup>128</sup> LP Headlam Papers MS Vol 2643, ff 150-156, Headlam to Rosenberg, October 29<sup>th</sup> 1935, quoting here from f 155. When Headlam's biographer Ronald Jasper quotes from the letter he includes the passages about the vacuousness of Aryan race theory but omits the reference to Jews being a problem. However, he misdates the letter as February 25th (Jasper, *Headlam* p 295).

On the one hand he believed Nazi propaganda, for there had been no ‘great influx of Eastern Jews’ into Germany. Headlam also implied that the Jews are to blame for their own misfortune. On the other hand, his robust rejection of Nazi race theory would have been distasteful to Rosenberg. However, (as will become clear) there had been no reassessment in his mind about Hitler.

Headlam’s reluctance to criticise Germany affected the reports that the Council for Foreign Relations (CFR), chaired by Headlam, presented to the Church Assembly. These reports were critical of the Confessing Church. For the fourth survey in 1937, Headlam, together with Dr A .J. Macdonald, a member of the CFR Council, prepared a report saying that in many respects Hitler had good intentions towards the church, and that the Confessional Church was unwise. The CFR Council refused to accept the draft and delegated the Dean of Chichester, Arthur Duncan-Jones, to write the report.<sup>129</sup> Headlam trumped this by writing a preface for the report. As evidence that the Nazi movement supported the spiritual renewal of Germany, Headlam quoted from a book by a German theologian, D. C. Fabricius: ‘The Führer belongs to those who fulfil the will of God and realise the life of Christ in this life to an extraordinary degree. The Führer in uniting the nation and helping it to rise from the laxity and neglect into which it had fallen ... fulfils the law of Christ respecting love in a way few mortals could ever hope to emulate ...’ Headlam added that there was no real persecution of religion, but political preaching had brought trouble to the church.<sup>130</sup>

A storm broke over Headlam’s head, but he would not budge. He defended his views in the Church Assembly, where Lang said that the views in the preface did not

---

<sup>129</sup> Jasper, *Headlam* p 297

<sup>130</sup> *Fourth Survey of the Affairs of Continental Churches* (London: Church Assembly, 1937) pp 3-4



have the authority of the CFR or of the Church of England. Later, in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, when Headlam used a procedural device to try and oppose a motion by Bell expressing sympathy with the suffering Christians of Germany, he stood alone and could find not one voice in support.<sup>131</sup> Headlam's views had not changed since his letter to *The Times* nearly five years previously. Despite the regular flow of news from Germany, he persisted in seeing Hitler and the Nazis as basically reasonable, marred by some foolish excesses, but still open to persuasion.

Why was Headlam so persistent in defending Germany? In part it was simply his personality. His biographer Ronald Jasper, in a book not over-critical of his subject, provides many instances of Headlam's obstinacy and self-righteousness. Jasper records: 'He was absolutely unshakeable in his own convictions. He was frequently heard to remark: "People can say what they like about me now; but in fifty years' time they will see that I was right".' In addition to his personality there was his attitude, typical perhaps of his rather old-fashioned mentality, that state and church should be closely linked. Hensley Henson, Bishop of Durham, wrote to Headlam saying: 'I think you are dangerously misinformed about the religious situation in Germany ... In fact, you seem to disclose the nakedst Erastianism.'<sup>132</sup>

Beyond personality and erastianism, there is the question of Headlam's attitude to Jews and Judaism. His sympathy for Nazi Germany was linked to his lack of interest in what was happening to German Jews. As the letter cited above to Dawson showed, Headlam suspected that manipulative Jews were behind a good deal of the criticism

---

<sup>131</sup> Jasper, *Headlam* pp 298-299.

<sup>132</sup> LP Headlam Papers MS Vol 2643 ff 277-278, Henson to Headlam, August 17<sup>th</sup> 1938.

of Germany. This negative attitude to Jewry was in turn linked to his theology. Headlam shared the unthinking antisemitism of some theologians of his day in believing that Judaism at the time of Jesus was spiritually bankrupt. He wrote that rabbinic interpretations, including the Talmud and Midrash were ‘unsatisfying and erroneous; they are marked by incoherent reasons, verbal quibbles and bad logic’. Regarding the spiritual life of the Jewish people at the time of Jesus he said that ‘The picture is an unattractive one ... Religion seems to have failed as a guide to life.’<sup>133</sup> Yet writing as his letter to Rosenberg cited above showed, he rejected talk of Jewish blood as a *heriditas damnosa* for the genetic stock of a nation. Headlam’s fashioned antisemitism sprang from anti-Judaism, fed by a fear of difference and by Christian self-assertion.

Headlam’s interventions took place at a time of national debate about the merits of Fascism. Gisela Lebzelter notes that during the 1930s, it was quite fashionable for elements of the British upper class to be ‘strongly supportive of a conciliation with Nazi Germany, deploring the anti-Semitic “excesses” but not the ideology which was the central purpose of the Nazi regime.’<sup>134</sup> Headlam gives no indication of realising that his *apologias* for Germany took their place in a wider, fiercely-contested situation, in which Jews were being threatened and harassed. His stance was widely reported in the German press, as correspondence in his files shows. His letters in *The Times* and his preface to the *Fourth Survey* both brought admiring letters of thanks

---

<sup>133</sup> Arthur Headlam, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ* (London: John Murray, 1923) pp 89-90.

<sup>134</sup> Gisela Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1978) pp 34-35

from correspondents in the Reich.<sup>135</sup> After he attempted to defend Germany and his preface to the *Fourth Survey* in Convocation in June 1937, he received a letter of thanks from von Ribbentrop, at that time German ambassador, thanking him for his ‘considered remarks.’<sup>136</sup> Headlam had met von Ribbentrop at the German embassy on February 4th of that year, and wrote to him the next day saying: ‘I believe that I represent and understand the views of so many people in this country who are most inclined to sympathise with your country. It is to a large extent the more religious-minded among us who have felt the injustice with which your country has been treated ...’<sup>137</sup>

With distractions such as the abdication crisis of Edward VIII, and the slump of the early 1930s, it was difficult for the Church of England to pay full attention to what was happening in Germany. In this situation Headlam further distracted the Church of England. His attempts to defend the Evangelical Church in Germany in its dalliance with Hitler, and his rejection of the Confessing Church, helped to focus the mind of the Church of England on the intra-church struggle. Within this drama it was difficult to keep sight of the fate of the Jews. It became necessary to rebut and restrain Headlam, which meant that there was more argument on the agenda he set - the need to leave the Nazis alone and the errors of the Confessing Church - and less chance of a wider concern about Jewish victims of the Nazis.

Privately, Headlam showed antipathy to Jews, arising out of his belief that their religion was an empty shell, but arising also out of some personal antipathy within

---

<sup>135</sup> See for example LP Headlam papers MS Vol 2643 ff 270-271; and f 279.

<sup>136</sup> LP Headlam papers MS Vol 2643 f 249, von Ribbentrop to Headlam, June 19<sup>th</sup> 1937.

<sup>137</sup> Headlam Papers Vol 2643 f 199 The full text of the letter is in Chandler, *Brethren in Adversity* pp 134-135.

him. Hence, perhaps, his refusal to look at the evidence of Jewish suffering in pre-war Germany: Jews were untrustworthy. He also frequently attacked what he imagined to be a widespread Jewish connection with communism. Headlam's curious distancing of himself from Jewish suffering seems to have remained even after mass killings became well known. In June 1943 he was invited to preach a sermon at a service for the Baltic states at Holy Trinity, Kingsway, in the Holborn area of London. He referred to the cruel fate of the three countries. He lamented 'banishment, deportation, imprisonment, murder, persecution of the Church and the Clergy ... massacres and a mass deportation policy ... Nothing that we have ever heard of can exceed the cruelty of the concentration camps.'<sup>138</sup> But the word Jew and its cognates never passed his lips.

#### The *Church Times* on the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1938

The Church of England was served by a range of weekly newspapers, of which the two largest were the *Church Times* and the *Church of England Newspaper*. The *Church Times* spoke largely to the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England; the *Church of England Newspaper* mainly to the Evangelical section. However, *Church Times* had the largest circulation of any Church of England newspaper, selling around 54,000 copies each week.<sup>139</sup> Established in 1863, it appealed beyond its Anglo-Catholic roots to a wider range of Anglican opinion. From 1924-1941 it was edited by Sidney Dark. Dark was a journalist of flair and wide interests. He had worked for the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* before taking over at the *Church*

---

<sup>138</sup> Arthur Headlam, *Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia: A Sermon Preached ... 1943* (np, nd) pp 3-5.

<sup>139</sup> *Willings Press Guide 1933* (London: Willing & Son, 1933) pp 47 and 494.

*Times*.<sup>140</sup> The *Church Times* naturally focused primarily on ecclesiastical issues, but also opined weekly on social and political developments.<sup>141</sup>

Right from the start, Dark noticed the threat posed by Hitler to Jews. A growing realism about Nazi intentions, and concern for the suffering of Jews under Nazi rule, was a feature of the *Church Times*. In March 1933 he wrote: ‘Herr Hitler will have his way, and peaceful Jews will possibly have to suffer a reign of terror.’<sup>142</sup> Following news of antisemitic riots, he wrote a week later that, ‘Never since the fourteenth century has there been a similar Jewish persecution in Germany, and the loss, spiritual, mental and financial, must be tremendous.’<sup>143</sup> This early note of concern in a major Christian paper about antisemitism is striking in its clarity. While the Anglican leadership at Lambeth Palace seemed uncertain about German events and in need of information, the major Church of England newspaper saw it as a crisis that challenged the church. Indeed, on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1933, on the eve of the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses, Dark criticised his church’s silence about German antisemitism: ‘We very much regret that the Archbishop of Canterbury has not ... voiced the Church’s detestation of this new outburst of wickedness.’<sup>144</sup> Jews were also being ‘silently and ruthlessly robbed of their means of subsistence.’<sup>145</sup> Even in these early days of Nazi control of Germany, Dark was extraordinarily perceptive. In May 1933, noting that a leading Nazi had suggested that non-Aryans should be

---

<sup>140</sup> ‘Dark, Sidney’ *ad loc.* *Who’s Who 1946* (London: A & C Black, 1946).

<sup>141</sup> These were especially covered in the ‘Summary’ with which the paper opened, where Dark gave his opinion on the news of the day; and in the section ‘From a Journalist’s Notebook’, again by Dark. Both usually occupied a whole page.

<sup>142</sup> *Church Times* (hereafter *CT*) *CT* March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1933 ‘Summary’ p 251.

<sup>143</sup> *CT* March 24<sup>th</sup> 1933, ‘Summary’ p 347.

<sup>144</sup> *CT* March 31<sup>st</sup> 1933 ‘Summary’ p 379. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the previous day Lang had made a vague expression of concern for the Jews of Germany in the House of Lords.

<sup>145</sup> *CT* April 7<sup>th</sup> 1933 ‘Summary’ p 411.

sterilized, he wrote: ‘Never has an anti-Semitic movement been so thorough or so candid in its admission that extermination is its ideal.’<sup>146</sup> Later in the year he entered in imagination into the terrible situation of Jewish children and their misery at school.<sup>147</sup> Thereafter, concern for Jews and their plight under Nazism was a regular theme in the *Church Times*. Dark saw that while antisemitism might have an ancient history, there was something new here in its ferocity: ‘In all their long experience of persecution, the Jews have never suffered so complete a suppression as that directed against them by the Nazi government.’<sup>148</sup>

In 1934, Dark continued to direct the attention of his readers to the situation in Germany. He also turned his attention to Mosley and his British Union of Fascists, highlighting the antisemitism of their campaign against ‘alien’ forces in the City of London.<sup>149</sup> But in 1934, Dark broadened his coverage of Germany to include sustained reflections on how Nazism was in effect creating a new religion, by worshipping brute force and bowdlerizing Christianity of any Jewish content.<sup>150</sup>

Yet a perusal of the *Church Times* in 1934 and 1935 shows that sympathy with the Jews is expressed less often than in 1933. The most surprising feature is the lack of any response at the time to the Nuremberg laws. There is no mention of the Nuremberg laws in September 1935, when they were decreed, with the single exception of a reference to the law making the Swastika the national flag of

---

<sup>146</sup> *CT* May 12<sup>th</sup> 1933 ‘From a Journalist’s Notebook’ p 558.

<sup>147</sup> *CT* October 13<sup>th</sup> 1933 ‘Summary’ p 407.

<sup>148</sup> *CT* ‘Summary’ August 18<sup>th</sup> 1933 p 183.

<sup>149</sup> *CT* January 26<sup>th</sup> 1934 ‘Summary’ p 83.

<sup>150</sup> See for example March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1934 ‘The Mind and Soul of Hitlerism’ p 265; August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1934 ‘The Faith of the German People: What is the New Religion?’ p 133. Both were by anonymous correspondents.

Germany.<sup>151</sup> It has already been noted in this chapter how in the leadership of the Church of England, interest in the Jewish situation waned in 1934 and 1935. Even in the *Church Times* this seems to have been the case. It was at least partly because the paper contained many pages about the Confessing Church. Suffering Christians in Germany left less room for news of suffering Jews.

In the years 1936-1937 news about Jewish suffering in Germany had to compete with other news of the day. In those years the *Church Times* gave prominence to the death of King George V and the abdication of King Edward VIII, as well as to the Italian campaign in Abyssinia and the Spanish Civil War. There was also the report of the Archbishops' Commission on the relations of Church and State. Even so, the situation of the Jews was not forgotten. In a leading article about the Jewish plight, Sidney Dark commented that, 'The conscience of the world is indeed atrophied. It does not function any more.'<sup>152</sup> He returned to the subject in another leader, saying that 'All talk of Aryan blood is ignorant and dishonest nonsense'. To persecute Jews was to persecute the gospel of Christ.<sup>153</sup> Dark wrote repeatedly that Jewish immigration into Palestine should be allowed.<sup>154</sup> When Dark considered German and Austrian antisemitism in a leading article, he warned presciently once more that 'The German Government ... is determined to exterminate its own Jewish or fractionally Jewish minority.'

---

<sup>151</sup> *CT* September 20<sup>th</sup> 1935 'Summary' p 287. In that same issue the leader articles were about Christian marriage, and church schools. Some consequences of the Nuremberg laws are mentioned in the issue of November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 'Summary' p 575.

<sup>152</sup> *CT* March 20<sup>th</sup> 1936 Leading article: 'Persecution' pp 348-349.

<sup>153</sup> *CT* October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1936 Leading article: 'Nazis and Christian Jews' p 449.

<sup>154</sup> See, for example, *CT* May 1<sup>st</sup> 1936 p 531; June 12<sup>th</sup> 1936 p 719.

In sum, the suffering of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis was frequently mentioned in the *Church Times*. With the passing of time, the topic appeared rather less frequently, with political events at home and abroad and the Confessing Church tending to dominate the paper's news reporting. Nor was Jewish suffering seen as unique; in fact, it was frequently put in the same bracket as Christian suffering in Russia, Nationalist Spain and anti-clerical Mexico. Yet the *Church Times* is remarkable for its outspokenness, its sympathy and its ability to enter into how it would feel to be a Jew under the Nazi regime. The paper even alerted its readers to the danger of extermination. The *Church Times* in its coverage of the Jews set out to challenge and prick the conscience of the Church of England.

What explains Sidney Dark's outspoken defence of the Jews? Part of the answer, in so far as it is an answer, is that he was philosemitic. A typology of philosemitism finds four groups of Gentiles to be favourably predisposed towards Jews. They are: those who see Jewish emancipation as a sign of progress; those from a Christian background who know how much their own religion owes to Judaism; those who find Zionism and its ideals a source of hope; and those who argue that Jewish distinctiveness, with all its achievements, has its own place in a world of elites.<sup>155</sup> Remarkably, Dark belongs in the first three of these four groups. He regarded Jewish assimilation as a sign of social progress. A convinced Anglican, he was well read in the Jewish scriptures and understood well the Christian debt to Judaism. He had visited Palestine and been greatly impressed by the *Yishuv* – the Jewish communal life there – and was even involved in the production of a Zionist weekly in London,

---

<sup>155</sup> William D. Rubinstein and Hilary Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1999) chapters 6-9.



*Palestine*.<sup>156</sup> In addition to these three factors, it should be added that he was something of a maverick; in the 1940s it was surely unusual for a man of his class to argue for republicanism.<sup>157</sup> Here was no bystander, but someone who consistently used his influence to draw attention to the situation of the Jews under the Nazis. Apart from his platform in the *Church Times*, Dark wrote one book in support of the Jews, and co-authored another attacking antisemitism.<sup>158</sup> In late 1942 he wrote: ‘The world has been horrified by ... the planned and fiendish massacre of the Jews by the Nazis ... this wholesale killing with the maximum of suffering makes us ashamed of our common humanity.’ He also wrote that if Europe was not made safe for Jews to live in, ‘then there will be no justice, no mercy, no security for anyone, no liberty, no equality, no fraternity.’<sup>159</sup>

### Conclusion

The initial response of the Church of England to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was to speak in their defence – but to do so fitfully and uncertainly. The clearest condemnation came from Lang in June 1933 when he spoke at the Queen’s Hall protest meeting, injecting some passion into the proceedings, and in May 1934, when he excoriated the vile cartoons of *Der Stürmer*. By contrast he said little of note about Nazi antisemitism in the House of Lords. In the other assemblies of Convocation and the Church Assembly, the resolutions passed lacked any cutting

---

<sup>156</sup> See Dark’s autobiography, *I Sit and I Think and I Wonder* (London: Gollancz, 1943), especially pp 91-101.

<sup>157</sup> ‘I have always been a republican, and I have never appreciated the social and political value of the monarchy’ - Dark, *I Sit and I Think* p 82.

<sup>158</sup> Sidney Dark, *The Jew Today* (London: Nicholson & Watson, November 1933; reprint, 1934; and (with Herbert Sidebotham) *The Folly of Anti-Semitism* (London: Hodder, 1939). Sidebotham was a *Sunday Times* columnist.

<sup>159</sup> Dark, *I Sit and I Think* pp 90 and 100.

edge. Part of the problem was that the Anglicans were led astray twice in the period 1933-1938. George Bell, from the best of motives, launched a campaign to help non-Aryan Christians which gave the impression of doing something to help the Jews. In fact it was a distraction and ignored mounting evidence that the non-Aryan situation was not as desperate as initially thought.

Then from 1937 Anglican circles found that they had to rebut Headlam's apologia for Nazi Germany. The Church of England's focus on Germany was, in the process, refracted through the crisis of the Confessing Church, and away from the crisis facing the Jewish community. Headlam was driven (as Henson noted) by extreme erastianism; but this thesis has also noted the role of antisemitic stereotypes in his thinking, including blaming the Jews for secularism and immorality, and believing that the Jewish religion was an empty shell. Nor was it easy to admit that the persecution raised questions about Christian culture, past and present. In late 1933 the Anglican biblical scholar Edwyn Bevan wrote: 'I hardly think that the present persecution of Jews in Germany can count as wrongs inflicted by Christians as such. It is not on religious so much as on racial grounds that the Germans are persecuting, not as Christians, but as "Aryans" ...',<sup>160</sup>

The Church of England *did* condemn the Nazi persecution of the Jews: in speeches by church leaders, in resolutions of synods, and in church publications like the influential *Church Times*. Yet there was also a reluctance to engage with the reality. As shown above, at several junctures Bell shrank from attacking the Nazi government and its policies. Even the passage of the Nuremberg laws in 1935 did not

---

<sup>160</sup> Edwyn Bevan, 'Considerations on a Complaint Regarding Christian Propaganda among Jews', *International Review of Missions* 22.4 (1933) p 481.

stir up Anglican criticism. Chandler suggests that possibly, 'for those outside Germany, the drama of the persecution subsided after 1933. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the issue, no longer new and sensational, went stale in the public mind.'<sup>161</sup>

Despite the growing strength of the ecumenical movement, Bell used his leadership there to focus on intra-church issues like the Aryan Paragraph, rather than on the violence, intimidation and repression of the Nazis. However, in 1938 the events of *Kristallnacht* were to bring considerable changes in the Anglican consciousness.

---

<sup>161</sup> Chandler, 'The Anglican Church and Jews in Germany' p 253.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND 1938-1942

This chapter begins with a consideration of *Kristallnacht* rather than with the beginning of the Second World War because it was *Kristallnacht*, above all, which heightened Christian awareness in England about the Jewish position in Germany. The terminal date for this chapter is December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942, chosen because the Allied public announcement on that date of the mass killings of Jews was a watershed.

The pogrom of November 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 1938 in Germany woke many in England to the reality of German antisemitism. The assassination two days previously of the Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris by a Polish Jew was the excuse for widespread attacks on synagogues and Jewish businesses in Germany. Encouraged by the SA, who had taken a hint from Goebbels, mobs destroyed or seriously damaged 815 shops, 29 department stores and at least 267 synagogues. Some 30,000 Jews were arrested and put into concentration camps, and a large punitive fine levied on the Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> The exact number of Jews killed is not known. The official report said 91, but one estimate is that the true figure was 236, with hundreds more dying in concentration camps in the ensuing months.<sup>2</sup> These events caused revulsion among church leaders and others in the English churches. Lang wrote to *The Times*, once again saying that he spoke 'for the Christian people of this country'. He called the violence in the Reich 'fierce, cruel and vindictive' and asked for prayers to be said in churches for 'those who have suffered this fresh onset of persecution and

---

<sup>1</sup> Leni Yahil, 'Kristallnacht', *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Vol 2 p 838.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Read and David Fisher, *Kristallnacht: The Nazi Reign of Terror* (New York: Random House, 1989) p 69.

whose future seems to be so dark and hopeless'. He warned that events like this put 'an almost intolerable strain' on Anglo-German friendship.<sup>3</sup> By coincidence the Durham diocesan conference was meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup>, and Hensley Henson, Bishop of Durham, persuaded it to adopt a motion reading:

That this conference of clergy and laity desires to express the disgust and horror with which it has heard of the recent anti-semitic outrages in Germany, and requests the Bishop of Durham to communicate this Resolution to the Chief Rabbi, and to assure him of the deep sympathy which this Conference feels and shares with the general body of British citizens.<sup>4</sup>

There were protests made at the local level too, with clergy contacting local Jews. The Anglican Bishop of Willesden in London wrote to his local rabbi, Rev. Dr. L. Rabinowitz, saying that words failed him at what was being done to the Jews.<sup>5</sup>

#### Bell, Henson, and Anglican responses to *Kristallnacht*

Church Assembly met shortly after *Kristallnacht*. It witnessed another example of Bell bringing Anglican attention to bear on Germany through a focus on non-Aryan Christians. On November 16<sup>th</sup> Bell proposed that the Assembly should welcome the establishment of the Christian Council for Refugees with a donation of £5,000. He began by referring to the pogrom, saying that 'The most recent persecutions which had shocked them all so profoundly were especially directed against the full Jews.'

---

<sup>3</sup> *The Times* November 12th 1938 p13.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Cesarani, 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen: Towards a Taxonomy of Rescuers' p 45.

<sup>5</sup> BoD 3121 EO3/281, Bishop Guy Smith to Rabbi L. Rabinowitz, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1933.

But it had also affected non-Aryans. He quoted from a letter he had received from a German Christian Jew in London, asking him to help a Jewish Christian friend in Germany. Bell then proceeded to give examples of how Jews were hounded and lived in fear, before going on to appeal for help for non-Aryan Christians. Even reading the written account, it is difficult to follow whether he is referring to Jews *per se* or whether he is referring to Christians of Jewish descent. He gave examples which must be ones of *Jewish* suffering:

He wished that he could persuade them to imagine the intensity of the misery – old men of 75 turned out of their homes, refused a lodging and forced night after night to find a shelter under the bridges of Vienna; children terrified and clinging to their mothers as they tried to hide; young men taken to the concentration camp and ordered to leave Germany if they would leave the concentration camp, and no country would have them, and offered the escape of suicide.<sup>6</sup>

Yet these examples came immediately after he had said that ‘in the height of the madness’ the persecutors had probably not distinguished between ‘the Jew and the Jew’s children by a Christian wife’. With this rhetorical device, Bell muddled the picture. Once again he used those of mixed descent as his primary example, and had made it seem as if Christians and Jews were in the same boat. It was natural for a Christian to highlight the suffering of fellow-Christians, but the way Bell did this had the unfortunate effect of removing the particular vulnerability of the Jews.

---

<sup>6</sup> *CAP* Vol 19 pp 503.

Nearly all subsequent speakers in the debate supported Bell. Only one speaker, an archdeacon, raised the wider perspective of how the Church of England could speak to the country about the events in Germany and thus turn indignation into action to help the Jews. He was also the only speaker to criticise the German Church, saying that it had been too late in protesting against Nazi attacks on the Jews.<sup>7</sup>

In the afternoon Church Assembly returned to the events in Germany. Canon Guy Rogers of Birmingham proposed:

That this Assembly welcomes and desires to associate itself with the expression which his Grace the Chairman has given to the feelings of indignation felt by Christian people of this country when they read of the deeds of cruelty and destruction perpetrated on Jewish people in Germany and Austria.

The reference in the motion was to the letter by Lang which appeared in *The Times* on November 12<sup>th</sup>. This initiative gives a hint of dissatisfaction with the Bell approach. Canon Rogers said that the debate that morning (about aid to non-Aryan Christians) was not enough. 'It was important that there should be ... some definite expression of sympathy with the Jewish people in the persecution through which they were passing.' His second reason for proposing the motion was: 'To appeal to the German people to dissociate themselves from that persecution. ... they asked their friends in Germany to repent of their violence and cruelty to the Jews as symbolized in the

---

<sup>7</sup> *CAP* Vol 19 pp 511-512.

blazing synagogues of Jewry.'<sup>8</sup> The outspokenness of these words, their focus on the Jews, and the call on Nazi Germany to repent, was in sharp contrast to Bell's presentation. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that he agreed with the motion and added:

Silence on the outbreak of such an almost unprecedented manifestation of injustice and hatred [ie *Kristallnacht*] would be misunderstood, and the occasion could not be allowed to pass without a word of protest and remonstrance. If no voice had been raised immediately it might have been supposed that the Christian people of the country acquiesced in what was happening, or were so fearful of their relations with the German Government and people that they hesitated to speak.<sup>9</sup>

Lang swiftly drew proceedings to a close and the motion was carried *nem. con.* The Church of England's legislature had spoken out in defence of the Jews. But the declaration had been done in a circuitous and confusing way: the motion referred to another declaration (Lang's letter to *The Times*) which it was assumed everyone would know about. This made the gesture unnecessarily opaque. On the other hand for once a resolution was made without passing words through the sieve of concern for non-Aryan Christians.

The Church Assembly did not return to the subject of Jewish suffering in any meaningful way for the next three years. There was no discussion of the Jews during

---

<sup>8</sup> *CAP* Vol 19 pp 543-544.

<sup>9</sup> *CAP* Vol 19 p 545.



the period 1939-1942, when shorter meetings concentrated on Anglican issues.<sup>10</sup> When Lang addressed the Convocation of Canterbury in January 1939 he asked for help for the 'multitude of refugees being driven from their countries, especially from the German Reich', and called on the British Empire to admit them.<sup>11</sup> In late 1942 Bell invited his fellow bishops in the Convocation of Canterbury to support his motion about

the increasing danger of a collapse of European civilization due to the prolongation of the sufferings caused by the Nazi regime to millions in the occupied and invaded countries, and presses upon the British people a deeper sense of the urgency of the situation and of a far stronger insistence on the spiritual factors involved as well as the need of greater austerity and readiness for sacrifice.

This meandering resolution is so general in its application as to lack any cutting edge. To be fair, in his speech Bell said that 'The tortures and deportations of the Jews formed some of the darkest chapters in the history even of that tragic people.'<sup>12</sup> But the main focus of his speech was on famine spreading across western Europe, from Greece to Finland and parts of Russia. The suffering of the Jews was simply part of a wider pattern. What he wanted done was not clear, but it seems to have been a desire for the British government to allow food through to the Continent.

---

<sup>10</sup> In 1940 and 1941 Church Assembly met twice, instead of three times a year. It resumed the thrice-yearly pattern in 1942.

<sup>11</sup> *CT* 'The Convocations' January 20<sup>th</sup> 1939 p 63.

<sup>12</sup> *CT* 'Convocations of Canterbury and York' October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1942 p 574.

It was this same humanitarian concern which Bell showed in his work for internees. With the outbreak of war, Jewish refugees were among the 'enemy aliens' who were interned by the British government. Initially relatively few were rounded up, but with the collapse of France in 1940 a 'Fifth Column' panic ensued in Britain. Over 20,000 refugees from Nazism were interned in Britain, and several thousand more were deported to Australia and Canada.<sup>13</sup> A system of vetting them in tribunals was established. Some were released to enlist in the armed forces or take up other roles in the war effort. Bell felt the policies of internment and deportation were unjust and unnecessary. In a speech in the House of Lords on June 12th 1940 he reminded his listeners that the internees included 'the genuine refugees of Hitlerism, who have either fled here or been driven here because of the cruelty they have suffered or because of the persecution they have endured in Germany or Austria. They regard Hitlerism and the Nazi regime with horror.'<sup>14</sup> He visited the internment camp on the Isle of Man in July of that year and pressed again for an improvement in conditions - and for their release.<sup>15</sup> Similarly Bell used the House of Lords to speak for those who had been sent to Australia on board the *Dunera* and had been robbed and abused on the journey.<sup>16</sup>

This was a humane man, deeply disturbed by the suffering meted out by the Nazis. He sought to be open to the reality of the world, and to act accordingly, but like many people, he found it hard to go beyond the perspectives of his class and culture. He was certainly not indifferent. Yet, somehow, during the crisis years leading up to the

---

<sup>13</sup> Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* p 156.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Jasper, *Bell* pp 147-148; HL Hansard Vol 116 pp 542-548. Non-Aryan Christians had been among those interned.

<sup>15</sup> Jasper, *Bell* pp 151-152.

<sup>16</sup> Jasper, *Bell* p 153.

outbreak of war, he did not assume the mantle of prophecy, even although he was in a good position to speak the truth about the Jewish situation that others would rather avoid. It was not because he was afraid of controversy. He was prepared to irritate and alarm civil servants by asking questions about the abusive treatment of refugees on the *Dunera*.<sup>17</sup> During the war, Bell was also ‘the most persistent and pugnacious critic within the churches, not only of Allied bombing policy but also of other aspects of Allied strategy towards Germany’ – notably the insistence on unconditional surrender.<sup>18</sup> He seems to have been made cautious by fear that headline criticisms of Nazi antisemitism might make it more difficult for him to help non-Aryan Christians.

Headlam still wanted Britain to show a more open attitude to Germany. In March 1939 *The Church of England Newspaper* ran an article by Headlam as its front-page lead. Its headline quoted Headlam: ‘Christianity in Germany: “Broadly Speaking Herr Hitler’s Apologia is True”.’ Headlam roundly criticized the Confessing Church, insisting that the church was free if it concentrated on ‘spiritual’ work and avoided politics. He made no mention of the Jews.<sup>19</sup> Headlam was isolated, as the incident in the Convocation of Canterbury had shown (when no one would second a wrecking amendment from him). Lang’s disavowal of him had revealed him to be out on a limb. The Church Assembly had spoken at its November 1938 meeting, and its voice counted for more than that of Headlam. But he remained a bishop, with wide ecumenical contacts, and continued as head of the CFR until 1945.

---

<sup>17</sup> See the care taken in briefing the Duke of Devonshire, the minister who would answer Bell in the House of Lords in December 1941: PRO HO 215/23.

<sup>18</sup> Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* p 268. See also Hastings, *English Christianity* pp 375-376.

<sup>19</sup> *Church of England Newspaper* March 17<sup>th</sup> 1939 p 1.

Christian antisemitism and Christian-Jewish solidarity: contrasting attitudes

Headlam was not the only antisemitic clergyman in the Church of England. There were others. By contrast there were those who raised their voices on behalf of Jewry and who sought to do what they could to help.

An example of lingering antisemitism could be Dom Gregory Dix, an Anglican Benedictine monk at Nashdom Abbey in Buckinghamshire. Dix and the monks at Nashdom Abbey in Buckinghamshire were highly esteemed within the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England. Dix was also a scholar of renown.<sup>20</sup> His antisemitism came to light when the Board of Deputies of British Jews, in one of its attempts to counter antisemitism, contacted Christian colleges and centres offering a gift of books about Judaism. Dix, the abbey's librarian, wrote to decline the offer, since the books were already in the monastery library. The rest of the letter was a diatribe about Jewish influence. He doubted whether Christians could take responsibility for 'the outrages upon your faith now taking place in Germany' then added that people like himself were

very much 'up against' certain forms of international domination of an irresponsible kind. The 'Comintern', International Banking, Secret Societies like the Grand Orient, which do have the most sinister influence on the world ... And it is an undeniable fact that one does often find strong Jewish influence, and even control, in these circles. ... I believe it is the real

---

<sup>20</sup> His book *The Shape of the Liturgy*, a work of eucharistic theology, was first published in 1945 and is still being reprinted, most recently in 2000.

suspicion in the minds of many ‘Goyim’ that Jewry does guide and lead these secret forces which is the real breeding-ground of anti-Semitism. It is not Judaism, or Jewry, but the ‘international Jew’, who is feared and in consequence hated.<sup>21</sup>

There are numerous stereotypes: the Bolshevist Jew, the financially manipulative Jew, the Freemason Jew, the unpatriotic, deracinated Jew. It is the same language as the *Protocols of Zion*, amounting to a picture of the Jew as the sinister other. Dix’s response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews is to blame the Jews.

Dix’s antisemitic views do not seem to have been exercised publicly. Dean Inge’s views on the other hand were very public. W. R. Inge had been Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral London, from 1911 to 1934, a prominent position in the Church of England. The Board of Deputies had been tracking antisemitic remarks made by Inge from as early as 1922. Inge, for example, was convinced that the Russian revolution had been started by the Jews, possibly by German Jews wanting to destroy Russian industry.<sup>22</sup> In May 1939 he wrote an article in the *Church of England Newspaper* saying that English Jews were using their influence in press and parliament to embroil Britain in Jewish affairs. He intimated that Jewish businesses were threatening to withhold advertising from papers that adopted a pro-German line. Inge was roundly criticized by the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Church Times*.<sup>23</sup> But there were others in the church who feared Jewish influence. When clergy and laity of the diocese of

---

<sup>21</sup> BoD 3121/C16/03/19 f 2 Dix to Salomon, March 14<sup>th</sup> 1937. The letter is typewritten including the signature, but there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. Letters like this were sometimes duplicated by typing and circulated within the Board.

<sup>22</sup> See the correspondence in BoD 3121/BO4/I009.

<sup>23</sup> *CT* May 19<sup>th</sup> 1939 p 523, mentioning the report in the *Daily Telegraph*.

London met in conference in June 1939, it was alleged by a vicar from north-west London that Jews were taking over nearly all the best streets in his area, while Jewish grocers were undercutting local English grocers and driving them out of business. A schoolteacher from the same area said that refugee Jewish children were, intellectually speaking, well ahead of English children of the same age, and was alarmed at the prospect of the country being ruled by Jews in a few years time.<sup>24</sup>

There was another, very different reaction among the churches, one which sought to defend the Jews wherever possible. The most outstanding examples, Bill Simpson and James Parkes, will be discussed in the following chapters. But there were others, who did what they could to respond creatively to the news unfolding from the Reich, both before and after *Kristallnacht*.

In March 1937 the Bishop of Chelmsford, Henry Wilson, criticized Nazi persecution of the Jews in his diocesan newsletter. Later he wrote to Alfred Brotman, secretary to the Board of Deputies, saying that this was ‘not the first occasion when I have referred to the shameful, cowardly and mean persecution of your race.’<sup>25</sup> From Salford, Canon Philip Green, an Anglican vicar, wrote to Sidney Salomon at the Board of Deputies in July 1938, saying that ‘the indifference of many Christians to the persecution of the Jews in Germany is disgraceful’, adding that he wrote and spoke about it as often as possible including an article published in the *Manchester Guardian* on ‘The Disease of Anti-Semitism’.<sup>26</sup> From Salem Congregational Church in Burnley, a minister wrote to Neville Laski at the Board of Deputies after *Kristallnacht*, inviting him to speak in the church, adding that he had been ‘outraged

---

<sup>24</sup> CT June 9<sup>th</sup> 1939.

<sup>25</sup> BoD 3121/BO4/CE007, Wilson to Brotman, April 30<sup>th</sup> 1937.

<sup>26</sup> BoD 3121/C/15/03/18, Green to Salomon July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1938.

by the incredible inhumanity' of recent action against Jews in Germany.<sup>27</sup> A vicar in Worcester, the Revd W. R. Morris, promised to do what he could for 'the Jewish cause', adding that he was impelled to do so by 'the moral bankruptcy of present-day anti-Semitic countries.' Morris also helped Jewish refugees in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.<sup>28</sup> Clergy not only responded by condemning antisemitism themselves, but also reported to the Board of Deputies antisemitic propaganda in their localities. A network of clergy in the Anglican diocese of Leicester was particularly effective in this way.<sup>29</sup> In a few instances Christians reassessed their history in the light of Nazi antisemitism. The chairman of a conference organized by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship in September 1941 wrote to Chief Rabbi Hertz to convey to him the conference's 'deep sympathy with the Jewish community throughout the world, facing such grave and cruel sufferings' and its 'sense of shame that throughout the ages the Jewish community should have so suffered at the hands of professing Christians'.<sup>30</sup>

#### The limitations of establishment: government indifference to Cosmo Gordon Lang

Between 1938 and 1942, Lang received a number of requests to use his influence as Archbishop of Canterbury with the British Government to help Jews in particular situations of distress. The Church of England, as the established church, had good access to government and civil service figures in England. It could lobby behind the scenes. Bishops could ask questions in the House of Lords and make speeches there. It might be thought that this would have given it an excellent position from which to

<sup>27</sup> BoD 3121/EO3/281, Noel Calvin to Laski, November 15<sup>th</sup> 1938.

<sup>28</sup> Morris to Salomon December 13<sup>th</sup> 1939 and May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1940, BoD 3121/ C/15/03/19 folder 2.

<sup>29</sup> BoD 3121/ C/15/03/19, Memorandum nd. See also correspondence in this file.

<sup>30</sup> 'Declaration by Anglican Pacifist Fellowship' BoD 3121/E01/051.

highlight the plight of the Jewish people under the Nazis, and persuade the British government to do more to assist Jewish people. The Weissmandel-Lang correspondence is significant in this respect, because it shows that Lang did try on occasion to lobby on behalf of Jewish interests. It also shows how little influence the church had in reality, even with its established status.

Michael Dov Weissmandel (1903-1956) is a fascinating figure. He was an Orthodox Rabbi at Nitra in Slovakia, where he was also leading teacher in the yeshivah (he had traveled to Oxford three times to study Hebrew manuscripts at the Bodleian). Weissmandel became a prominent figure in underground rescue efforts, smuggling letters out appealing for help. He supported the bribe paid to Eichmann's deputy, Dieter Wisliceny, which may have succeeded for a time in delaying deportations of Jews from Slovakia to extermination camps. Weissmandel meanwhile worked on the Europa plan, an even bigger scheme to save the remaining Jews of Europe via a massive bribe.<sup>31</sup> Then in spring 1944, using information given by escapees from Auschwitz, Weissmandel smuggled out messages to the West asking the Allies to block the movement of Hungarian Jews by bombing the Kosice-Presov rail line, but to no avail.<sup>32</sup>

Weissmandel approached the Archbishop of Canterbury on at least three occasions to try and get British help for the Jews. The first attempt was made in May 1938, when following the *Anschluss* some 60 rabbis were expelled from Austria and were

---

<sup>31</sup> See the entry on Weissmandel by Shlomo Kess in the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Vol 4 pp 1639-1641. Weissmandel's name is sometimes rendered Weismandl in English. There is a biography of Weissmandel by Abraham Fuchs, *The Unheeded Cry* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1985). Weissmandel escaped from a deportation train using a hacksaw smuggled into a loaf of bread. After the war he lived in the United States.

<sup>32</sup> James H. Kitchens, 'The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-Examined' in Michael Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum (eds) *The Bombing of Auschwitz* pp 80-81; Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* pp 204, 216-217.



trapped on a boat on the Danube. Czechoslovakia refused them entry and Austria refused to allow them to return. The second occasion came in November of the same year. After the Munich agreement (September 29<sup>th</sup>), the Germans dismembered Czechoslovakia on October 6<sup>th</sup>, with Slovakia under its own autonomous government. Parts of Slovakia were annexed by Hungary, which declared Jews in those areas to be stateless. Again they were expelled, and again trapped in a no-man's land, this time between Hungary and Slovakia. The third attempt was in May 1939, when Weissmandel, again in London, asked Lambeth Palace to persuade Canada to accept a group of Slovakian Jews wishing to emigrate.

On the first of these occasions, Weissmandel traveled to England in late April or early May 1938 determined to help the rabbis trapped on the Danube, plus another 3,000 Burgenland Jews also ordered to leave their homes. He asked to see Lang, and handed in a letter written in rabbinical Hebrew – presumably for confidentiality – from Isaiah Porritt, Orthodox Chief Rabbi in Vienna, and Samuel Epp, his counterpart in Burgenland. The letter was sent for translation to Dr H. Danby, a Hebrew scholar at Oxford. The document said in cautious and elliptical language that Weissmandel would speak on their behalf and then added: ‘More we cannot say, for great is the pain.’<sup>33</sup> On May 4<sup>th</sup> Weissmandel met Lang. After this meeting Lang’s chaplain, Alan Don, noted in his diary that evening: ‘The anti-Semitism of the Nazis is of the devil and stamps them as ruthless brutes devoid of pity and who glory in cruelty for its own sake.’<sup>34</sup> Don wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary: ‘I am directed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to bring to your notice the desperate

---

<sup>33</sup> LP Lang Papers, Vol 38 f 157. Returning the translation, Danby commented to Don: ‘There is a steady stream of the same sort coming in to people in Oxford.’

<sup>34</sup> LP Alan Don diary, May 4<sup>th</sup> 1938, np.

plight in which the Jews from the Burgenland find themselves.’ Citing the visit from Weissmandel, Don asked for special consideration to be given to admitting to the UK these Jews ‘whose lot would appear to be even more desperate than that of the Jews in general.’ Hoare’s office replied refusing to consider this, and made a vague reference to hopes that the High Commissioner for Refugees might enable ‘some scheme for their resettlement overseas.’<sup>35</sup> Lang’s attempt to help had come to nothing, and the Home Office showed how little urgency it attached to his request by taking almost three weeks to reply.

Weissmandel tried again. On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1938 Lang received a telegram at Archbishop’s Palace in Canterbury from Weissmandel. It read: ‘Hungarian authorities for the last five days drive with greatest brutalities in cold rain darkness thousands of Jews in No Mans Land on the whole Slovak frontier Stop In greatest despair we beg His Grace for intervention Rabbi Weissmandl.’ Don forwarded the telegram to the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, Sir Robert Vansittart. It bounced from one Foreign Office desk to another, gathering pessimistic comments. Second Secretary A. D. M. Ross questioned why anything more should be done for these refugees than for others; R. M. Makins, minuted that ‘The Munich agreement is not applicable, and it is pointless to protest to the Hungarian Government. There is I am afraid no action to be taken.’ The discussion took place at a junior level, and there was no indication of special privilege given to an approach from the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, even though Don had pointed out that Lang had met

---

<sup>35</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 159, Don to Hoare, May 9<sup>th</sup> 1938; Hutchinson to Don, May 31<sup>st</sup> 1938, f 161. Hutchinson added that since the refugees were still (technically) in Austria, strictly speaking they did not even come under the aegis of the concerns of the High Commission for Refugees. Lang raised the matter with the High Commissioner, Sir Neill Malcolm (f 163), but nothing came of it.

Weissmandel and believed him worthy of credence. The eventual reply to Don came from a relatively junior level and was simply a stock polite dismissal.<sup>36</sup>

However, it was not just in Whitehall that Lang met a reluctance to change policy. In May 1939 Weissmandel visited London again and tried a third time to enlist the help of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Weissmandel produced a plan for Slovakian Jews to emigrate to Canada, backed up by £30,000 capital, and asked Lang to help. Lang contacted the Canadian High Commissioner in London, Vincent Massey, who replied that a group settlement on the scale proposed 'would put a serious strain on the absorptive capacity of the country at the present time' and he doubted whether Ottawa would respond positively.<sup>37</sup>

Nor did a direct approach from Lang (rather than through his chaplain) have more influence. In July 1939 Lord Gorell, who was president of the movement bringing Jewish children out of the Reich, wrote to Lang to ask the archbishop to make representations to the Foreign Office about refugees expelled from Germany to Poland. Poland refused to admit them. Jews were once more left destitute and trapped in no man's land. Lang raised the matter directly in a face to face conversation with the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, who refused to approach the Polish Government.<sup>38</sup> In terms of the establishment, this was a particularly telling refusal. Lang had been a good friend of Halifax's father, the second Viscount Halifax.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Halifax was a practicing Anglican who like his father studied

---

<sup>36</sup> The telegram, and associated correspondence and minutes, can be found at PRO/FO/371/21587.

<sup>37</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 ff 386-387 and 409, Lang to Massey, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939; Massey to Lang, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1939.

<sup>38</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 38 f 435; Gorell to Lang, July 12<sup>th</sup> 1939; Lang to Gorell, July 16<sup>th</sup> 1939, f 438.

<sup>39</sup> Lockhart, *Lang* p 170. Lang been in close touch with Halifax (*file*s) when Lang served as a member of the Joint Committee on the Indian Constitution; Halifax, as Lord Irwin, was a former Viceroy and Governor-General of India (Lockhart, *Lang* p 183).

theology and church history. Later, in defence of the war effort, he would frequently cite Christian values as being at stake. But in the opinion of his biographer Andrew Roberts, ‘a degree of guile and awareness of the realities of life in no way contradicted his ... practical and worldly High Anglicanism.’<sup>40</sup> Still, it might have been expected that a senior statesman active in his church might defer to a plea from his nation’s pre-eminent religious leader. It was not so.

Lang tried to help Jews in at least one specific instance after the outbreak of war. In March 1940 the Marquess of Reading forwarded to Lang a petition from 201 Jewish men under his command at the Richborough Pioneer Training Corps camp, asking that their wives and children still in Germany, should be accepted by Britain if they were allowed to proceed to a neutral country. There was little chance of them being allowed to leave Germany, but Lang wrote to Sir John Anderson, the Home Secretary. The official line held. Anderson replied that he feared that Germany might use such a policy to infiltrate spies into Britain, and anyway, he added, ‘There is already considerable uneasiness about the number of refugees in this country.’ Lang, in conveying the news to Reading, wrote that he sympathised deeply with the men and was ‘keenly disappointed’ that nothing could be done to help their families to join them.<sup>41</sup>

In these instances, Lang did make representations on behalf of Jewish refugees to the government and its officers, but to little avail. The senior prelate of the Church of

---

<sup>40</sup> Roberts, *The Holy Fox* p 303. For an example of Christianity cited by Halifax as a reason for the struggle, see p 192.

<sup>41</sup> LP Lang Papers Vol 85, Lang to Anderson, March 6<sup>th</sup> 1940, f 26; Anderson to Lang, March 9<sup>th</sup> 1940, ff 38-39, copying earlier letter on same issue to independent MP Eleanor Rathbone; Lang to Reading, March 13<sup>th</sup> 1940, f 41.

England had drawn attention to particular stories of Jewish suffering. The civil authorities remained unmoved, despite his official position in the life of the realm.

#### The Albert Hall meeting and Jewish-Christian co-operation

After *Kristallnacht* church leaders were once more asked to speak at a big public meeting, this time at the Albert Hall on December 1<sup>st</sup> 1938. The initiative for the Albert Hall meeting came from the Board of Deputies of British Jews whose President, Neville Laski, supervised the arrangements. The meeting was designed to be as widely representative as possible, to strengthen the sense of national protest against Nazi brutality. Keynote religious speakers were the Chief Rabbi, Dr Joseph Hertz; William Temple, Archbishop of York; Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster; and Dr Robert Bond, Moderator of the Free Church Council. The meeting was chaired by Viscount Sankey, who had been Lord Chancellor 1929-1935. The English churches supplied three out of eight speakers. The missing churchman was Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, whose chaplain W. M. Mason had written to Laski saying that the archbishop had already expressed his views about Germany in *The Times* and at the Church Assembly, and for the time being was not inclined to take part in any further public protests. In 1938 he was 74, and worn out by the coronation the previous year; his health had begun to worry his staff who pressured him to do less.<sup>42</sup> Even without Lang there was a strong Christian presence at the protest meeting.

---

<sup>42</sup> Lockhart, *Lang* pp 424-426.

The material in the Board of Deputies files relating to the meeting has gaps, but one point emerges immediately from the correspondence.<sup>43</sup> Here was an assembly, called to register a powerful English protest against antisemitism in Germany. Yet Laski was at pains to instruct speakers that they should not focus too strongly on Jewish suffering. To Sankey, Laski wrote on November 21st:

I am anxious ... that too much stress should not be laid upon the purely Jewish aspect. I think that considerable attention should be given to the provoking cause of the meeting, namely, the savage outburst of persecution, but stress should be laid upon the fact that Christians of all denominations are sufferers from a wave of anti-religious persecution. I have always placed it in the forefront of my speeches that humanity is at stake and that the Jews are but a facet of that humanity which we all seek to serve. It would, in my judgement, be particularly inappropriate if the Jews were to regard themselves as the privileged persons on this occasion, and I think from what I have heard from both the Archbishop [Temple of York] and His Eminence the Cardinal that they think on the same lines.

Laski implies here that the churches are taking the same line spontaneously. However, on the same day he wrote to Mgr Val Elwes, secretary to Cardinal Hinsley:

I am more than conscious of the suffering of Catholics and others equally with the Jews, all of whom seek to follow without disturbance their religious faith

---

<sup>43</sup> BoD 3121 EO3/281, Laski to Sankey, November 21<sup>st</sup> 1938.

and teaching. Indeed, as I ventured to tell you when we discussed this matter over the telephone, I have always sought to impress upon the Jewish community and upon such Christian meetings as I have been privileged to address, that Jews are but a facet of a problem which affects humanity as a whole, and though at the moment their physical suffering may be acute, nevertheless, their suffering is a suffering which Catholic and other Christian churches are undergoing in Nazi Germany ...<sup>44</sup>

In his telegram to Lady Violet Bonham Carter on November 24th, Laski explained that she, not he, should propose a vote of thanks to the speakers, because ‘My proposing vote [of] thanks would too obviously underline Jewish aspect of meeting which we [are] anxious to avoid.’ He said that he spoke not only for himself but for the other Jewish leaders Lord Bearsted and Sir Robert Waley Cohen.<sup>45</sup>

Most astonishing of all, he also wrote to Chief Rabbi Hertz saying that he had consulted Lord Bearsted and Sir Robert Waley Cohen, who concurred with him that the Chief Rabbi ‘should speak as one of the representatives of religion and not otherwise.’ Hertz was to be one of several representatives of religion in England – not a representative of English Jewry, a further downplaying of the Jewish aspect of the meeting.<sup>46</sup> This distancing of the meeting from its Jewish context was reflected in the resolution put to the gathered thousands by Lord Sankey. It read:

---

<sup>44</sup> BoD 3121 EO3/281, Laski to Elwes, November 21<sup>st</sup> 1938.

<sup>45</sup> BoD 3121 EO3/281, Laski to Bonham Carter, November 24<sup>th</sup> 1938.

<sup>46</sup> BoD 3121 EO3/281, Laski to Hertz, November 24<sup>th</sup> 1938. A pained Hertz demurred, replying that he would appear as a representative of the English Jewish community.

That this great meeting of British citizens, representative of all religious bodies and all schools of political thought, strongly protests against the religious and racial persecution which is taking place throughout Germany, and pledges itself to support every legitimate form of action likely to alleviate the sufferings of all the victims of such persecution.<sup>47</sup>

*Religious and racial persecution* – with the religious mentioned before the racial – shows a desire by the organizers to appeal to classical humanitarian values, with their emphasis on fairness and tolerance. This is also why the words ‘Jews’ and ‘Jewish’ do not appear in the resolution at all.

Given the outburst of hatred shown in *Kristallnacht*, this language of liberal discourse may seem strange. However, Richard Bolchover has argued that the pre-war Jewish community in Britain was, broadly speaking, one that believed humankind to be on the path of progress, becoming more tolerant, rational and enlightened. ‘[L]iberalism had taught Jewry to regard anti-semitism as an anachronistic relic of medieval barbarism.’<sup>48</sup> From this perspective, Nazism was an aberration, and it was still possible to appeal to the better instincts of the German people. Laski’s instructions, with their repeated appeal to the standards of humanitarianism, seem to support such an interpretation. The appeal to humanitarianism was already showing itself fruitful with regard to Britain itself. On the day that Laski wrote to the correspondents mentioned, the Home Secretary, Sir

---

<sup>47</sup> BoD 3121 EO3/281, p 27 of official transcript of the meeting.

<sup>48</sup> Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* pp 88-92, quoting from page 89. See also Dan Stone, ‘The Domestication of Violence: Forging a Collective Memory of the Holocaust in Britain, 1945-6’ *Patterns of Prejudice* 33.2 (1999) pp 24-26.



Samuel Hoare, announced in the House of Commons that all child refugees would be admitted whose maintenance could be guaranteed.<sup>49</sup> Louise London comments that fundamentally this expansion of temporary refuge was humanitarian in motive and was a response to growing concern in Britain. Until then, ‘precedent and policy had militated against openly humanitarian admissions.’<sup>50</sup>

However, the appeal to humanitarianism and to the principles of civilisation came at a price. It created common ground with all people of good will, but at the same time eroded the specifically Jewish aspects of the crisis. Laski wanted to minimize the Jewish aspects of the crisis in order to maximise support from the wider community; implicit here is a degree of uncertainty as to whether the wider community would regard the Jews as part of the community, or regard them as somehow alien. On the surface, the appeal was to common humanity and the principles of the Enlightenment. This concealed a fear that perhaps the English people could not make Jewish suffering their own, and would be unable to empathise sufficiently. Hence Laski’s concern to reach out to the churches by appealing to them as, in effect, fellow-sufferers – he highlights Christian suffering in Germany to Sankey (who was a leading Anglican high churchman) and Catholic suffering to Cardinal Hinsley’s secretary.<sup>51</sup> Hence, too, the desire to present the Chief Rabbi as a religious leader. As will be seen, the same hopes and fears materialized in the formation of the Council of Christians and Jews.

---

<sup>49</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge* p 181.

<sup>50</sup> London, *Whitehall and the Jews* p 112.

<sup>51</sup> For Sankey see ‘Sankey, John’ *ad loc.* in L. G. Wickham Legg and E. T. Williams, eds, *Dictionary of National Biography 1941-1950* (London: OUP, 1959).

Did the Christian speakers heed the hints to minimize the Jewish aspects of the crisis? Cardinal Hinsley said that he would not condemn any specific nation but spoke from principles of ‘our common humanity’. However, he did name some nations, because he followed the usual Catholic line of listing places of persecution – Russia, Mexico, Spain, Germany, in that order, and included Jewish suffering among those places where ‘the violation of fundamental principles of human society makes civilized existence impossible.’ He did, however, say that the Vatican had condemned antisemitism in its declaration of March 25<sup>th</sup> 1928. There was no reference to the events of *Kristallnacht* nor to the reality of persecution of Jews in the Reich.<sup>52</sup> Hinsley also made an ambiguous reference to Jews as ‘the people once chosen by God’ with the possible implication that they were no longer chosen.<sup>53</sup> Speaking for the Free Churches, Dr Robert Bond was much blunter, saying that he wanted to express his church’s ‘horror and resentment at the happenings that have been taking place in Germany’. He noted the prominent part Jews had played in building up Germany. The Chief Rabbi, ignoring Laski’s directions, did not hesitate to emphasise that this was a meeting about *Jewish* suffering, about the ‘mass misery of 500,000 men and women, unceasingly being subjected to a state-directed torture’, adding, ‘perhaps more sickening is the vile hypocrisy and malignant mendacity with which the apostles of Nazism attempt to justify their jungle policy towards the Jews.’ The closing speaker was the Archbishop of York, William Temple. He referred twice

---

<sup>52</sup> A firm of shorthand-takers produced a typescript of the speeches, see BoD 3121/EO3/281. Hinsley was taking what was helpful from the declaration of 1928, which in the opinion of Michael Phayer ‘broke no new ground theologically, referring as it did to the Jews as blind for rejecting their messiah and as the former people of God, but it condemned all antisemitic hatred and stated that the Vatican wished to protect Jews from unjust treatment.’ Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust 1930-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) pp 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> The view that the Christianity had succeeded Israel in divine election was a standard part of Christian apologetics. See Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism* pp 213-214.

to the suffering of Christians and Jews in Germany, once to 'the recent attack upon the Jews'. However, he confused the message by attributing some of the blame for events in Germany to the Versailles Treaty and its humiliation of Germany. He called on those attending the meeting to reaffirm their commitment to 'those principles on which rests every civilization worthy of the name': equality, freedom of thought and expression, freedom of worship and security from oppression, adding: 'All these principles are repudiated in Germany as in Russia today.'<sup>54</sup>

It is difficult to read these speeches without feeling that their content hardly matched the agonizing reality for Jews in the Reich. Certainly, church leaders attending the meeting had given it a higher profile, and had spoken for large sections of the community. But without the Chief Rabbi's contribution, the sense of this as a time of great Jewish suffering might have dissolved. Church leaders bracketed Christian suffering with that of the Jews. Encouraged by Laski's direction, the church leaders had also spoken of antisemitism as a violation of liberal, humane norms which all civilized people ought to respect. The events of *Kristallnacht* hinted at even darker times ahead for Jews under Nazi domination. The leadership of the churches of England wanted to be seen to care. But what they had to say was too mired in generalities, too little focused on the reality of life for the Jews of the Reich. This was in keeping with the messages they had received from Laski on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

As it happened, from the Christian perspective, the appeal to liberal values was congruent with the thinking of many clergy in 1938. It was felt that appeal could still

---

<sup>54</sup> For Hinsley, see official transcript (in BoD 3121/EO3/281) pp 4-6; for Bond, pp 9-11; for Hertz, pp 17-20; for Temple, pp 23-27

be made to the German conscience. Clergy were often aware of the imbalances of the Versailles Treaty, and strongly inclined to regard war with Germany as unjustifiable. Two months before the Albert Hall meeting, Chamberlain had returned from meeting Hitler at Munich, believing that he had achieved an agreement that would guarantee peace. The response of Anglican clergy to this was overwhelmingly positive, with few voices raised in dissent. Lang was effusive in his praise of Chamberlain. Hastings says that 'For the clergy as a whole, peace, to be pursued by all means and at almost any cost, was the overriding preoccupation of the thirties ... stoked, often unhealthily, by a guilt complex about both the clerical jingoism of the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles.'<sup>55</sup> Clergy and church leaders were therefore receptive to the language of finding common ground with all people of good will who would work for civilized values.

When war broke out, the language of civilized values was still utilised by Temple because it allowed him to portray the war as a just war, without resorting to the cruder patriotism of the First World War. In a broadcast on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939, Temple said that 'The prevailing conviction is that Nazi tyranny and oppression are destroying the traditional excellencies of European civilization and must be eliminated for the good of mankind.'<sup>56</sup> But as the war rolled on and the issues at stake became clearer, many of the clergy abandoned their earlier optimism about human nature. Temple by contrast did not.<sup>57</sup> The point here is that before the outbreak of war, the tendency to appeal to the community of civilized values was not a solely Jewish phenomenon.

---

<sup>55</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 349.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Iremonger, *William Temple* p 540.

<sup>57</sup> Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform* pp 195-196 and 218.

The *Church Times* on the persecution of the Jews 1938-1942

The events of *Kristallnacht* were widely reported by the press outside Germany. In Britain the *News Chronicle* spoke of a 'pogrom' and 'savagery', while *The Times* said that the events had 'disgraced' Germany.<sup>58</sup> In his survey of the British press Andrew Scharf says that in the response to *Kristallnacht* 'the dominant note struck by the British Press ... was one of genuine moral outrage.' However, he adds that 'the Press as a whole showed less interest in the German Jewish situation than in its implications outside Germany ... the chief of which was likely to be an infinitely more serious refugee problem.'<sup>59</sup> How did the Anglican press respond?

In his issue of November 18<sup>th</sup> 1938, Sidney Dark devoted most of a page of the *Church Times* to reviewing the news from Germany. Despite his strong sympathies with the Jews, at this critical time he seemed to lose hope. He concluded that with regard to Germany, 'the outside world is impotent to stay, or even to lessen, insensate racial rage.' He believed that protests 'will do nothing to alleviate the hard lot of the unhappy German Jews'. He said that denunciation was valueless. Dark called once again for free immigration of Jews to Palestine and the Dominions.<sup>60</sup> Dark's editorial, deeper in the newspaper, surveyed the history of *English* antisemitism, especially during the medieval period when Jews were subject to mob violence and extortion. He concluded: 'Christian England cannot but be ashamed of the way their forefathers treated the Jews.'<sup>61</sup> A few weeks later, looking back over the year, Dark ended 1938 by saying that 'Never in modern history ... has there been such a

---

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Read and Fisher, *Kristallnacht* p 150.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew Scharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* pp 58 & 62.

<sup>60</sup> *CT* November 18<sup>th</sup> 1938, 'Summary' p 547 .

<sup>61</sup> *CT* November 18<sup>th</sup> 1938, 'God and the Jews' pp 552-553.

deliberate and considered persecution of a minority as that which has taken place in Germany since the beginning of the Nazi regime.’<sup>62</sup>

Once war began, it was wholly different. Concern for the Jews was expressed *less* often than before in the columns of the *Church Times*. With less access to news from the Continent, and with the pressure of war news there was no sustained consideration of what was happening to the Jews. During the war the *Church Times* focussed on intra-church interests. The period 1939-1942 is taken up with issues such as pacifism and Christianity, sexual immorality among the armed forces, and destruction of churches by German bombs.

In any event, Dark was old and tired. In February 1941 the proprietors replaced him with Leonard Prestige, who was the vicar of a small parish in Oxfordshire and a theologian specialising in the Early Church. The writer of a history of the *Church Times*, Bernard Palmer, says of Prestige that ‘He tended to rewrite everything in his own donnish style ... It reduced the paper to a dull literary uniformity.’<sup>63</sup> Under Prestige there was considerable coverage of Nazi persecution of Christians in occupied Europe. For example a lengthy article in November 1941 described how the Catholic Ustashe, assisted by Germans and Italians, were slaughtering large numbers of Orthodox Serbs in Yugoslavia.<sup>64</sup> Prestige did not have Dark’s Jewish sympathies. Prestige argued that despite this being a time of suffering and vulnerability for the Jews, they should still be regarded as potential converts to Christianity. He wrote:

---

<sup>62</sup> *CT* December 30<sup>th</sup> 1938, ‘Summary’ p 719.

<sup>63</sup> Bernard Palmer, *Gadfly for God: A History of the Church Times* (London: Hodder, 1991) p 176.

<sup>64</sup> *CT* ‘The Serb Martyrs: Torture and Death of Orthodox Christians’, November 21<sup>st</sup> 1941 p 682.

Christians who have scruples about commending the faith to the Jews at this moment, on the ground that it is like hitting a man when he is down, wholly misconceive the mission of the Church. It is no longer a question of presenting the Jew with an inexorable choice between baptism, on the one side, and, on the other, ostracism, spoliation, torture or death – at least in those parts of the world still free from the blight of anti-Semitism ... Christians should be possessed with the longing that one of the most richly endowed and sorely tried nations on earth should receive not only temporal relief but also the fullness of its spiritual heritage.<sup>65</sup>

So Jews were to be helped. But at the same time they were to be helped to become Christians.

The response of the Church of England to German antisemitism between 1938 and 1942 is a study in limitations. When the Church Assembly met within days of *Kristallnacht* its primary response was to support Bell's initiative to help non-Aryan Christians. Bell continued his policy of asking for help without criticizing Hitler or Nazism. When a resolution about the pogrom was passed, it lost all edge by referring vaguely to a prior statement in *The Times* by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was Henson of Durham who spoke out most clearly. He was an exception: generally, the Church of England seemed at pains to avoid any declaration that might seem 'political', whatever that was. Moreover, even the signals from the Board of Deputies of British Jews were concerned to portray the suffering of German Jews as a

---

<sup>65</sup> *CT* (Editorial) 'The Jews in Advent', December 5<sup>th</sup> 1941 p 717.

challenge to human values rather than as a case of ugly racial persecution. Christians bracketed the Nazi persecution of the Jews with the persecution of Christians in other parts of the world. The Weissmandel case also shows that even when the Archbishop of Canterbury tried directly to help Jews, he had little influence in government circles. Actual antisemitism in the Church of England was rare, with Headlam the most prominent example. His influence was malign in another direction, when his controversial interventions encouraged the Church of England to focus on the Confessing Church in Germany.



## CHAPTER THREE: ANGLICAN AND ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1942-1945

The most important single source for news of the Holocaust in Britain was the Polish government in exile in London. News that Chelmno, Treblinka and Belzec were operating as death camps was known within weeks and published in the Polish-language press in London. From there it began to be picked up in the Jewish, British and American press. Chelmno, the first extermination camp, opened on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1941. Its existence and function was known in Warsaw less than four weeks later, and published soon thereafter in the Polish underground press. Through the Polish government, Jewish organisations in London, New York and Palestine heard about the massacres almost from the beginning. News came from the trickle of Poles still arriving in London, and from the exchange of German citizens interned in Palestine for Jews arrested within the Reich holding Palestinian and certain other passports.<sup>1</sup> David Cesarani says that in Britain 'The nature of the Final Solution surfaced gradually and haphazardly.' On January 16<sup>th</sup> 1942 the *Jewish Chronicle* reported the deaths of some 132,000 Jews in Poland and the Ukraine. Other reports followed in the paper culminating in a front-page report on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Then on June 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, the *Daily Telegraph* carried reports that 700,000 Polish Jews had been killed. Its source was Shmuel Zygielboym, a member of the Polish National Council in London, who had alerted the *Telegraph* precisely because the news would receive wider circulation than in the Polish press. It was the first time that a British newspaper had

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Laqueur, 'Final Solution: Public Knowledge' in Laqueur (ed) *The Holocaust Encyclopedia* (New Haven: Yale, 2001) pp 199-201.

mentioned the use of gas in mass killings of Jews, and the news was subsequently picked up by many other British papers.<sup>2</sup> The dissemination of information was given a further boost by the Riegner telegram and the arrival in London of Jan Karski. On August 8<sup>th</sup> 1942 Gerhart Riegner, representative of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, cabled Rabbi Stephen Wise, a Jewish leader in the United States with many congressional contacts, and Sidney Silverman, a British MP of Jewish origin. The telegram said that reliable reports pointed to German plans to exterminate the Jews. On August 10<sup>th</sup> Silverman passed the telegram to the Foreign Office, which harboured grave doubts about the report.<sup>3</sup> In November 1942 Jan Karski arrived from Poland, having been charged by Jewish leaders there to bring the news of extermination. Karski had visited the ghetto in Warsaw twice and had been smuggled into and out of Belzec death camp.<sup>4</sup> In December 1942, as a result of Karski's reports the Polish National Council asked Allied governments to act vigorously to halt German massacres of Jews.

The evidence by now was compelling, and on December 17<sup>th</sup> Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden told a shocked House of Commons that the rising tide of reports was true. He referred to 'reliable reports ... regarding the barbarous and inhuman treatment to which Jews are being subjected in Nazi-occupied Europe.'<sup>5</sup> Eden then read out a statement agreed by the Allied Powers, condemning 'this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination'. He confirmed that after deportation those taken away

---

<sup>2</sup> Cesarani, 'Great Britain' in Wyman (ed) *The World Reacts* p 606; Laqueur, *Terrible Secret* p 74.

<sup>3</sup> Laqueur, *Terrible Secret* pp 79-80.

<sup>4</sup> Laqueur, *Terrible Secret* pp 119-120. See also appendix on Karski's mission, pp 229-237.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* p 103.

were never heard of again, and estimated the number of victims as being in the hundreds of thousands.

### William Temple and fresh approaches to the Government

Cosmo Gordon Lang had retired as Archbishop of Canterbury at the end of March 1942, having been Archbishop of Canterbury for 14 years. When he was appointed to Canterbury in 1928 he was already 64. His successor was the Archbishop of York, William Temple. Temple had a reputation for a keen mind, a compassionate heart and strong leadership. Under the impact of the war's stresses, and Lang's increasing age, the Church of England was not as energised as it could have been. There were hopes that Temple would bring new dynamism to every aspect of the Church of England, including its social witness. Temple had been a strong supporter of efforts to give the churches of England greater involvement in the pressing issues of the 1930s, especially unemployment. In 1941 he had chaired a conference at Malvern which brought together 400 clergy and lay people to discuss the future social order of the nation. With his transfer to Canterbury in April 1942, Temple 'began a much wider campaign to prepare for post-war society'. He was close to influential socialists such as Stafford Cripps.<sup>6</sup> His strong social conscience included a deeply-felt concern for the Jews at this time of their persecution and annihilation.

From July to December 1942 the publicity given by the Polish National Council to the killings led to a flurry of press reports. A Jewish representative on the Polish National Council in London, Ignacy Schwarzbart, sent Temple the same information which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* at the end of June. It reported, for example,

---

<sup>6</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 397.

the death of 50,000 Jews from the Vilna region at the hands of Germans and Lithuanians. It described mass shootings and Jews forced to dig their own graves, and also gave details of the starvation rations given to Jews. In September Professor Selig Brodetsky, President of the Board of Deputies, wrote to Temple suggesting he raise a question in the House of Lords about these reports. Brodetsky followed this up with a copy of a telegram from Richard Lichtheim of the Jewish Agency office in Geneva about the deportations from Lodz, also saying that the fate of the Jews of South East Europe hung in the balance. On top of this, A. L. Easterman of the British Section of the World Jewish Congress sent Temple a chronicle giving a sweeping account of the campaign against Jews across Nazi-controlled Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Temple's response was in keeping with the tradition of seeing the Church of England as a unifying factor, able to hold together many different strings of contact. He had good communications with the Jewish community. He also drew together the different churches to arrange a joint approach to the government. Primed with information from the Jewish community and refugee advocates, Temple acted. In October he headed a delegation to Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, asking for admission to the UK of children from Vichy France. He also hoped that Morrison would ask Latin American states to use their influence with Vichy to let the children go. (Catholic Latin American countries had some influence with the traditionalist Catholic regime of Pétain.) The delegation was thoroughly ecumenical: apart from Temple there were Cardinal Hinsley and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, Eleanor Rathbone (the prime mover behind the delegation) and others. The

---

<sup>7</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 53: Schwarzbart to Temple, September 20<sup>th</sup> 1942, ff 81-84 and 107; Brodetsky to Temple, September 20<sup>th</sup> and September 24<sup>th</sup> 1942, ff 111-112 & 113-114; Easterman to Temple, October 16<sup>th</sup> 1942, ff 120-124.

meeting was a disaster. Morrison was abrupt, even dismissive. Temple wrote to Rathbone, 'It became clear before I left that the Home Secretary would not be doing anything.'<sup>8</sup> Undaunted, he approved a cable in the name of the Anglican, Catholic and Free Church leaders which was sent to Latin American presidents asking them to give asylum to refugees.<sup>9</sup> Temple also chaired a huge protest meeting at the Albert Hall on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1942. Winston Churchill sent a message: 'The systematic cruelties to which the Jewish people ... have been exposed under the Nazi regime are among the most terrible events of history, and place an indelible stain upon all who perpetrate and instigate them.'<sup>10</sup> At Brodetsky's request Temple raised the matter in the House of Lords, where he spoke on November 11<sup>th</sup> in the debate on the King's speech. By choosing this occasion rather than a parliamentary question, Temple gave the issue a higher profile. One of the examples he gave (from Easterman's information) of Jewish suffering was the recent deportation of 15,000 Jews from Vichy France 'in circumstances of great cruelty ... packed together in cattle trucks'. He asked for easier entry into Palestine, support for neutral nations housing refugees, and a more generous visa policy for admission to Britain.<sup>11</sup>

Temple was further galvanised by a report in *The Times* on December 4th. Headed 'Nazi War on Jews' and subtitled 'Deliberate Plan for Extermination', the report drew a bleak picture of the Polish Jewish population deported in cattle trucks or killed where they stood. A smaller report described the deportation of Norway's

---

<sup>8</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 54 f 134, Temple to Rathbone, October 29<sup>th</sup> 1942.

<sup>9</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 54 f 141. The cable was also signed by two peers and one MP.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Gilbert, *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985) p 485.

<sup>11</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1942 columns 21-23.

Jews.<sup>12</sup> Temple phoned the Free Church leaders to ask if he could speak for them as well. The letter he wrote to *The Times* that day referred to ‘the appalling facts now coming to light with regard to Hitler’s project for the extermination of the Jews’. It was, he said, ‘a horror beyond what imagination can grasp’. He wrote on behalf of both the Free Churches and the Church of England ‘to express our burning indignation at this atrocity, to which the records of barbarous ages scarcely supply a parallel.’ Temple called on Britain to accept freely any Jews who were able to escape, and added that the excuses made by officials for not accepting them had ‘an air of irrelevance’ when seen against the backdrop of the evil campaign against the Jews. He also called for a declaration that the perpetrators would be held responsible when the war was over.<sup>13</sup> Temple showed that he was determined not to let the issue disappear from the public conscience. He made good use of the new joint platform on which Jews and Christians could speak together, the Council of Christians and Jews; this will be discussed later. But he also used his position to approach government ministers directly, including Churchill himself, until, frustrated, he used his membership of the House of Lords to raise awareness of the Jewish situation. He was leading a Christian campaign of pressure on the government to act more decisively to help the Jews.

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 1943 Temple wrote to Churchill explaining that his conscience was ‘deeply concerned’ about what was happening to the Jews, and added: ‘The massacre of the Jews goes on daily, and we feel that some immediate action should be taken to do what is possible, however little that is.’ Temple asked for action on several points.

---

<sup>12</sup> *The Times* December 4<sup>th</sup> 1942 p 3.

<sup>13</sup> *The Times* December 5<sup>th</sup> 1942 p 5.

First, that neutral countries housing Jews who had escaped should be assured by the Allies that they would share the cost of maintaining the refugees. Second, that the Allied nations made clear that they would provide asylum. Third, that assistance be given to Jews in those neutral countries from which they might be deported. Finally, he offered to appeal for hospitality for Jewish children, if the government advised it. Temple ended with a note of urgency: 'Our chief anxiety is the time-factor; our process of consideration takes so long, and the Jews are massacred daily. I repeat this because it is the whole cause of our urgency in this matter.' Churchill passed the letter to Anthony Eden. Hints of action were toned down by A. W. G. Randall, Head of the Refugee Department of the Foreign Office, and Richard Law, Foreign Office Minister of State. Thus 'action ... to alleviate the sufferings of the Jews in occupied Europe' became 'action to meet the new developments of the refugee problem in Europe.' The eventual reply from Eden on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1943 was vague and general: 'In spite of the many complexities of the situation, we are making an attempt to deal with it as far as possible on an international basis ... It is up-hill work.'<sup>14</sup> The hint of self-pity ('uphill work') is virtually all that distinguishes this letter from the stock replies sent to many lesser correspondents. Temple's senior position as presiding bishop of the state church won him the right to be heard by senior officers of state, but little else.

Temple tried again, this time in concert with the Archbishops of York (Cyril Garbett) and Wales (Charles Howell Green). On January 25<sup>th</sup> 1943 a statement from the three archbishops was carried in *The Times* and other newspapers. They said that

---

<sup>14</sup> PRO FO/371/36649, for Temple's letter (January 8<sup>th</sup> 1943), draft reply and Eden's eventual answer (January 16<sup>th</sup>).

they spoke in the name of all the Anglican bishops in England and Wales. They called upon the government to work with Allied and neutral nations to find a refuge 'for all persons threatened with massacre who can escape from Axis lands.' They said that the suffering of millions of Jews, and their condemnation 'to a cruel and certain death' was a challenge to humanity to act. The declaration was prophetically blunt: it said that Hitler was carrying out his repeated intention 'to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe, which means in effect the exterminating of some 6,000,000 persons ...' <sup>15</sup> The other churches immediately supported the Anglican call. The following day *The Times* carried letters from Cardinal Hinsley, and from John Whale, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, supporting the Anglican initiative.<sup>16</sup> The Foreign Office was unmoved. A. W. G. Randall minuted, 'It would, I think, be enough to refer the Archbishop to Mr Attlee's declaration and tell him that we are in consultation with the Dominions and US Govt.' <sup>17</sup> Clement Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister and Labour leader, had told the House of Commons that 'the only real remedy for the consistent Nazi policy of racial and religious persecution lies in an allied victory' and every resource needed to be directed to that end. There were discussions with other countries with regard to helping Jews who managed to escape, but those had to remain confidential.<sup>18</sup> It was very vague. The three archbishops perceived massacre and an ethical challenge. The government replied referring to 'racial and religious persecution'. They might almost be speaking about different events.

---

<sup>15</sup> *The Times* January 25<sup>th</sup> 1943 p 2.

<sup>16</sup> *The Times* January 26<sup>th</sup> 1943 p 5.

<sup>17</sup> PRO FO 371/36650.

<sup>18</sup> Hansard House of Commons January 19<sup>th</sup> 1943.



Temple made a third approach on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1943. He wrote to Anthony Eden forwarding a resolution from the Council of Christians and Jews: 'It is evident that all who were present were deeply moved by this tragic situation and anxious that all possible steps should be taken for the relief of its victims at the earliest possible moment.' The resolution again called for asylum for Jews who managed to escape, guarantees for their support to neutral nations, and for the Allies to remind governments threatening the lives of Jews that there would be prosecution of those responsible. Randall scribbled across Temple's letter: 'I suppose we must send some reply. Just write and express sympathy.'<sup>19</sup> During the period of this correspondence, the first three months of 1943, the Jewish situation in occupied Europe deteriorated further. Germany itself, Greece, the Netherlands and Poland saw fresh actions against their Jewish population. Hitherto, partly for economic reasons, many of the German Jews had been left where they lived. In Poland, most of the Jewish population had already been decimated, but there remained some large ghettos which were engaged in producing material for the German war effort. One of the largest of these was Bialystok, but on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1943, the Germans suddenly deported 17,600 Jews from there to Treblinka.<sup>20</sup>

Temple made sure that the Church Assembly supported his stand. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, speaking from the chair, he invited the Assembly to associate itself with the declaration of the Anglican archbishops on January 25<sup>th</sup>, when they had called on Empire governments to open their doors to Jews. The motion was passed unanimously. Temple showed a streak of ruthlessness in the matter. There was no

---

<sup>19</sup> PRO FO 371/36652

<sup>20</sup> Yahil, *Holocaust* pp 406-7, 411, 437 & 442-443. Bialystok was finally liquidated on August 16<sup>th</sup>.

debate because he wanted an uncompromising show of support from his church and was determined to avoid expression of contrary views. Hence the device of introducing the motion from the chair.<sup>21</sup> Temple then turned to the House of Lords. Just as in the previous debate of November 11<sup>th</sup>, he came to the House well-informed because of his good links with the Jewish community. Adolph Brotman of the Board of Deputies had written to him on March 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> with information which he was able to use.<sup>22</sup> On March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943 Temple moved:

That, in view of the massacre and starvation of Jews and others in enemy and enemy-occupied countries, this House desires to assure His Majesty's Government of its fullest support for immediate measures, on the largest and more generous scale compatible with the requirements of military operations and security, for providing help and temporary asylum to persons in danger of massacre who are able to leave enemy and enemy-occupied countries.

Temple spoke at length, and used the strongest language. He opened by describing what was happening to the Jews on the Continent as 'an evil the magnitude and horror of which it is impossible to describe in words.' He acknowledged that many suffered at the hands of the Nazis, but it was against the Jews that their fury was concentrated. Temple acknowledged, too, that many said the real answer was to win the war, but he pointed out that only if it was won in a matter of weeks would it deliver 'multitudes

---

<sup>21</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 55, Temple to Bell, March 29<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>22</sup> BoD EO 2/015, Brotman to Temple, March 16<sup>th</sup> 1943. Brotman sent Temple a report from Ignacy Schwarzbart of the Polish National Council, and two reports from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency relating to Rumania and Bulgaria. See also LP Temple Papers Vol 55 ff 303-304.

of those who are now doomed to death.’ He quoted descriptions of recent events in six different countries supplied, he said by the Board of Deputies, and originating from the World Jewish Congress and ‘a Jewish member of the National Council of Poland’. He described deportations from Germany, and of the extermination of the ghettos of Poland, where it was estimated that only 250,000 Jews now remained alive. Temple said that after the Allied declaration of December 17<sup>th</sup>, ‘we should contrast the solemnity of the words with the meagre action that has actually followed.’ His suggestions for action followed a by now well-worn pattern: Palestine to admit Jews up to the 29,000 admissions remaining out of the quota system there; Britain to waive most visa restrictions for Jews; issue block visas issues to consuls in countries like Spain, Portugal and Turkey; an offer to be made to Nazi Germany through a neutral power offering to admit the Jews; a single government figure appointed to find ways to help the Jews, and given real power. He concluded:

My chief protest is against procrastination of any kind ... The Jews are being slaughtered at the rate of tens of thousands a day on many days ... We at this moment have a tremendous responsibility. We stand at the bar of history, of humanity and of God.<sup>23</sup>

The six speakers following Temple all supported him. Viscount Cranborne, who spoke for the Foreign Office in the House of Lords, replied for the government.

---

<sup>23</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943, columns 812-822.

Throughout his speech he followed standard Foreign Office policy in stressing that the situation was not a purely Jewish problem. There were, he said,

odious persecutions which are being inflicted upon the Jews, the Czechoslovaks, the Poles, the Yugoslavs and the other subject peoples. For I think I would be a mistake to throw undue emphasis on the Jewish side of this question ... it is perhaps the most horrible feature, but it is only a feature of a much bigger problem.

That problem, he said, was ‘the refugee problem’ and it was ‘purely a question of methods and means and practical possibilities.’ He said that the difficulties in giving further help were immense, and included feeding and accommodating any additional refugees, shipping and national security. He chided Temple for implying government inertia on the issue, and also for limiting one of his proposals to Jews: ‘I imagine that it was a slip of the tongue on [the archbishop’s] part to limit this proposal to Jews, because clearly ... it should apply to the other tortured peoples of Europe.’ The government, he said, ‘have been driven to the conclusion ... that there is not much more we can do alone’. It had been agreed with the United States that ‘the refugee problem should not be considered as confined to any particular race or faith.’<sup>24</sup>

The government wanted to conjure away the specificity of the Jewish situation, and make the issue a more general one that would apply to all refugee peoples. The divergence between church and government noted earlier was repeated. To Temple, even the exigencies of war did not override the particular horror of the Jewish

---

<sup>24</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943, columns 847-858.

situation and its moral urgency. To the government, this was simply one more aspect of a many-faceted war, and the challenge was not to help the Jews but to deflect the rising tide of public pressure which the church was helping to create. The government's strategy was to take pressure off Britain by internationalizing the problem. It was to be presented as a crisis for refugees, not as a crisis for Jews. Randall of the Foreign Office Refugee Department had briefed Cranborne, warning him that Temple's initiative in the House of Lords 'will lead to some embarrassing questions' and Cranborne followed the government line accordingly.<sup>25</sup>

Wasserstein sees political expediency at work in this refusal to accept that the Jews were especially at risk. If it was recognised that Jews fell into a special category, then Britain would be expected to act more vigorously to help them, which might then undermine British policy on excluding refugees from Palestine.<sup>26</sup> It was also feared that help given to the Jews might create resentment and lead to Germany allowing large numbers to leave, 'embarrassing other countries by flooding them with alien immigrants.'<sup>27</sup> Thus when it came to the Anglo-American refugee conference in Bermuda in April 1943, both governments said that the conference was focussing on refugees rather than on Jews *per se*. 'The most important of their reasons for playing down the Jewish aspect of the problem was to discourage pressure to undertake a special effort to save the Jews.'<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> PRO FO 371/3655, Randall to Cranborne, March 15<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>26</sup> Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe* p 163. Hence, the Cabinet Committee on the Reception and Accommodation of Jewish Refugees, at its first meeting on December 31st 1942, deleted the word 'Jewish' from its title (Wasserstein, p 183).

<sup>27</sup> This quotation from the UK memorandum sent to the US State Dept on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1943, quoted in Wasserstein p 184.

<sup>28</sup> London, *Whitehall and the Jews* p 212

Temple had responded to the Jewish situation by harrying the government, leading a delegation, writing to *The Times*, and launching a debate in Britain's upper chamber of parliament. What had Temple achieved? Hastings says: 'That was, very probably, the most memorable and important speech Temple ever made in the House of Lords. It had, however, next to no effect.'<sup>29</sup> Actually, it did have some impact. The speech was widely reported and commented on in the national and religious press. It gave further impetus to a growing public mood of concern about the Jews (see following section of this chapter). Temple had increased public awareness of what was happening to the Jews. But the government was unmoved.

Were Temple's proposals vacuous? Two points might be made in reply. The first is that while most Jews could not escape, there was the possibility of more doing so. The second point is that while Temple believed his proposals would work, he accepted that they might not. In the latter case, he believed that they would still be important as symbolic actions.

Regarding the possibilities of escape, Wasserstein says that by the spring of 1942 Jewish escape from Europe was virtually impossible. Yet he also says that during 1943 some 1,200 Jewish refugees passed through Turkey to Palestine. They came from Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania.<sup>30</sup> To this we can add the trickle who managed to escape to Switzerland and Spain. In the preparations for the Bermuda Conference, The High Commissioner for Refugees, Sir Herbert Emerson, urged the Allies to expand existing refuge facilities in Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Sweden, and to plan for ways of moving existing refugees on from Spain and Switzerland. He

---

<sup>29</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 377.

<sup>30</sup> Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe* pp 161-162. This total includes both legal and illegal immigrants.

believed that this could enable more refugees to pass through frontiers which were technically closed to them. He also wanted the Allies to give assurances about future homes for those refugees in neutral territory who could not be repatriated to their original nations at war's end.<sup>31</sup> Such a guarantee was especially important for Switzerland, which had closed its border with France in August 1942, alarmed at the number seeking refuge, and had turned back thousands. The British and Americans refused to give such a guarantee, and the Bermuda Conference had negligible results.

Regarding the symbolic value of action by the Allies, Temple was realistic about the possibilities. In his speech to the House of Lords in March 1943, the Archbishop had said, 'What matters is that we should open our doors irrespective of the question of whether the German door is open or shut, so that all who can may come.'<sup>32</sup> This was, in effect, a call by England's foremost church leader for a symbolic action that would speak of British concern for the Jews. He wanted this to influence British policy-making. Hence the call for some dramatic gesture: a generous visa policy, or opening up Palestine, or assuring neutral countries that assistance would be given to them if they gave refuge to escaping Jews.

Perhaps the clearest example of such a symbolic action would have been the bombing of the Auschwitz crematoria, or of the railway lines feeding them.<sup>33</sup> This was not one of the actions mentioned by Temple. One recent commentator has said that arguments for bombing as a symbolic action are 'specious'.<sup>34</sup> Part of the

---

<sup>31</sup> London, *Whitehall and the Jews* pp 211 and 217.

<sup>32</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943, columns 817-819.

<sup>33</sup> For a full discussion of this controversy, see Neufeld and Berenbaum (eds) *The Bombing of Auschwitz*.

<sup>34</sup> James Kitchens, 'The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-Examined' in Neufeld and Berenbaum (eds) *the Bombing of Auschwitz* p 99 .

problem was the very real danger of killing Jews if Auschwitz was bombed. This fear helped to sway the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem against making an appeal for the bombing, when the matter was discussed on June 11<sup>th</sup> 1944.<sup>35</sup> However, the following month a draft note was prepared by the Agency's office in London. It was intended for the British Government, but apparently never sent. The note made a moral case for the bombing of Auschwitz. It pointed out that it would rebut the Nazi propaganda that the Allies did not really want the Jews, and would also drive home to the murderers the Allied intention to bring them to justice. The calls for direct action against Auschwitz were analogous to the calls by Temple and other church leaders for a moral dimension to be considered by the nation's decision-makers. Stuart Erdheim believes that 'moral values ... were tragically neglected in the case of the Holocaust' and he gives examples of other humanitarian missions undertaken by the RAF in 1944, when the moral argument triumphed over cost issues.<sup>36</sup> It is the same moral dimension that is implicitly or explicitly present when the behaviour of the Vatican is analysed by historians. It is felt that a papacy which claims the moral high ground should have been prepared to make a stand for the Jewish people. By the same token, it was natural for English church leaders to ask for symbolically important acts to be undertaken which would demonstrate unequivocally the Allied concern for the Jews. Temple was asking for this, but the official line was unyielding: little could be done, beyond the war effort itself, and anyway Jews were simply part of a bigger refugee problem.

---

<sup>35</sup> The Jewish Agency Executive was, in effect, the Cabinet of the Yishuv self-government. the minutes of the meeting are printed in *The Bombing of Auschwitz* pp 252-253.

<sup>36</sup> Stuart Erdheim, 'Could the Allies have bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau?' in Neufeld and Berenbaum (eds) *Bombing of Auschwitz* pp 154-155.



It was another indication of how the Church of England's influence was limited in political circles. William Temple had behind him the dignity of his office, but he also was on first-name terms with some government ministers. For example, when he wrote to Cranborne, he began his letters 'Dear Bobbety' (the viscount's nickname among family and friends). Cranborne replied, 'Dear William'.<sup>37</sup> This, however, counted as little as Lang's friendship with Halifax noted earlier.

Temple continued trying. In 1944 he broadcast twice to the people of Hungary, warning them about the deportations and asking that no one co-operate with them. The first broadcast came in April. At an Executive Committee meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews, the President of the Board of Deputies, Professor Selig Brodetsky, had drawn attention to the increasingly parlous plight of the Jews of Hungary. He felt that a direct appeal from Christians of the UK to Christians of Hungary and other countries affected might encourage them to shelter some of the potential victims, or help them to escape. The Executive decided 'to ask the Archbishop of Canterbury, as head of the established Church in this country, to consider the possibility of broadcasting such a message if appropriate arrangements could be made.'<sup>38</sup> Henry Carter, a Methodist minister with a key role in refugee work and on the executive of the Council of Christians and Jews, phoned after a meeting of the CCJ on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1944, begging Temple to broadcast to the Christians of Hungary on behalf of the Christians of the UK, saying that the eyes of British

---

<sup>37</sup> See for example, LP Temple Papers Vol 44 f 144, Temple to Cranborne, November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1942.

<sup>38</sup> SUA, CCJ Executive Committee Minutes, CCJ Archives 2/2 1943-1948, meeting of April 4<sup>th</sup> 1944.

Christians were on them.<sup>39</sup> German forces had swept in on March 29<sup>th</sup> and set up a collaborationist government which immediately acted against the Jews who until then had enjoyed a partial respite. Temple's broadcast was translated into Hungarian and broadcast on April 11<sup>th</sup>. He said that he spoke 'in the name of the Christian people of England' and he called on his listeners in Hungary to have no doubt what their Christian discipleship would require of them. Namely, that they do their utmost to save from massacre those at risk, and if possible help them to escape.<sup>40</sup> It was a clear, direct appeal from England's best-known Christian leader to the people of Hungary. There was just one problem: Temple did not mention the Jews. He asked the Hungarians 'to prevent the extermination of people whose only fault is the race from which they are born or the independence of their minds and constancy of convictions.' This formula could have covered pacifists, Communists, gypsies or others, as well the Jews who were implied without being mentioned by name. Temple had been bowdlerized by the Foreign Office, which had told the BBC to ask Temple

to broaden the basis of the appeal so as to include other victims of Nazi oppression. They do not think that it is altogether a sound policy to concentrate exclusively on the Jews when so many others are suffering for their political and religious convictions.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 55 f 107, memorandum from Temple's chaplain Ian White-Thompson regarding phone call from Carter, April 4<sup>th</sup> 1944. See also f 106, with cable from WJC in Geneva asking for broadcast, forwarded by Easterman, nd.

<sup>40</sup> The text of the broadcast can be found in LP Temple Papers Vol 55 f 117.

<sup>41</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 55 f 11, Francis House to Temple, April 6<sup>th</sup> 1944. Francis House was Assistant, Overseas and European Religious Broadcasting of the BBC.

Once again, the British policy of neutralizing the specifics of the Jewish situation had triumphed.

The second broadcast came on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1944. Drawing on Central Zionist Archives, Pamela Shatzkes says that this broadcast resulted from an initiative by Lord Melchett (Henry Mond), a former Conservative MP.<sup>42</sup> This time Temple spoke about the Jews by name. He spoke directly about how they were being rounded up, deported in terrible conditions to be killed and cremated at Auschwitz. He begged the Christian people of Hungary to do their utmost, even to take risks, to save the Jews: ‘For the honour of our common Christianity I implore you to do your utmost.’ In this broadcast Foreign Office censorship would not allow Temple to tell his listeners that 12,000 Jews were being deported daily, and that the total to June 24<sup>th</sup> was estimated at 405,000.<sup>43</sup>

We may doubt that the people of Hungary sat next to their radio sets pondering a broadcast from a remote English Christian leader. Anyway, the Hungarian leader, Admiral Horthy, was at that very moment halting the deportations partly in response to pressure from the Allies and the Vatican. The broadcasts show, however, Temple’s response to the crisis. He responded quickly and clearly. He showed that in his own understanding, it was quite clear what Christian principles asked of him – and of the Hungarians. To do otherwise would dishonour Christianity. His broadcasts show that he saw this as a crisis not only for the Jews but for the Christian bystanders.

---

<sup>42</sup> Pamela Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue: Impotent or Indifferent? Anglo-Jewry 1938-1945* (Basingstoke: 2002) p 149.

<sup>43</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 55 ff 180, 183 and 185, for memoranda between Lambeth Palace and the BBC.

Temple seems to have been able to hold together both strands, the specific nature of the threat to the Jews, and the wider challenge to Europe's Christian tradition posed by that threat. These broadcasts and other action by Temple for the Jews should be taken into account when assessing recent research by Tom Lawson. Lawson has argued that the Church of England saw Nazism as a murderous elite which imposed itself upon the German population. Nazism negated Christian values and Christians, too, had been its victims. Church leadership was looking to the future and the need for reconciliation with a defeated Germany. But as it turned out, this Anglican approach also fitted in well with the post-war need to confront the Soviet Union. The latter could be portrayed as another totalitarian violation of European and Christian values. The effect was to deflect attention from Jewish suffering and the question of wider German complicity with the attempted extermination of the Jews.<sup>44</sup>

Some of the evidence cited by Lawson is compelling, especially church opposition to the post-war denazification programme, and the speeches of Bishop Bell. Reading Bell's wartime speeches it is clear that Bell's concern for non-Aryan Christians was not the only factor inhibiting his condemnation of Germany. His ecumenical links, and his eirenic temperament, made him seek common ground wherever possible. Bell was at pains to distinguish

between the Hitlerite State and the German people from the point of view of the future of Europe. The present war is not a war of nation against nation ... it is a war of faiths in which the nations themselves are divided ... Our banner

---

<sup>44</sup> Tom Lawson, 'Constructing a Christian History of Nazism: Anglicanism and the Memory of the Holocaust, 1945-49' *History and Memory* 16.1 (2004), *passim* but especially pp 158-159, 161 and 164.

is the banner of liberty, democracy and Christian civilisation against slavery, tyranny and barbarism.<sup>45</sup>

Bell's approach here is congruent with the arguments made elsewhere in this thesis, that Nazism was often seen primarily as an assault on liberal values, with the inherent racial basis of its philosophy downplayed, along with Jewish suffering. However, there was more than this in the Anglican response, as is seen in Temple. Nor does Lawson convey the balance when he cites Bell's words to the House of Lords in March 1943: 'It is a simple matter of fact that Germany was the first country in Europe to be occupied by the Nazis.' In the same speech, Bell also said: 'I dare not acquit the Germans as a whole of some guilt in accepting the Nazi regime ...'<sup>46</sup> Lawson also claims that when the Jews of Hungary were being deported in 1944, 'the church sought to draw attention to the universal impact of murderous Nazi occupation policies', ie focused attention away from what was happening to the Jews specifically.<sup>47</sup> But as has just been shown, Temple acted vigorously to try and help the Jews and was more or less censored by the BBC acting at the behest of the Foreign Office.

---

<sup>45</sup> Bell, *The Church and Humanity 1939-1946* (London: Longman, 1946) p 107. See also his speech to the House of Lords in December 1944, on Christianity as a unifying force in Europe (pp 158-164).

<sup>46</sup> George Bell, *The Church and Humanity* p 98. Bell goes on to blame in particular what a later generation would call the military-industrial complex. Lawson's citation about Germany being the first country occupied by the Nazis is said by Lawson to appear on p 99, but the words are on p 100. If a recent survey is to be believed, scholarly consensus may now support Bell's position: 'Certainly, before 1933 neither the German people nor any group within the Nazi Party or its voters wanted what happened to the Jews after 1938. No doubt many sections within German society would have been satisfied with a visible restriction of Jewish influence. Only a minority within the Nazi Party itself ... contemplated a sweeping deprivation of human rights, implemented, if necessary, by physical force. The vast majority of the Nazi Party's members and voters were indifferent and sometimes even rejected this rabid antisemitism.' (Oded Heilbronner, 'German or Nazi Antisemitism?' in Dan Stone, ed, *Historiography of the Holocaust* pp 17-18.) Heilbronner's assertion is open to question.

<sup>47</sup> Lawson, 'Constructing a Christian History of Nazism' p 159.

Temple's response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was formidable. He spoke twice in the House of Lords, wrote to *The Times* and broadcast on the BBC, headed delegations, corresponded with government ministers and anybody of influence he thought would listen. Through the declaration of the three archbishops and the unanimous resolution of the Church Assembly, he swung the weight of the Anglicans behind his personal campaign for a more decisive, indeed imaginative, answer by Britain to the deportations and death camps. To this end, he was crucial in bringing together an ecumenical and inter-faith coalition of religious leaders, at a time when ecumenism was in its infancy and inter-faith co-operation rare. As the next section will show, he helped crystallize a national awareness of the plight of the Jews. This was all part of a workload which almost certainly hastened his death. After only two years as Archbishop of Canterbury he died unexpectedly of a pulmonary thrombosis on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1944. His biographer F. A. Iremonger sums up Temple's character by saying that he showed 'that common touch which bound him to the multitude in the primal fellowship of human-kind.'<sup>48</sup> Purple prose, but accurately reflecting the humanity of the man, who did not count the Jews as 'other' but simply responded wholeheartedly to do what he could to help. Of their situation, he said, 'the imagination recoils ... It is impossible to hold such things at all before the mind.'<sup>49</sup> But he did, indeed, hold them in mind and encouraged his church and nation to do likewise.

---

<sup>48</sup> F. A. Iremonger, *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Letters* (London: OUP, 1948) pp 630 & 631.

<sup>49</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, March 23rd 1943 column 814.

### Public meetings and petitions, 1942-1945

The publicity given to the death camps by the Polish government and Jewish bodies, and the declaration by the Allies of December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942, meant that in early 1943 there was an upsurge of interest in what was happening to the Jews. One indicator of this was the publication in January 1943 of the publisher and controversialist Victor Gollancz's 32-page pamphlet, *'Let my People Go.'* Within three months it had sold 250,000 copies.<sup>50</sup> The churches of England did not create this wave of interest. However, the response of the churches to the news of the 'Final Solution' helped provide a vehicle for expressing the public anger and dismay.

Often bishops took a key role chairing meetings or proposing resolutions. In February 1943 the Bishop of Leicester wrote on behalf of a public meeting to Churchill expressing civic 'indignation at the ruthless extermination of the Jews by the Nazis' and pleading for help. The bishop, Vernon Smith, wrote that 'The Resolution was received by the whole assembly standing in respectful silence.'<sup>51</sup> That same month the Bishop of Hereford, Richard Parsons, called together 26 Anglican, Catholic and Free Church clergy to his palace, supported by the Benedictine abbot of Belmont Abbey, to press for help for the Jews.<sup>52</sup> Liverpool in the 1940s was still a city divided on Orange and Green lines with a Jewish minority. But in March 1943 when Liverpool City Council wanted to demonstrate the city's feelings about the Jewish situation, it asked the Anglican bishop and the Catholic

---

<sup>50</sup> Victor Gollancz, *'Let my People Go': Some Practical Proposals for Dealing with Hitler's Massacre of the Jews and an Appeal to the British Public* (Gollancz: London, 1943). Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Victor Gollancz: A Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1987) p 375.

<sup>51</sup> PRO PREM 4/51/8, Bishop of Leicester to Churchill, February 19<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>52</sup> PRO FO 371/36654, Bishop of Hereford to Eden, February 24<sup>th</sup> 1933.

archbishop to propose and second a resolution at a meeting of representative citizens in the council chamber. The resolution expressed ‘horror at the brutal massacres of Jewish people in Europe’ and called for sanctuary for the Jews.<sup>53</sup>

Gatherings of clergy wrote too, as did congregations and parishes. In February 1943 the clergy of Southwark Anglican cathedral wrote to Churchill asking ‘that action should be taken at once to save as many Jews as possible.’<sup>54</sup> A meeting of clergy and lay representatives of Whitley Bay on Tyneside wrote to Eden saying that they viewed ‘with horror the atrocities perpetrated against Jewish people in Axis occupied countries’ and asking him to act.<sup>55</sup> In March, 560 members of the parishes of Badminton and Acton Turville in Gloucestershire wrote to Churchill, ‘deeply stirred by the reports of the mass extermination at present taking place in Eastern Europe’ and expressing their ‘sense of urgency in this matter’. The list of signatories was headed by the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort.<sup>56</sup> Another petition was sent from the people of the parish of Gulval in Cornwall, this time to Eden; it too contained hundreds of signatories from a small rural parish. The Gulval petition was sent to Eden by A. L. Beechman, Liberal National MP for St Ives, who added: ‘I have received a large number of letters and petitions from my constituents in Cornwall asking me to do whatever I can to urge the Government to take practical steps to rescue the Jews.’<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Sir Cooper Rawson, Conservative MP for Brighton, forwarding a petition from Bishop Hannington Memorial Church in Hove, wrote to Eden: ‘I enclose a petition, one of many I have received from constituents on the

---

<sup>53</sup> PRO FO 371/3655, Alderman R. D. France to Eden, March 19<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>54</sup> PRO PREM 4/51/8, Canon Norman Clarke to Churchill, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1943.

<sup>55</sup> PRO FO 371/36659, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943.

<sup>56</sup> PRO PREM 4/51/8, Revd H. E. McLeod to Churchill, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>57</sup> PRO FO 371/36659, Beechman to Eden, April 21<sup>st</sup> 1943.



subject of the Jewish massacres.’<sup>58</sup> The Rector of Bletchingley in Surrey wrote to the Conservative MP for East Surrey, Charles Emmott, who, in forwarding the letter to Eden complained: ‘I am plagued with letters on this subject.’<sup>59</sup> There was one exception, though: Catholic representations were relatively lacking. The petitions and letters from whole congregations and from individual clergymen that are characteristic of the other denominations are largely absent. The Catholic Church at this time was hierarchic and there was no mechanism for parishioners to make their voices heard. On the other hand, Free Churches were well represented, especially Methodists and Quakers. There were letters signed by groups of clergy and petitions signed by whole congregations, and in this respect there seems no difference between the Church of England and the Free Churches.

Letters expressing concern or dismay came from all walks of life, and not just from church members, but the churches in England were particularly strongly represented. This was acknowledged by the Foreign Office. On January 27<sup>th</sup> 1943, Alec Randall, Head of the Refugee Department at the Foreign Office, sent a cable to the British Embassy in Washington:

Interest of Allied and certain neutral Governments, Swiss in particular, as well as public opinion which is now subject to intense propaganda by Jewish organizations and Christian Churches is such that further absence of any kind of response by the United States will inevitably arouse. I appreciate State

---

<sup>58</sup> PRO FO 371/36660, Rawson to Eden, May 30<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>59</sup> PRO FO 371/36651, Revd Aitken Crawshaw to Emmott, Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 1943, *et seq.*

Department's pre-occupations, but should be glad if you could report their observations on the main issues with as little delay as possible.<sup>60</sup>

As noted earlier in this chapter, part of the British response to the crisis was to 'internationalise' the problem by holding discussions with the United States. The corporate Christian pressure of English churches mentioned in the cable was no more effective than that of leaders such as Temple. The pressure from the churches simply increased the desire of the Foreign Office to portray the Jewish situation as a refugee problem that could only be solved internationally.

Even so, we may note Randall's bracketing of 'Jewish organizations and Christian Churches'. The emotional distance between the churches of England and the Jews of England was no longer as wide as it had been. If the conscience of England was increasingly troubled by the massacres of the Jews, then it was partly due to the Christian response. What is striking about the Christian letters in the Foreign Office files is the emotion of the language. Three notes stand out in the letters: abhorrence, shame, and urgency. Abhorrence is probably the most common emotional key, and hardly surprising. Even in a brutal war, the planned extermination of a people horrified many in England. Shame, although less frequent, does occur. For example, in February 1943 Clitheroe Methodist Church in Lancashire met as a congregation and unanimously agreed a resolution expressing 'sorrow and shame at the cruel wrongs now being inflicted upon the Jewish People in Germany and German occupied countries.'<sup>61</sup> Shame was implicit in the response the following month of

---

<sup>60</sup> PRO FO 371/36649, Randall to Washington, January 27<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 371/36651, Revd J. E. Storey to Sir William Brass MP, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1943

some 300 Baptist ministers meeting in London who agreed that ‘apparently very little had been done by us as a nation’ since the declaration of December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942; the Revd M. E. Aubrey, General Secretary of the Baptist Union, said that the meeting spoke for ‘a great number of Christian people’.<sup>62</sup> As regards urgency, this is a component of virtually every letter from English churches. One example may suffice: when the Reading Meeting of the Quakers wrote to Eden, they concluded their appeal for help with the words: ‘We earnestly urge that there should be no delay, since each day lost means torture for millions of people and the wholesale destruction of women and children.’<sup>63</sup>

The response of the English churches, ordinary congregations, ordinary clergy, to the news of the slaughter, is quite sophisticated. There is a diminution of the sense of alterity. There is a sense of common humanity, and of the duty to respond within the bonds of humanity. In addition, the churches do understand that the situation of the Jews is different. It was seen that while many nations and peoples were suffering, the Jews alone faced extermination. In this respect, and at this time, the churches had shown conscience as well as clarity.

#### The founding of the Council of Christians and Jews

In the 1930s there was virtually no mechanism for Jewish-Christian co-operation in England. The creation of the United Synagogue in 1870 and the institution of the office of Chief Rabbi enlarged the possibilities of a discreet dialogue between, for

---

<sup>62</sup> PRO FO 371/36656, Revd M. E. Aubrey to Eden, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943.

<sup>63</sup> PRO FO 371/36649, H. Stevens to Eden, January 14<sup>th</sup> 1943.

example, Jewish and Anglican religious leadership.<sup>64</sup> Outside this, however there was little formal contact between Jewish and Christian communal leadership. A Society of Jews and Christians had been formed in 1927, but was largely London-based and rather academic in orientation. The society ‘had met violent opposition from both communities since its inception.’<sup>65</sup> Both sides were suspicious of anything that seemed to minimize the truths that they held dear. In addition Jews knew well that Christian approaches in the past had mixed altruism and proselytism.

There are competing claims for the emergence of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). James Parkes claimed that the initiative came from discussions at his house, the preliminary arrangements having made by Kathleen Freeman, an active Anglican laywoman.<sup>66</sup> However, the crucial first steps seem to have been taken at Bloomsbury House, which housed many of the organizations working to help Jewish refugees. The building was administered by a combined Jewish and Christian committee; the Methodist minister, Bill (W. W.) Simpson was one of its two secretaries. Bill Simpson believed that the first thoughts of CCJ came from discussions at Bloomsbury House. So did Norman Bentwich, who wrote: ‘Out of the co-operation in the rescue of the refugees came the idea of the Council of Christians and Jews for permanent co-operation in social causes by the two Communities in

---

<sup>64</sup> David Englander, ‘Anglicised not Anglican’ p 249.

<sup>65</sup> Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society during the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) p 176.

<sup>66</sup> James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969) p 174.

Britain.’<sup>67</sup> There was a series of exploratory meetings bringing together Simpson and Henry Carter with four members of the Board of Deputies.<sup>68</sup>

There was some initial Christian acknowledgement of the role of Christianity in the development of antisemitism. Carter was reported as saying that ‘there was an enormous fund of goodwill in the Christian Churches towards Jews and the rapidly growing conviction among them that the Churches had to undo the harm wrought against the Jews throughout the centuries.’<sup>69</sup> This statement of Carter’s seems to imply a note of Christian self-examination, possibly even penitence for antisemitism. This is almost certainly how Carter was understood, for in a later meeting of Jewish representatives only, it was said that ‘Leading Christians realized that Christianity was at fault in allowing anti-semitism to grow, and that it devolved very largely on Christians to combat anti-semitism.’<sup>70</sup> This was one avenue that the CCJ could have explored. But instead, at these preliminary meetings it was decided that at the forthcoming conference ‘the main purpose was to deal with anti-semitism from the point of view of the attack which it constituted on civilization.’ The invitations to the November 19<sup>th</sup> Grosvenor House conference went out in Temple’s name and duly invited participants

To consider the dangers to civilization involved in religious and racial intolerance and to establish means by which Christians and Jews ... can ...

---

<sup>67</sup> Norman Bentwich, *They Found Refuge* (London: Cresset Press, 1956) p 121. For Bloomsbury House, see pp 39-41.

<sup>68</sup> The high-powered Jewish delegation shows the importance the Board of Deputies placed on the talks. The Board representatives were Professor Selig Brodetsky, its President; Sir Robert Waley Cohen; Leonard Stein and Adolph Brotman. Carter was chairman of the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany

<sup>69</sup> BoD C15/03/021 file 1, Memorandum of meeting, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1941.

<sup>70</sup> BoD C15/03/021 file 1, Memorandum by Brotman of meeting, October 27<sup>th</sup> 1941.

strengthen the practice of those principles which are common to Christianity and Judaism and which they believe are fundamental to civilization and to the peace of the human race.<sup>71</sup>

William Temple and Chief Rabbi Hertz headed their respective delegations. Temple and Hertz got on well, and the meeting decided to explore the creation of a formal mechanism for Jewish-Christian consultation and co-operation.<sup>72</sup>

The invitation made it clear that the emphasis would be on what Christians and Jews had in common. The appeal to values ‘fundamental to civilization and ... peace’ was an implicit rejection of uncivilized war-mongering Nazism. At Grosvenor House this was the line favoured by the delegates. Temple said there that

... the matter they were dealing with was not an isolated question but a symptom of something very evil and if they could find ways of healing the sore that tended to develop it would be the means of influencing at the most sensitive point the chief issue before them at that time, of which the war was only one symptom ...

If they could find ways of expressing the principles which they had in common and which they agreed in thinking lay at the basis of a just

---

<sup>71</sup> BoD C/15/03/021 file, Memorandum [by Brotman] on Meeting on Christian/Jewish relationships held at Reform Club, September 29<sup>th</sup> 1941. Invitations, same file. The final wording of the invitations was drafted by Sir Robert Waley Cohen, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1941.

<sup>72</sup> See Marcus Braybrooke, *Children of One God: A History of the Council of Christians and Jews* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1991) p 11; W. W. Simpson, ‘Jewish-Christian Relations since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews’ *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* Vol 28 (1984) pp 91-92. At this point Temple was Archbishop of York.

civilisation, they would in that way do very much more towards healing the antisemitism than by frontal attack.

Chief Rabbi Hertz spoke immediately afterwards and was at pains to establish rapport with the churches, for he referred to instances where Catholics and Jews had suffered at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan in the US. He also linked antisemitism with antidemocratic forces. He added: 'Rejection... of the Jew carried with it rejection and destruction of the ideas of freedom.' Except for a sermon by Bishop David Mathew, the Catholic representative, other delegates followed the same lines as Temple and Hertz.<sup>73</sup>

From the beginning, then, the CCJ stressed consensus and liberal values. It approached the Nazi drive to exterminate the Jews as a challenge to civilisation. This was the tone set by Temple, but it was also the approach favoured by the Jewish side. After the Grosvenor House meeting in November, Chief Rabbi Hertz, Professor Selig Brodetsky and Sir Robert Waley Cohen formulated four potential aims for the putative CCJ. The first was

The effective checking and combating of religious and racial intolerance ....  
 having regard to the fact that the Nazi attack on Jewry has revealed anti-semitism as the initial stage of a comprehensive plan of attack on Christianity

---

<sup>73</sup> 'Minutes of Conference on Jewish-Christian Relations at Grosvenor House, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1941', CCJ Executive Committee Minutes 2/1, 1941-1942, Southampton University Archives (SUA). The speeches are in reported speech. Temple, pp 1-2; Hertz, pp 2-3.

as well as on Judaism, and on the ethical principles which are common to both religions ...<sup>74</sup>

Carter's suggestion of Christian self-scrutiny has disappeared. In fact, Christianity is no longer part of the pre-history of the mass killings. On the contrary, Christianity itself is seen as under attack. The specificity of the Jewish situation fades to the background under this appeal to Jewish-Christian common ground. This was, as we have seen, the approach favoured by Neville Laski and the Board of Deputies for the mass meeting at the Albert Hall in November 1938 to protest *Kristallnacht*.

It was these four aims, slightly adapted, which became the CCJ's goals when it formally constituted itself at a meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> 1942. The aims were first published in September when the executive committee released a press statement. In the statement the CCJ said that the present German Government had consistently attempted to undermine and destroy traditional religious and spiritual values, especially through antisemitism, 'which is repugnant to the moral principles of Christianity and Judaism alike ...' The four guiding aims were: to combat religious and racial intolerance; to promote understanding and co-operation between Christians and Jews; to promote Jewish and Christian youth fellowship; and to foster Christian and Jewish study and service directed towards post-war reconstruction.<sup>75</sup> Kushner

---

<sup>74</sup> BoD C/15/03/021, Brotman to Sir Robert Waley Cohen, December 9<sup>th</sup> 1941. The other three aims were forms of Jewish-Christian co-operation (see following).

<sup>75</sup> SUA CCJ Archives, Executive Committee Minutes 2/1, (1941-1942) meeting of September 8<sup>th</sup> 1942



cites this as evidence of CCJ's 'universalist leanings' which made it reluctant to deal with the particular problems faced by the Jews.<sup>76</sup>

There is a paradox here. The CCJ grew out of Christian-Jewish contacts which developed in refugee work and were further galvanized by the Nazi extermination campaign. Yet the CCJ, as Kushner points out, chose to focus on domestic antisemitism, and put this within the context of being for civilization, peace and progress. Kushner pinpoints a liberal ideology as part of the problem here: 'One internal limitation within the CCJ was its reluctance to move away from a liberal ideology and emphasize the particularity of the Nazi antisemitism.'<sup>77</sup> But what happened to the note of Christian self-examination noted earlier? Hopes for this lingered on the Jewish side. When Brotman wrote to Viscount Samuel inviting him to become a member of the CCJ Executive Committee, he said that 'During the last three months a movement was set afoot for the establishment of a Council of Christians and Jews, based on the recognition by the Churches that they had a great responsibility for the development of anti-semitism ...'<sup>78</sup> Yet this admission of historical complicity simply did not happen. Carter and Simpson, though they may have hinted at this Christian self-scrutiny, were really speaking for themselves. Such Christian self-examination as took place was the work of individuals such as Simpson and James Parkes.<sup>79</sup> Carter and Simpson might claim that there was a sobering realization among the churches of England that Christianity had contributed

---

<sup>76</sup> Tony Kushner, 'James Parkes, the Jews and Conversionism: A Model for Multi-Cultural Britain?' in Diana Wood (ed) *Christianity and Judaism* (Studies in Church History, Vol 29) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) pp 456-457.

<sup>77</sup> Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* p 165.

<sup>78</sup> Brotman to Samuel, nd but probably March 1942, BoD C/15/03/021 file 2.

<sup>79</sup> See following chapter of this thesis.

historically to antisemitism, and thus to the present situation of the Jews. But this realization existed only among a few individuals. The true response of the English churches was not to look to the past, but to look to the future by creating a means of Christian-Jewish co-operation.

One factor discouraging Christian accountability for antisemitism was the fate of a project that could have led to some increased Christian self-awareness regarding antisemitism. The Chief Rabbi, soon after the formation of the CCJ, announced his intention to resign. He complained about inadequate Orthodox representation, and about ‘fraternization’ between Jews and Christians. In fact his unease seems to have been caused by a project mooted for the CCJ, which would have scrutinized how schools, including Sunday schools, portrayed the Jews. Hertz deplored this suggestion of ‘Jewish interference with New Testament instruction in Christian schools.’<sup>80</sup> We may conclude that he wanted to maintain the traditional autonomy of each community, and viewed with alarm the precedent of one community involved in the theological polemics of the other. The plan was quietly dropped, and it took all Temple’s diplomatic skills to get Hertz back on board.

It is also possible that Hertz had feared a backlash if Jews were critical of Christians. This fear emerged more clearly a year later when Charles Singer wrote a book strongly critical of Christianity. Singer was a physician and a distinguished professor of medical history in the University of London and prominent in Liberal Judaism.<sup>81</sup> Singer also had many Christian friends, and moved easily among them,

---

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Simpson, ‘Jewish-Christian Relations’ p 93. The Sunday school project would later be pursued as a personal project by Bill Simpson (see following chapter of this thesis). For Temple’s letter to Hertz, see BoD C15/03/22.

<sup>81</sup> His father was the compiler and editor of one of Liberal Judaism’s best-known liturgical books.

which probably contributed to his frankness. Even the title of his book was challenging: *The Christian Failure*.<sup>82</sup> Christians, he argued, were generally unaware of

what vast wickedness has been perpetrated in the Christian name, of what evil men and evil things have been and still are associated with the teaching of Christianity and with the Christian name, of how largely these matters are involved in the present crisis of civilization ...<sup>83</sup>

Singer looked at the record of the churches inside and outside Germany regarding antisemitism. He concluded that only when the churches themselves were threatened did they discover 'that National Socialism is wickedness'. Then, in words that could have come from today's writings on the theme of bystanders, he wrote:

There is the inhuman indifference of the Central European Churches, and the very slow reaction of all the Churches outside Germany. How slow it was, how dull it was, how reluctant, how inhuman, how unimaginative, how senseless it was, only those who watched the situation at near hand will, perhaps, ever fully realize.

Singer believed that the Luther's antisemitism, and the Catholic Inquisition, had contributed to a process which led ultimately to the Nazis. The churches in Europe for over one thousand years had a network of influence stretching into the heart of

---

<sup>82</sup> Charles Singer, *The Christian Failure* (London: Gollancz, 1943).

<sup>83</sup> Singer, *Christian Failure* p 9.

society. 'If, therefore, after all these centuries, Christian states still fail to act on ethical principles distinguishable as Christian, then Christianity must be held to have failed in its major field.'<sup>84</sup>

Hertz feared that Singer's book would create ill-feeling between Christians and Jews. Leonard Stein, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, wrote to Brodetsky following a conversation with the Chief Rabbi. Singer was a member of the CCJ executive, and Stein wrote: 'I cannot help agreeing with the Chief Rabbi that ... Singer ought tactfully to be induced to resign from the Council.'<sup>85</sup> There is no record in the file of Brodetsky's reply and Singer remained on the CCJ.

Despite these worries, the Council of Christians and Jews did initially function as an advocate for the beleaguered Jews of Europe. The Executive Committee considered the Jewish situation early in December. It decided to send a delegation to the Foreign Office after a realistic debate. One unnamed member said that 'the apparent inaction of the Foreign Office in this particular connection was not due to any lack of concern but to the difficulty of finding what action, if any, could be taken.' There was also concern lest the public be 'so sated with horror' that the truth about what was happening to the Jews would have little impact. But it was felt that 'silence on the part of the Council or of the Christian Churches might lead Jews to feel that no one was interested in their plight ...'<sup>86</sup> On December 16<sup>th</sup> 1942 Christian members of the CCJ Executive met with Richard Law, Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office. The delegation consisted of the Archbishop of Canterbury; Bishop David Mathew, representing Cardinal Hinsley; the Moderator of the Free

---

<sup>84</sup> Singer, *Christian Failure*, pp 85, 89, 97 and 102.

<sup>85</sup> Stein to Brodetsky, August 13<sup>th</sup> 1943, BoD C/15/03/021 file 3.

<sup>86</sup> SUA CCJ Archives 2/1 (1941-1942) Executive Committee Minutes December 3rd 1942.

Church Federal Council; Lord Daryngton; Henry Carter and Bill Simpson. It was a decision of the CCJ itself to limit the delegation to its Christian members, but the Jewish Agency in Palestine concurred with the reasoning, which was that Christian pressure would make it harder for the government to dismiss this as a matter of Jewish self-interest.<sup>87</sup> Jewish members of the CCJ would also have been aware that there was a Jewish approach being made to the Prime Minister. Churchill passed the request for a meeting on to Eden, who met a high-powered Jewish delegation on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Despite Jewish fears about being brushed aside, their delegation met with the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden; the Christian delegation, on the other hand, was received by Law, a junior Foreign Office minister. After the Jewish delegation the government set up a committee to consider what help could be given to Jewish refugees who escaped via Bulgaria or Portugal.<sup>88</sup> It is possible that one of the outcomes of this committee was the UK government's decision in February 1943 to allow 4,500 Jewish children from Bulgaria to enter Palestine. However, German pressure prevented this happening.<sup>89</sup> The Christian delegation was simply heard out, politely. The Christian delegation had been high-powered and impressively representative of the churches of England, yet it had achieved little.

Initially the CCJ kept up the pressure on the government. At its AGM on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1943 it passed a lengthy resolution unanimously, which reiterated the points made by the delegation on December 16<sup>th</sup> calling for asylum (Palestine included) and

---

<sup>87</sup> Kushner, *Holocaust and Liberal Imagination* p 167.

<sup>88</sup> The delegation comprised Chief Rabbi Hertz; Sir Robert Waley Cohen, President of the United Synagogue; Professor Selig Brodetsky, President of the Board of Deputies; Leonard Stein, President of the Anglo-Jewish Association; and James de Rothschild, MP. For the decision to set up the committee regarding refugees from Bulgaria or Portugal, see the Minute W. M. (42) of December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1942 in PRO PREM4/51/8. See also Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p 176.

<sup>89</sup> Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue* p 168.

financial assistance for all Jews who escaped, and for warning to be given unequivocally to those responsible for the extermination campaign. The resolution concluded that ‘the members of the Council, as representing both Christian and Jewish public opinion, desire to press upon His Majesty’s Government their deep sense of urgency in this matter ...’ Forwarding the resolution to Churchill, Temple wrote: ‘It was evident that all who were present were deeply moved by this tragic situation and anxious that all possible steps should be taken for the relief of its victims at the earliest possible moment.’<sup>90</sup>

After this point, however, the CCJ’s interest in the situation of the European Jews declined. Kushner comments that

The issue of antisemitism in Britain, and its Christian and Jewish roots, dominated the activities of [the CCJ] until well after the end of the war ... the concern about the global dangers of antisemitism perversely pushed its activities to concentrate on domestic matters.<sup>91</sup>

It is indeed surprising that the CCJ spoke little about the Jewish situation in Europe at precisely the time when more and more was becoming known about their extermination. However, as was pointed out earlier in this chapter, Temple’s first broadcast to Hungary took place in April 1944 in response to an initiative from the CCJ. Moreover, a *caveat* needs to be entered about dividing global and domestic antisemitism. In 1942 and 1943 there was fear that Nazi sympathizers in Britain

---

<sup>90</sup> AGM resolution and Temple to Churchill of February 8<sup>th</sup> 1943 in PREM 4/51/8.

<sup>91</sup> Kushner, *Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* p 165.

might use their influence for malign ends. The extent of antisemitism in Britain at this time is the subject of debate. Mass Observation surveys in 1943 recorded that strong disfavour towards the Jews was expressed by some 13 per cent of respondents, half the figure of two years previously, and that antisemitism was in decline during the last two years of the war.<sup>92</sup> Bolchover believes that exaggerated fear of domestic antisemitism inhibited the Anglo-Jewish response to the tragedy unfolding on the Continent.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, Jews were frequently accused of black-marketeering, shirking and other offences.<sup>94</sup> And Kushner writes that British policy was partly driven by ‘distrust of the British public’. As late as December 1942 Home Secretary Herbert Morrison justified restricting Jewish immigration by reference to potential British antisemitism.<sup>95</sup> Part of the problem here was the lingering attitude that Jews were thought of as essentially ‘un-British’, an attitude also found among government officials who accordingly restricted right of entry.<sup>96</sup> Louise London found huge variations in attitude among officials responsible for immigration during this period, with senior Home Office officials considerably more sympathetic to the Jews. When sending small numbers of Jewish survivors to the Dominions was under discussion, Sir John Stephenson, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Dominion Office, wrote that, ‘The Dominions will be very reluctant to accept these intractable and unassimilable settlers ...’<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Kushner, *Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* pp 187-188.

<sup>93</sup> Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* pp 42-53.

<sup>94</sup> On black market issues, see Kushner, *Persistence of Prejudice* pp 119-122.

<sup>95</sup> Tony Kushner, ‘The Impact of British Anti-semitism 1918-1945’ in David Cesarani, ed, *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) p 205. On the other hand, Morrison had been a Mayor of the East End borough of Hackney, and leader of the London County Council, and it might be argued that he was well acquainted with community relations.

<sup>96</sup> Kushner, ‘Impact of British Anti-Semitism’ pp 197 and 206.

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews* p 278. On stereotypes, see p 276.

The picture, then is mixed. England at this time showed lingering negative attitudes towards the Jews and a more honest, open attitude. It does seem reasonable for Jews and Christians at the time to have acted against domestic antisemitism as a bulwark against the spread of international, Nazi antisemitism. There was fear that relatively low-level prejudices might become something much worse. At the Grosvenor House conference to set up the CCJ, Carter had said that ‘there was an inherent prejudice almost traditional in the minds of many which could be fanned to angry flame by local incidents, and in that way what they knew of as anti-semitism might become a very terrible reality at some turn of public events in this country.’<sup>98</sup> At this point in late 1941 Britain rightly feared a German invasion. English church leaders could have reasonably feared that one of the outcomes of such an invasion would have been attacks on British Jews. The campaign against British antisemitism took place amidst the wider realization that in other European countries there had been willing collaborators with the Nazi campaign of hatred and extermination. Local antisemitism had its place in the wider consciousness of what was happening elsewhere, and Jewish and Christian leaders realized this. Despite its recourse to the universal language of liberal values, the CCJ had been a response to specific Nazi persecution of the Jews.

Early indications of Christian self-examination petered out. But some Christians remained uneasy, sensing that the Jewish-Christian *rapprochement* signalled a change in Christian attitudes to Judaism. In 1945 W. G. Lambert, lay chairman of the conversionist organisation Church Mission to the Jews, inveighed against the CCJ:

---

<sup>98</sup> BoD E01/051, Minutes of Conference on Jewish-Christian Relations at Grosvenor House, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1941, p 4.



I want to say a word or two ... about what is known as the Inter-Faith approach to the Jews. Many clergymen, and many leaders of religion, think they have completed their duty to the Jews when they have joined with them in protesting against the persecution of the Jews, and in claiming for Jews their rights as men. Such an attitude cuts right at the root of missionary work such as ours ... Many of the contacts that we try to make with the Jews must be, of course, evangelistic.<sup>99</sup>

Many church leaders in England were determined that the Nazi persecution of the Jews should find no imitation in England, no foothold. As part of their response they created a mechanism for Jewish-Christian consultation and joint action. As W. G. Lambert noted, this subtly called into question the whole basis of mission to the Jews.<sup>100</sup>

#### The *Church Times* on the persecution of the Jews, 1942-1945

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1942, when the wider British press was reporting more and more about the Nazi extermination campaign, there was virtually nothing in the *Church Times*. In August 1942 a lengthy news article drew on an allied information report about the Axis attitude towards religion. The article presents persecution as primarily directed against Christians: in 70 cm of reportage, the only reference to Jews is this: ‘In the occupied zone of France, Jews are the victims of the

---

<sup>99</sup> *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* Vol 46 June 1945, p 3.

<sup>100</sup> Temple believed that Christians could still seek the conversion of Jews, under certain conditions. For the principles he drew up, see LP Bell Papers Vol 31, ff 249-296.

most striking form of religious persecution.’<sup>101</sup> There was a flurry of reports around the time of the House of Commons declaration by Anthony Eden. On December 24<sup>th</sup> there was a lengthy paragraph in the news ‘Summary’ reporting that ‘In Poland alone over a million Jews are believed to have succumbed to the Nazi policy of extermination ... It is estimated that a million more, belonging to other European countries under Axis control, have been wiped out ...’ The report refers in uncompromising language to ‘The Nazis, with minds like sewer-rats’ and says that ‘the general horror’ is heightened by the feeling of impotence.<sup>102</sup> In April 1943, a full column report about persecution of the Jews gave some details of Christian rescue and protection efforts, which were reported from Brussels, France and the Netherlands: ‘Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, have been heroically prominent in this work.’<sup>103</sup> It is interesting that by mid-1943 it was seen as morally important that Christians had made a stand somewhere against the deportations. Again, when the deportation of Greek Jews was mentioned, resistance by the Orthodox Church was reported.<sup>104</sup> But mentions of the Jewish situation were few and modest. From mid-1943 until the end of the war in Europe, apart from the flurry of reports around the time of the House of Lords declaration, the *Church Times* carried little about the Jews. The main concerns of the paper were about church issues, such as the proposed new ecumenical Church of South India, clergy pensions and the ordination of a woman priest by the Bishop of Hong Kong.

---

<sup>101</sup> *CT* August 14<sup>th</sup> 1942, ‘Religion under the Axis: A Bestial Record of Torture and Desecration’ p 444. In using the language of religion rather than race the *Church Times* may be following the underlying Allied report.

<sup>102</sup> *CT* ‘Summary’ December 24<sup>th</sup> 1942 p 691.

<sup>103</sup> *CT* ‘Tales of Horror: An Official Record of the Jewish Persecution’ April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1943 p 219.

<sup>104</sup> *CT* ‘Heroic Priests in Greece’ June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944 p 299.

The big exception came in 1945, when British troops entered Belsen. The *Church Times* carried a full-length article by a military chaplain, the Rev T. J. Stretch, describing the harrowing reality of the camp. The article is powerfully written and obviously seared on the chaplain's mind: 'The sight of it all will live with me for ever.' He describes a hut with 400 dead people; people who are 'walking skeletons'; children playing among bodies. The extraordinary feature of the article, however, is the author's perplexity as to who the prisoners are. There are almost no references to Jews. The fullest reference is this:

And who are these people who have suffered so much? We don't know; nobody knows. ... And their crimes? Some, including Germans, listened to foreign broadcasts; others spoke against the State or against Hitler – it amounts to the same thing; some were underground workers in occupied countries; other belonged to different races or creeds; they were Poles or Jews.<sup>105</sup>

It is true that Belsen contained a mixture of prisoners, but of the 60,000 still living at the time of liberation, the majority were Jewish.<sup>106</sup> Many of them had been transferred there after August 1944 from the camps in the east. Some had survived death marches en route. Given the previous publicity in Britain about the death camps, it might have been expected that the chaplain would have realized that the dead and dying around him were Jews. This was not the case. Somehow, despite the

---

<sup>105</sup> *CT* 'Camp of Death: A British Chaplain Enters Belsen' by the Revd. T. J. Stretch, May 18<sup>th</sup> 1945 p 278.

<sup>106</sup> Ben Shephard, *After Daybreak: The Liberation of Belsen* (London: Pimlico, 2006) p 4.

statement in the House of Commons, despite the news in the mainstream press, the Anglican chaplain had little awareness that many of these dazed and dying survivors of Nazi persecution were Jews. However, it fits into a broader pattern whereby Belsen was presented by the media at the time as a story about the British liberators. The huge toll of the dead and dying was presented as undifferentiated suffering. Tony Kushner comments that ‘in countries with such diverse war histories as Britain, the United States and France, there was little consideration of the fact that those liberated at Belsen were Jewish. This tendency in large part reflected a refusal to accept the uniqueness of the Jewish plight in the war under the Nazi onslaught.’<sup>107</sup>

William Temple’s time as Archbishop of Canterbury (April 1942-October 1944) was contemporaneous with the high tide of the Nazi extermination of the Jews. Temple led the response of the English churches by using all his influence to move concern for the Jews up the national agenda. He spoke at the Albert Hall. He raised the issue twice in the House of Lords, the second time in a speech that caught the attention of many. Temple brought pressure to bear on the government by writing to Churchill and by leading delegations to the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, and to the junior minister at the Foreign Office, Richard Law. He also broadcast to Hungary and pleaded with ordinary people not to co-operate with the authorities in their actions against the Jews. Temple made sure that he brought his own church along with him, issuing a statement with two other archbishops and getting the Church Assembly to

---

<sup>107</sup> Tony Kushner, ‘Introduction: [Part] 1’ in Jo Reilly, David Cesarani, Tony Kushner and Colin Richmond, eds, *Belsen in History and Memory* (London: Frank Cass, 1997) p 6. See also p 17.

back his stand. Temple's response of strongly-felt concern encouraged a broader response within the churches of the country. Local Christian leaders chaired protest meetings. Groups of clergy wrote to the government expressing their corporate concern. Congregations, often led by their vicars, circulated petitions which were then sent to the Prime Minister. Many of those who wrote to their MP or to the government said that his speech had galvanized them. This development indicates a diminution of distance between Christians and Jews, and an assertion of the ties of common humanity. In this movement, however, the Catholics were largely absent, except when represented by members of the hierarchy. Part of the response of the English churches was to work with the Jewish community in establishing the Council of Christians and Jews, thus making manifest their co-operation. This did not address directly what would later be called the genocide, but it did speak to fears that the hatred might seep over into Britain, with dire consequences. This rapprochement between Jews and Christians did not escape the attention of the Nazis, who mocked this development in broadcasts to Britain.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> BoD C/15/03/23 file 1, Report from H. A. Goodman of the Ministry of Information, October 1<sup>st</sup> 1942.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS: THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES AND THE  
BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN SELF-SCRUTINY

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First it will examine the record of Christian organisations whose main work was to try and convert Jews to Christianity. Did these missionary organisations continue as if nothing had changed? Or did they display a new sensitivity, and perhaps even reconsider their traditional proselytising stance towards the Jews?

Second, by way of contrast this chapter will explore counter-evidence that the plight of the Jews under the Nazis did lead to some Christian self-scrutiny, particularly with regard to James Parkes and W. W. (Bill) Simpson. Some Christians were beginning to ask if past Christian teaching and conduct had contributed to antisemitism that was exploited by the Nazis. What new approaches were proposed? How representative of the churches were clergy like James Parkes and Bill Simpson? These questions form the substance of this chapter.

The missionary societies

From the very beginning of the Christian era, Jews were the recipients of urgent Christian pleas to abandon their ancestral faith and embrace Christianity. Christianity had emerged from a Jewish matrix and the church understood itself as fulfilling Jewish history. The New Testament scholar James Dunn does not believe that Christianity and Judaism were truly separate until the third century. He concludes that 'the bulk of the Jewish people' had not accepted the Christian message, and that this caused 'puzzlement, hurt and yes, anger' in early Christian

circles.<sup>1</sup> Although Christianity was in the ascendant in the Roman Empire, Judaism continued to thrive. The continuation of Judaism seemed to raise an implicit question mark over Christian claims: Jesus was said to fulfil Jewish history, but many Jews did not accept this. This led to hostility towards Jews, whose refusal to accept Christianity was attributed to an unusual obduracy, perhaps one of the earliest Christian stereotypes of Jews.<sup>2</sup> This claim, and an associated claim that Jews were ‘clannish’, could still be found among those who sought to convert the Jews in 1933. In that year Edwyn Bevan queried the strong sense of identity of the community when he wrote that ‘A great deal of the trouble, it seems to me, is due to the character of the Jewish community, its being a national community and a religious community both together. As such it is a strange survival in the modern western world – the survival of a type of community which in primitive times was general.’<sup>3</sup>

Interest in missionary work among the Jews developed afresh during the 19th century. In the Catholic Church conversion of Jews was one of the chief aims of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Sion, a religious order founded by convert Jewish brothers in Jerusalem in 1856. Protestants founded mission organisations which had as their sole aim the conversion of Jews to Christianity. In England the founding of missionary societies specialising in Jewish work was prompted largely by the Evangelical revival, with its stress on evangelism and its reverence for the scriptures.<sup>4</sup> Missions to Jews was encouraged by the anticipation that the

---

<sup>1</sup> James D. G. Dunn, ‘The Question of Anti-semitism in the New Testament Writings of the Period’ in James D. G. Dunn, ed, *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999) p 210.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Acts 19.9, 2 Corinthians 3.14-15. The Christian scriptures also contain the first linking of Jews with Satan: see John 8.31, calling them children of the devil.

<sup>3</sup> Bevan, ‘Considerations on a Complaint Regarding Christian Propaganda’ p 490.

<sup>4</sup> George Stevens, *Go, Tell my Brethren: A Short Popular History of Church Missions to Jews (1809-1959)* (London: The Olive Press, 1959) p 27.

conversion of the Jews would herald the Second Coming of the Christ. Lord Shaftesbury was a key figure in the early days of the Society, and Barbara Tuchman says that

To him ... the Jews were simply the instrument through which biblical prophecy could be fulfilled. They were not a people, but a mass error that must be brought to a belief in Christ in order that the whole chain reaction leading to the Second Coming might be set in motion.<sup>5</sup>

Evangelicals, with their belief in biblical inerrancy, were particularly intrigued by texts such as Zechariah 10.6-12, which spoke of scattered Jewish people being gathered back to the Holy Land, and Zechariah 12.10, which was interpreted as indicating a conversion of the Jewish people. These prophecies were also tied to apocalyptic texts such as Revelation chapters 19 and 20, and thus to millenarian expectations, ie that Christ in the Second Coming would reign for 1,000 years as part of the end-times of the world. As will be shown later in this chapter, this school of biblical interpretation had a significant influence on the response of the missionary societies to the Nazi persecution on the Jews.

The Church of England's main involvement in Jewish missionary work was known as Church Missions to the Jews (CMJ). Founded in 1809 under the original title of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, it formed part of a massive expansion of mission work that grew out of Evangelicalism. CMJ was the largest English missionary society working among

---

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: How the British Came to Palestine* (Macmillan: London, 1984) p 121. See also R. H. Martin, 'United Conversionist Activities among the Jews in Great Britain 1795-1815: Pan-Evangelicalism and the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews' in *Church History* 46.4 (1977) p 441.



the Jews. In 1927 it had an income of around £45,000 and some 200 missionaries striving to convert Jews. The missionaries were found in places where there were substantial Jewish communities, including locations in Britain but also Hamburg, Warsaw, Lvov, and Bucharest, as well as Palestine, Persia, and North Africa.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter will concentrate on the response and outlook of the CMJ, as the outstanding English missionary society. But it was not alone in working among Jews on the Continent. Probably the most significant independent organisation was the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, founded in 1876 and drawing from a cross-section of smaller denominations, especially Baptists. Another group was the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, which had broad Free Church support. There were other smaller organisations, such as the Barbican Mission to the Jews, operating largely from an independent evangelical base. Though these missionary organisations were small, they maintained a surprising number of mission centres and workers on the Continent. The Mildmay Mission to the Jews was to be found in Warsaw, Przemysl, Lvov, Riga, Kaunas, Brussels, Berlin, and Kisiniev. The British Jews Society worked in Vilna, Cracow and Vienna, the Barbican Mission to the Jews in Vilna, Bialystok, Paris, Prague, Bucharest and Novisad (Yugoslavia), all chosen because of their large Jewish populations.<sup>7</sup>

The Catholic Church's missionary activity among Jews was more diffuse, but the Sisters of Sion in England continued to encourage Jewish conversions. In the 1920s and 1930s individual priests such as the Jesuit Arthur Day, and the Dominican Vincent McNabb, strove to convert Jews.

---

<sup>6</sup> James Black, ed, *The Christian Approach to the Jew: Being a Report of Conferences ... held at Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927) p 198.

<sup>7</sup> See the list attached to the Programme for Conference on Closer Co-operation between Societies Working among Jews, London April 29/30 1941 (CBMS Archives at SOAS, Box 315).

Missionary societies undertook a wide variety of social, educational and health work among the Jews. The aim, however, was conversion. In 1927 some 200 representatives of mission agencies working among the Jews across Europe met in Budapest and Warsaw. In their resolutions they recommended that their schools should aim at 'guiding the young mind to Christ, and secondly, the provision of the best secular education possible.' Churches and mission centres 'should endeavour to attract and influence the Jewish youth in their neighbourhood by such means as play centres, educational and physical training classes, summer camps, vacation Bible schools ... all being coupled with very definite Christian teaching.' As for medical missions and hospitals, 'All patients should be invited to attend religious services at which the message of the Gospel is presented ... it may be wise to make attendance a condition of admission to the hospital, but this cannot be insisted upon under all circumstances.'<sup>8</sup> Jews, then, were carefully targeted, both in their centres of population and in their social needs. This meant that missionary efforts focussed on the poorer Jews. In England these were the more recent immigrants from Eastern Europe. Middle-class Jews were, says Todd Endelman, 'beyond the reach of the conversionists'. He adds that compared with Germany, 'relatively few Jews' became Christians.<sup>9</sup> Black admits that in the late 1920s it was being said that the money spent on conversionist activities could be better spent on other missions to more receptive peoples.<sup>10</sup> The English Jewish journalist and writer Israel Zangwill had noted the same high expenditure and the

---

<sup>8</sup> James Black, *Christian Approach to the Jew* pp 20, 22 & 23.

<sup>9</sup> Todd Endelman, 'The Social and Political Context of Conversion in Germany and England, 1870-1914' in Endelman, ed, *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987, pp 100 & 102.

<sup>10</sup> James Black, *Christian Approach to the Jew* p 5.

same meagre results: 'No wonder that Hebrew converts cost an average of a thousand pounds apiece.'<sup>11</sup>

Jewish missionary societies, along with most British missionary organisations, joined the Conference of British Missionary Societies (CBMS). This co-ordinating body allowed some sharing of resources and a united voice when approaching the government. The CBMS in turn established a Committee for Work among the Jews. The CBMS itself belonged to another bigger co-ordinating body, the International Missionary Council (IMC), established in 1921 to facilitate the work of national conferences of missionary organisations from sixteen countries. In 1930, IMC in turn founded the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews (ICCAJ).<sup>12</sup> The CBMS Committee on Work among the Jews worked closely with this international counterpart, and in fact the ICCAJ British section often overlapped with the CBMS committee. The surviving archives of the CBMS Committee for Work among Jews and of the ICCAJ give valuable insight into how English churches were reacting to events on the Continent.<sup>13</sup>

In January 1934 representatives of fourteen UK missionary societies working among Jews met in London to discuss greater co-ordination of their work. The conference was aware of the growing pressure on Jews in Germany. It heard an address from Miss Ruth Rouse of the Church of England Missionary Council, who had visited Germany the previous October. According to the minutes, she

---

<sup>11</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (New York: Macmillan, 1921) p 333.

<sup>12</sup> Göte Hendquist (ed) *Twenty-Five Years of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews* (IMC: Uppsala, 1957) p 3 (CBMS Archives, Box 314).

<sup>13</sup> The papers of the CBMS Committee for Work among the Jews are held at the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London (SOAS), Boxes 314 and 315. The archives of the IMC International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jew are also at the SOAS Library on microfiche. For the IMC/ICCAJ papers I shall use the references given in the IMC Archive index: H-10.002/261201 followed by the particular item number.

described how 'the Germans as a nation felt to be intolerable' some of the effects of their Jewish population, and were determined 'to do away with ... (a) the domination of the Jews of certain professions; (b) Jewish influence and control of the cinema, theatre, and picture shops, which were a source of moral corruption; (c) the spread of Communism, for which they held the Jew responsible; (d) the bad influence exercised by Jews from Poland and Russia who had immigrated in considerable numbers after the war and had, in many cases, risen from poverty to positions of influence.' She felt that Hitler's regime 'had done much to improve the moral situation; but ... suffering had been inflicted on the Jews (in concentration camps, etc.) and there is on the part of young Germans today a remorseless campaign of anti-semitism.'<sup>14</sup>

On one level, the Rouse presentation might be a sincere attempt at reportage, simply telling how it is in Germany. But she seems to accept without criticism Nazi disinformation, such as the (false) allegation that 'considerable numbers' of Jews had arrived from Poland and Russia. She also seems to shift into her own voice when she says that Hitler had 'done much to improve the moral situation'. Like Bishop Basil Batty visiting a year earlier, she presents what she assumes to be popular opinion about the Jews, without any assessment of its value.

However, alongside a growing awareness of the situation of the Jews there was some sense of Christian failure. In 1934 and 1935 the Church of England Missionary Council issued pamphlets calling for help and prayer for the Jews. In the 1934 edition there was a foreword by Arthur Perowne, the Bishop of Worcester, who was also President of Church Missions to Jews. His theme was that the behaviour of Christians had 'repelled the Jew from Christ and discredited

---

<sup>14</sup> IMC H-10.002/261201 Item 2.

Christianity'. He went on to refer to 'a new wave of anti-Semitism' citing the exclusion of Jews from any state office, and the attempt to apply this Aryan Paragraph to the church. He warned that there were signs of antisemitism extending to Britain, 'partly roused by the influx of large numbers of Jewish refugees from Germany.'<sup>15</sup> Bishop Perowne added that if Jews could be converted, their energy could be harnessed for the church:

We must more deeply consider the strategic importance of the Jew in the missionary enterprise. Anyone who will think of the commanding influence of the Jew in all the nations, and not least in our own, will realise the potential force for the furtherance of the Kingdom of a people, virile, gifted and persistent.<sup>16</sup>

Stereotypes are at work here again, with Jews being assigned 'commanding influence' in the life of nations, and being a 'persistent' people. The apparently neutral language is actually the language of fear that Jewish power will be used for ill unless Jews are safely incorporated into Christianity. Also noteworthy is how the consideration of Jewish suffering has been portrayed as an opportunity for the church.

In fairness it should be added that the prayers of intercession which follow sound a note of contrition for Christian failings. The prescribed prayers confessed 'the cruelty of Christian people to the Jews in past generations' and 'the revival of persecution and oppression in Germany and other lands' as well as 'racial prejudice and exclusiveness, rampant among Christians in many lands.' The

---

<sup>15</sup> IMC H-10.002/261201 Item 1 [Arthur Perowne], *The Church and the Jews: A Call to Penitence*

mixed picture in this *Call to Penitence and Prayer* probably reflects a church trying to be honest about the news from Germany, while continuing to see Christian-Jewish relations through an old prism of mission and conversion. There is a note of Christian contrition, but it does not overturn the expectations of conversion as the answer.

The following year (1935) there was another pamphlet appealing for prayer and support for the Jews. The author was William Paton, Presbyterian minister and UK Secretary of the International Missionary Council. Here the phrases suggested more clearly that part of the fault for the antisemitism lay with the Jews themselves:

Has there ever been a time, at least within the modern age, when the Jew has had so great a claim upon the compassion of Christians as today? Down the centuries the Jew and the Christian have been set over against one another. *The Jew is first the persecutor; later he is persecuted ...*

Today the violence of anti-Semitism in Europe has made the Jew an object of universal compassion. *No catalogue of the sins of the Jews explains or justifies the ostracism and social penalties which have fallen upon him ...*

The first duty of the Christian, as he turns in the presence of God to think of the Jew, must be to confess the wrong-doing of Christians towards Jews.<sup>17</sup>

---

*and Prayer* (Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly: 1934) pp 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> [Perowne], *The Church and the Jews* pp 2-3.

So there is a call for compassion, an expression of contrition for Christian sins towards Jews, but also the implication that the Jews were the initiators of the problems. One wonders what is meant by the 'catalogue' of Jewish failings. There is more, for Paton tells his Christian readers that the current wave of hatred directed against Jews brought new opportunities for evangelism.<sup>18</sup> Whatever Christian sins might be, they were not considered so serious as to call for a moratorium on conversion of the Jews.

A similar attitude could be found in the literature of other churches. The interdenominational Mildmay Mission to the Jews published a booklet around 1936 entitled '*Jacob's Trouble*' written by Samuel Wilkinson.<sup>19</sup> The booklet began by outlining the hatred of Jews fomented by *Der Stürmer* and reported the expulsion of German Jews from work and the vandalising of their shops. It also described how the Nuremberg laws isolated and humiliated Jewish people (pp 4-7). However, Wilkinson immediately asserts what is needed was aid, not protest:

Unnatural as the [Nuremberg] laws are, selfish as they are, debasing as they are, ... they do not *per se* call for interference ...

If we allow (as we must) that the Third German Empire ... has the right to keep its own house in order as best it knows, then we must leave this

---

<sup>17</sup> [William Paton] *The Jew and the Church: A Call to Penitence and Prayer* (Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly: 1935) p 2, H10.002/216201 Item 2; emphasis added.

<sup>18</sup> Paton, *The Jew and the Church* p 3.

<sup>19</sup> IMC H10.002/216201 Item 2, Samuel Wilkinson, *Jacob's Trouble: A Statement Concerning Jews in Germany* (John Bale and Mildmay Mission to the Jews: London, n.d.).

matter untouched. It is where poverty and want among Jews are produced that our aid can be most effective ...<sup>20</sup>

From this evangelical perspective, the Christian challenge was to help the victims, not to challenge the cause. Once again, it was said that Jews might be partly responsible for their troubles, because the Germans were now reacting against Jewish-led immorality:

That many Germans believe ... the presence of Jews in the body politic to be as fully a cause of national deterioration as was the cult of nudism or the production of pornographic literature will not - should not - awaken an antipathy in Great Britain against the German people. We may believe them to be badly led; to be informed of only one side of the truth; but we must give credit to their honest intentions and their love of country and race.<sup>21</sup>

The conclusion seems to be that Germans had a kind of logic in what they were doing. After all, if people have 'only one side of the truth' it is still truth. Moreover, German antisemites had honest intentions and were patriotic.

Some of the information available to these missionary societies came from their own contacts in Germany and Eastern Europe. But other information came from the IMC, which encouraged the English missionary societies to see new opportunities for evangelism in the Jewish crisis. Erwin Reisner, Associate Secretary of the International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews,

---

<sup>20</sup> Wilkinson, *Jacob's Trouble* p 7.



toured Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland and Switzerland October 11th-November 14th 1937. In his report he said that 'The movement towards conversion was never so strong as it is now ... It is easy to see that the conversion of Israel is the work of God and not of man.'<sup>22</sup> Having implied that God had a hand in Jewish humiliation in order to facilitate conversion, Reisner concluded that 'Of all the urgent questions before us it seems to me that the future fate of the non-Aryan Christians in Germany, and outside it, are the most pressing.'<sup>23</sup> Once again the difficulties of Christians of Jewish descent are deemed to dwarf those of the wider Jewish community.

Reisner's boss at the ICCAJ was Conrad Hoffman, an American Presbyterian minister who spent six months of each year at ICCAJ offices in London and six months at its offices in New York. In July 1938 he undertook a three-month tour of Europe. On the Continent he visited seven major cities in Germany, as well as Vienna, Budapest and Debrecen in Hungary, and Prague. Hoffman was remarkably frank: 'Everywhere the Church is involved in anti-Semitism: Priests of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, Priests of the Greek Orthodox Church in Roumania, and Ministers of the Protestant Church in Hungary, Germany and elsewhere.' Yet these dismal circumstances were again seen as a time of opportunity for Christian missions to the Jews: 'Let us not fail to continue in prayer, so that this time of suffering on the part of our Jewish brethren may not end in despair and disillusionment but rather in the discovery of God's love through Christ for all mankind.'<sup>24</sup> This came from an American, but from one in close contact with English Christians, spending half of each year based among

---

<sup>21</sup> Wilkinson, *Jacob's Trouble* p 19.

<sup>22</sup> IMC H10.002/216201 Item 4, Reisner, 'Report' pp 7 & 8.

<sup>23</sup> Reisner, 'Report' p 11.

<sup>24</sup> IMC H10.002/216201 Item 5, Hoffmann, 'Report on European tour' pp 10 &-12.

them, and writing, in fact, from his office shared with the CBMS in Westminster. Hoffmann made another visit to Germany in June and July 1939. He was clear-eyed about the deterioration in freedom and in the twisting of minds that was going on under the Nazis: 'The minds and souls of men are being regimented, stultified. Personality is being goose-stepped into a particular pattern.'<sup>25</sup> He describes the ruined synagogues and shattered shops left by *Kristallnacht* and gives a powerful description of the brutality meted out in the concentration camps. However, even at this late stage he still saw the situation as one in which Christian faith can be commended to Jews. He described how in Berlin and Vienna, 'Their very extremity of despair drives many back to God, whom they have all too long neglected, if not entirely forgotten. And in such circumstances men are rediscovering God and His love through Jesus Christ.'<sup>26</sup> The Jewish crisis was the Christian evangelist's opportunity.

Even during the war years conferences were held to discuss more effective evangelism among the Jews. On June 11th 1940, 67 delegates representing missionary societies and the churches met to review the situation and to plan strategy. The biggest delegation was from the Church Missions to Jews, which sent 15.<sup>27</sup> The first session was given to a review of the work of the societies in Nazi occupied Europe, where the work of British societies had perforce ceased. The CMJ mission centre in Warsaw had been destroyed by bombing. As regards personnel, who were often local Jews converted to Christianity, the conference minutes notes that 'There is discrimination against families of missionaries as well

---

<sup>25</sup> IMC H10.002/261201 Item 5, Hoffmann, 'In Germany June-July 1939: Report of a visit' p 2.

<sup>26</sup> Hoffmann, 'In Germany June-July 1939' pp 13-14.

<sup>27</sup> IMC H10.002/261201 Item 7 (Minutes of) United Conference on the Christian Approach to the Jews (June 11th 1940) List of Delegates: pp 1-3.

as against the missionaries themselves.' <sup>28</sup> Missionaries are recorded as cut off in Lvov, Warsaw, Przemysl, Berlin and Copenhagen. When it came to 'Future Plans and Problems', the conference accepted that there was a great deal of uncertainty. Even so, the Mildmay Mission was planning 'aggressive work' [among Jews] after the war, and the consensus of the conference was that the societies had to pool their efforts for more effective training of personnel. <sup>29</sup>

When it came to work among Jewish Refugees in England, there was a sense of satisfaction at the conversions that were taking place. The Rev. C. H. Gill of the CMJ reported that there had been careful separation between material help and evangelism to guard against wrong motives. Even so, 'the hunger of refugees for spiritual satisfaction has led to a considerable number of baptisms after careful consideration.' Moreover, 'persecution seems to have broken down Jewish prejudices against Christianity, and has rendered the Jews far more responsive to the appeal of the Gospel.' <sup>30</sup> This laconic note breathes a spirit of Christian self-satisfaction that seems far from sharing the anguish of those suffering under the Nazis. The next day the Rev. Jacob Jocz of CMJ saw God's hand in what was happening to his fellow-Jews:

the Jews were changing from gold-seekers into God-seekers. It was always in times of distress that people cried to God for help, and the present upheavals in Europe had roused the Jews from their spiritual lethargy ...But the synagogue could not satisfy the spiritual needs of the Jews today ... The Jews today were wanderers in the spiritual as well as in

---

<sup>28</sup> Minutes, United Conference p 2, 'Summary of Wartime Difficulties'.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes, United Conference June 11th 1940, p 3.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes, United Conference June 11th 1940, p 4.

the physical sense ... The Jewish heart had been prepared by suffering for the gospel message, and the Church had a golden opportunity ...<sup>31</sup>

The speech used the antisemitic images of the grasping Jew and the homeless Jew. Earlier that year Jocz had used the language of deicide when he wrote in *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* that 'We Jews have paid dearly for the greatest error in our history ... We refused the Cross of Christ and have had to carry our own cross of shame, hatred and persecution throughout the ages.'<sup>32</sup> Jocz was a convert from Judaism. He had clearly assimilated negative Christian stereotypes of Jews.

Despite fears being voiced occasionally that the events in Germany might condemn Christianity in the eyes of the Jews, there is little sense in this 1940 conference of the church needing to re-examine its attitude to the Jews. The only such note was struck by the Methodist Henry Carter, who said that Christians have to cultivate a spirit of humility 'in view of the sufferings of Jews at the hands of those who bore the name of Christ.'<sup>33</sup> The societies were anticipating a big hand in post-war relief and rehabilitation work, and were assuming that the Jews would be there and open to conversion.

This unreality was carried over to the next year in yet another conference, on 'Closer Co-operation between Societies Working among Jews', April 29th-30th, 1941. The minutes do not seem to survive, but ancillary material show that the assumption was still that the *status quo ante bellum* would be restored. The Rev. H. M. Grace sought information about their post-war plans from the Jewish missionary societies before and after the conference. The Mildmay Mission to the Jews wrote that 'Jewish Missions should concentrate on carrying the Gospel to the

---

<sup>31</sup> Minutes, United Conference June 11th 1940 p 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* Vol 31 February 1940, pp 12-13.

Jews on the Continent of Europe ... our policy will be to free ourselves, as far as is reasonably possible, from Mission work here in England, and use whatever resources may be available for direct evangelism of the Jews on the Continent.'<sup>34</sup>

The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews expected that 'we shall return to our work in Cracow and Wilno.'<sup>35</sup> There was still a strong presupposition that, tragic though the Jewish situation was, it offered a wonderful opportunity for the conversion of the Jews. This in turn flowed into the interpretation of the crisis as an act of divine will and a pointer to the end times.

The monthly magazine of CMJ, *Jewish Missionary Intelligence*, frequently published articles along these lines. The theme of this being a time of opportunity was a frequent one. In January 1939 an anonymous article said that many Jews were being led to consider their faith because of their sufferings, 'and large numbers whose attachment to the Synagogue has been merely nominal are coming and asking for baptism.'<sup>36</sup> Later that year, at the CMJ AGM, the Bishop of Worcester, Arthur Perowne, said that

even at this hour of crisis, when the Jews are suffering at the hands of so-called Christians ... there is a greater turning to Christ than ever before in the history of that race ... in Warsaw there are something like 1,500 people every week attending the Bible Classes and Enquiry Classes. In Lwow there is the same extraordinary turning to God ...wherever you look our work is being blessed of God; and the Jews are turning to Christ ...<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Minutes, United Conference June 11th 1940 p 11.

<sup>34</sup> CBMS Archives Box 315, Letter from Rev. C. Fisher to Rev. H. M. Grace, April 15 1941

<sup>35</sup> CBMS Archives Box 315, Letter from Rev. Arthur Parry to Rev. H. M. Grace, Nov 4 1941.

<sup>36</sup> *Jewish Missionary Intelligence (JMI)* Vol 30, January 1939 p 4.

In 1942 the Rev Roger Allison reported from Rumania that before he was forced to leave his mission, the situation of the Jews had deteriorated to become one of beatings, torture, loss of possessions and loss of livelihood. He added: 'There was a special crop of fruit during those last months; true conversions and quite a number of baptisms.' The General Secretary of CMJ, the Rev C. H. Gill, said that never previously had there been 'such a dispersion and such a shattering of the faith of the Jew in his religion.' CMJ applied the same principle of utilising the Jewish situation in England as well. It exhorted Christians housing Jewish refugees to seek to convert them by word and example: 'Was there ever granted to the ordinary British man and British woman a greater Christian opportunity and a greater responsibility?'<sup>38</sup>

Evangelism of this kind could be a bruising experience for refugees at the receiving end. Steffi Schwarcz, for example, was sent with her sister to a boarding school in Cornwall, where: 'The headmistress, emotionally unbalanced, started a vigorous campaign of conversion of the refugees, ie enforced attendance at church, threats when she did not succeed.'<sup>39</sup> The Barbican Mission to the Jews was particularly active in converting refugee children, despite complaints from the Chief Rabbi. One of its homes for Jewish refugee children was in a large country house near Exeter. When an inspector of the Refugee Children's Movement visited the home she found that 'As regards religion, almost all [children] have already been baptised and others intend to be. Mrs Davidson told me that she wished it to be quite clearly understood that theirs was a Mission to the Jews and they were bent on conversion.'<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> *JMI* Vol 30 June 1939 p 63.

<sup>38</sup> *JMI* Vol 33 April 1942, p 21; Vol 33 December 1942, p 89; Vol 32 April 1941, p 27.

<sup>39</sup> Leverton & Lowenson (eds) *I Came Alone* p 298.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Barry Turner, ...*And the Policeman Smiled* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990) p 250.

A belief in the emptiness of Judaism was used to underpin the argument that this was a time of opportunity. An article in *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* by the Rev. C. H. Titterton in March 1938 said that ‘the Jews as a nation are in spiritual darkness’. In July 1939, writing from Bucharest, the Rev. J. H. Adeney spoke of ‘the desperate lack of spiritual teaching on the part of the religious leaders of the Jews’. At the end of 1942 yet another minister, the Rev. G. H. Stevens, held that ‘The Jews today are without a faith because they feel the futility of the Jewish religion.’<sup>41</sup>

Earlier in this chapter it was pointed out that a belief in the end times had spurred the creation of CMJ. This apocalypticism continued to influence CMJ through the belief that the conversion of the Jews would be a sign that the Second Coming was at hand. Articles referring to the suffering of the Jews under the Nazi would frequently, and excitedly, ascribe this suffering to some aspect of divine will. Thus in early 1940 the Rev. E. L. Langston wrote that after the humiliation of the Jews and their return to Palestine, ‘it does seem that the very next event cannot but be the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’. The Rev. Jacob Jocz said that ‘In answer to the question why all this suffering and martyrdom I suggest that we Jews are being purged, purified and prepared for a great event in world history.’ The following month the Rev. C. H. Titterton surmised that ‘this tragedy is in the Divine providence, to make way for an infinitely happier situation.’ A bizarre explanation was arrived at by the Rev. W. R. Morris. He mused that the persecution of the Jews might be a divine plan to halt the assimilation of the Jewish people: ‘I do not, and could not say that God *ordered* the Nazi persecution of the Jews .... Yet ... God can turn the plans of

---

<sup>41</sup> *JMI* Vol 29 March 1938, p 39; Vol 30 July 1939, p 79; Vol 33 December 1942, p 89.

wicked men to the fulfilment of his purposes ... God has declared that the Jews are to persist.’<sup>42</sup>

The theme of this being a time of opportunity had the effect of downplaying Jewish suffering. Certainly, there were self-cautioning references of the need to screen would-be converts, and not to exploit the situation, but these were offset by the many references to evangelism, which was, after all, the very *raison d'être* of CMJ. Sometimes the excitement at the new opportunities to convert the Jews bordered on *Schadenfreude*. For example, the Rev C. H. Titterton in his article on prophecy and the Jews, wrote about the new opportunity deriving from the fact that ‘we see the Jewish people robbed and plundered and their financial power broken, themselves refugees ...’<sup>43</sup> The theme of the emptiness of Judaism also had dangerous side-effects, playing into stereotypes of carnal Jews obsessed with material things – see Jocz’s reference above to Jews becoming God-seekers rather than gold-seekers. And when the new President of CMJ, Christopher Chavasse of Rochester, spoke at the AGM in 1944, he said that materialism had made the Jews forget their own faith and made them what they were: ‘It is no more than logical that they should become Christians and so complete the Jewish revelation.’<sup>44</sup>

The apocalyptic expectation was dangerously close to a kind of fatalism, in which their suffering was something either pre-ordained, or at least an aspect within a wider divine providence. Sometimes, as in the examples cited earlier, it was said that the situation of the Jewish people was a harbinger of the last times. Sometimes it was implied that it was their lack of acceptance of Christianity which was the root cause of their suffering. Hence the suggestion that ‘if the Jewish people as a whole were to turn to God ... this day of agony ... would

---

<sup>42</sup> *JMI* Vol 31 February 1940 pp 12-13; March, p 20; Vol 34 February 1943, p 12.



swiftly end.’<sup>45</sup> Either way, their plight is seen in cosmic terms which reduce human agents to insignificance. Politics is interpreted through a religious prism as evidence of a greater, higher, providence.

*Jewish Missionary Intelligence* did from time to time mention the mass killings, often using the strongest language to describe them. For example, in January 1944, when the grim situation in Eastern Europe was well known, an anonymous article referred to German treatment of the Jews as representing ‘the most awful example of a people calling itself civilized and reverting to a revolting and degraded savagery.’<sup>46</sup> Sometimes *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* lamented the Christian history of antisemitism. This did not lead to self-scrutiny but instead to the regret that past Christian attitudes had made the Jews sensitive about evangelistic approaches. Thus the Bishop of Stepney, Robert Moberly could say that Christian acts of hostility ‘have built up an inferiority complex which has resulted in a certain arrogance, a certain feeling of suspicion, and bitterness, and hostility, on the part of the Jews towards the Gentile world.’<sup>47</sup> This avoided acceptance of responsibility by Christians, and instead ascribed negative characteristics to the Jews.

Not surprisingly, given this mixture of fatalism and concomitant lack of analysis, CMJ contributed little to the response by the churches of England to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. In fact, its response was to hope to turn the situation to its own advantage. The Church Mission to the Jews was a small society. *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* had a circulation of only 10,000. But CMJ represented a stream within the Church of England, as the occasional statements

---

<sup>43</sup> *JMI* Vol 31 March 1940 p 20.

<sup>44</sup> *JMI* Vol 45 June 1944, p 6.

<sup>45</sup> *JMI* Vol 34 April 1943 p 25.

<sup>46</sup> *JMI* Vol 35 January 1944 p 2.

from bishops cited above show: a tradition that was conservative, evangelical and strongly scriptural. In its early nineteenth century heyday the leaders of the evangelical revival had campaigned on several social issues, notably seeking a ban on the slave trade and reform of labour laws. But by the Second World War, evangelicalism was more averse to engaging with social and political realities. CMJ was simply marking time for the relaunch of its mission to Jews, which had to be suspended everywhere except Britain and parts of the Middle East. *Jewish Missionary Intelligence* gives no hints of a public campaign to help the Jews, no correspondence with MPs or ministers, no participating in delegations, no requesting bishops to speak in the House of Lords.

Sometimes those who came from other traditions within the Church of England acted very differently. For example, on the issue of converting Jewish refugees, there is evidence that Anglicans from a more liberal background acted vigorously to protect children from Christian pressure. Over a period of three months in 1939 James Parkes worked with Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz to track down and rescue 29 Jewish children who had been, in the words of Parkes, ‘kidnapped by unscrupulous missions’ who aimed to make them Christians.<sup>48</sup> Up in Durham, a Jewish refugee girl called Chava Markowitz lodged with the family of Canon Michael Ramsey. He noticed that she had taken to attending the Sunday services in the cathedral. She records: ‘He suggested that I should not attend the services because I was Jewish. As I was at an impressionable age, he did not want me to be influenced by the Christian religion and rites.’<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> *JMI* Vol 31 June 1940, p 47.

<sup>48</sup> Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* p 150. The Barbican Mission to the Jews seems to have been the organisation that was particularly keen to ‘place’ Jewish children in Christian homes. See Cesarani, ‘Taxonomy of Rescuers’ pp 46-47 and p 55 n44.

<sup>49</sup> Leverton & Lowensohn, *I Came Alone* pp 209-210. Michael Ramsey later became Archbishop of Canterbury.

The missionary societies of the English churches responded to the Nazi persecution of the Jews by hoping that the situation might work to their advantage, and planned accordingly. Jewish refugees in England were seen as potential converts. Sometimes this hope for a mass conversion of the Jews was related to millenarian or apocalyptic texts. The torture and mass killings of Jews was interpreted within a wider scheme of things, which located these events within a framework of divine providence. Jewish suffering was seen as tragic, but also as pre-ordained. The lack of any campaign by the missionary groups to influence public opinion against the Nazis raises the question of whether this eschatological perspective may also have had the effect of inducing a certain fatalism among some evangelical groups. If this was part of God's plan it might have been thought – who were they to resist the divine will?

Another factor militating against involvement (other than to convert) was the way that Jews were seen in stereotypes that were as crude as they were old. These depicted Jews as a stubborn people clinging to an empty faith. Because of this spiritual vacuum they were prone to materialism, particularly money-making. Sometimes the Jewish plight was reflected back to the churches as a whole, but what little was done in this way was mostly to raise money for relief work by the missionary societies. There was no understanding that the situation might challenge the very assumption on which their work was based: the moral superiority of Christianity.

However, apart from the drive for conversion, there was another approach within the churches of England. Bell and Ramsey, while still well anchored within the mainstream of Christian belief, belonged to a more liberal tradition; Parkes was more liberal still. From their perspective, to attempt to convert the

Jews at a time of catastrophe for the Jewish people would be immoral because it took advantage of people in a situation of vulnerability.

### James Parkes

James Parkes (1896-1981) was a priest in the Church of England who from the early 1930s began to speak and write in defence of the Jewish people. His interest in this came partly from his theological studies: he had completed an Oxford doctorate in 1934 which examined early Jewish-Christian relations. Robert Everett sums up Parkes' research as showing that Christian accounts of Judaism were distorted, that allegations of Jewish persecution of the early church were false, and that Christian historical writings 'were deeply embedded with false accusations against the Jews.'<sup>50</sup> In 1923 Parkes had begun to work full-time for the Student Christian Movement, and at an international student conference in 1925 'he encountered firsthand anti-Jewish sentiments, and he quickly became aware of its special violence and quality.'<sup>51</sup> By 1935 he had decided to make Jewish-Christian dialogue his life's work. At this time, said Parkes, it was

very difficult for the ordinary Christian to think of relations with Jews in any other terms than those of conversion to Christianity ... I was by that time quite certain that a relationship which had produced such a uniquely disastrous result as antisemitism could not be the relationship divinely intended to exist between the two religions.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Robert Everett, *Christianity without Antisemitism: James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993) p 25. Parkes' D. Phil. thesis was published in 1934 by Soncino Press of London under the title, *The Conflict of Church and Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism*.

<sup>51</sup> Everett, *Christianity without Antisemitism* p 10.

<sup>52</sup> Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* p 141.

His interest in bringing about a better relationship between Christianity and Judaism began before the rise of the Nazis. But it came to fruition at a time when antisemitism was growing, and when the implications of Nazism were becoming more and more apparent. With generous financial help from the industrial economist and retailer Israel Sieff, Parkes was able to devote himself to the field of Jewish-Christian relations and resisting anti-semitism. Although the mass killing of Europe's Jews scarcely features in his autobiography *Voyage of Discoveries*, Parkes represented something of a one-man response from within the Church of England to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. In particular, he spoke and wrote frequently about the dangers of antisemitism as he tried to bring the churches to realise their role in creating the atmosphere that led to the persecution of the Jews.

In the early and mid 1930s, most of his output as a writer and speaker was concerned with scholarly interpretation of the interaction of Jews and Christians. Even he did not always escape the language of stereotypes. In his scholarly *The Jew in the Medieval Community* he was able to write of Jews as 'cringing' because of their history of being oppressed, and also referred to 'psychological and social degradation.' He could also write in paternalistic language that would be unacceptable today.<sup>53</sup> However, from 1937 onwards, Parkes responded to the deteriorating situation of the Jews with a spate of articles and talks. For Christian audiences, he would write or speak on Judaism and Christianity, making plain his belief that Christian conduct in the past had contributed greatly to the present

---

<sup>53</sup> See Colin Richmond, *Campaigner Against Antisemitism: The Reverend James Parkes 1896-1981* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005) pp 124-125 on 'cringing' *et al.*; and p 177 for an example of paternalism where he refers to having 'a family of sixteen million Jews to look after.' For discussion of other examples see pp 296-297.

crisis. In the period January 1938-November 1945 alone, he composed 44 articles, many of which related to Christian responsibility for the Jewish situation.<sup>54</sup> In addition he gave talks and wrote books.

The response of Parkes to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was to bring together Christian conduct towards Jews, the history of antisemitism, and the Nazi programme. He reiterated that Christians could not and should not escape their share of the blame for what was happening to the Jews. For example, in a pamphlet written probably in 1938, he said that the vast majority of Christians

still believe that 'the Jews' killed Jesus, that they are a people rejected by their God, that all the beauty of their Bible belongs to the Christian Church and not to those by whom it was written; and if on this ground, so carefully prepared, modern antisemites have reared a structure of racial and economic propaganda, the final responsibility still rests with those who prepared the soil, created the deformation of the people, and so made this ineptitude credible.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly he wrote in an article for the Bulletin of the Religious Book Club that

Antisemitism only comes in when the dislike of the Jew is not based on his real conduct but on an imaginary picture of it. And that is why the ultimate responsibility lies on the Church. The picture drawn of the Jew by the Church Fathers bore no resemblance at all to the Jew he was. ...

---

<sup>54</sup> See the articles in SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers, 9/3. See also the bibliography compiled by Robert Everett, *Christianity without Antisemitism* especially pp 321-323.

<sup>55</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 9/3, 'Canada Pamphlet', typescript, pp 7-8.

And all the time the leaders of the Church were telling the people that these Jews were vipers, devils incarnate, who practised human sacrifice, who were forsaken of God, and were ultimately responsible for killing the Son of God himself ... You cannot continue that line of preaching for centuries without it ultimately sinking in. Finally ... the era of massacres began ... There is the responsibility of the Christian. He started the ball rolling.<sup>56</sup>

Parkes not only took his case to the churches, but argued it on a wider scale to anyone who would listen. Probably his largest audience was reached via the BBC. In the spring of 1939 he broadcast a series of six talks on the history of the Jews. In the third talk he described how in the Middle Ages Jews were made to live in ghettos, wear a special badge and compelled to attend sermons denouncing their religion: 'Jewish customs, Jewish exclusiveness, the Jewish denial of Christianity were continually held up as objects of hatred by the clergy.'<sup>57</sup> In a talk to the Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1941 he said that 'Antisemitism takes its origin from an imaginary picture of the Jewish character evolved by Christian theologians in the early centuries of Christianity.'<sup>58</sup> And in 1943 he wrote in *The Left News* that 'Even if the special Hitlerian forms [of antisemitism] be successfully expelled from the body politic of the world, Jewish security will be but temporary and superficial so long as the Christian

---

<sup>56</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 9/3, 'Antisemitism', typescript, pp 2-3. Everett lists the article as published in *The Religious Book Club Bulletin* (SCM Press) May 1939.

<sup>57</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 8/1, typescript of third talk p 4. The six talks were condensed into three articles for *The Listener* published April 29<sup>th</sup>, May 25<sup>th</sup>, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1939.

<sup>58</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 9/4, typescript p 2.

misinterpretation of their historic character and religion are repeated.’<sup>59</sup> In the typescript of an article or talk dated January 1943 he ended with the words (in capitals in the original): ‘... you can write to your MP. If you have a pulpit, speak from it; if you can call a meeting, do so. Wherever you have influence, use it. Our honour and sincerity are at stake as much as the lives of the Jewish people.’<sup>60</sup> Christian honour and sincerity were at stake: he could hardly have put it more plainly. It seems that as knowledge of what would become known as the Holocaust became clearer, so his words about the churches became fiercer. His book *Antisemitism* was published in 1945. In it he said:

A particular responsibility lies upon the churches. And, with many notable exceptions, their ignorance is both dishonourable and disgusting. There is nothing whatever to be said in their defence. They maintain missions to convert the Jews, while at the same time they will not spend a penny of either time or effort to see that Judaism and the story of the Jewish people are fairly presented to their congregations ... the share that they bear for providing a fertile breeding-ground for every kind of antisemitic misrepresentation is an exceedingly heavy one; and a few resolutions of sympathy with the victims of Hitler’s massacres do not square the account.<sup>61</sup>

It followed that Parkes opposed Christian missions to Jews. In a lecture or article composed around April 1943 he wrote that the churches could not work

---

<sup>59</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 9/5, typescript p 6. The article appeared in *The Left News* which was published by Victor Gollancz, in October 1943.

<sup>60</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 9/5/1 typescript pp 1 & 6.



with the Jews against antisemitism while simultaneously saying they needed to convert, because ‘This missionary attitude is inevitably coupled with a varying degree of denigration of Judaism.’<sup>62</sup> Preaching at Oxford he said it was not the will of God that Jews should become ‘Gentile Christians’.<sup>63</sup> When Temple was named as the next Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942, Parkes wrote to Temple reminding him that he would be invited to become Patron of the Church Mission to Jews. He invited him to decline the post as a sign of changed Anglican attitudes towards the conversion of Jews. Temple replied, demurring from Parkes’s suggestion of a Christian moratorium on seeking to convert Jews.<sup>64</sup>

In sum, Parkes was a voice calling the churches to repentance for their role in creating antisemitism. He encouraged the development of the Council of Christians and Jews, and helped to bring representative Jews and Christians together, but he was too much of an individualist to work in a structured way with CCJ, as he himself concedes.<sup>65</sup> His response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was to bring together the hitherto disparate elements of Christian history and the genocidal crisis of the times. Parkes concluded that Christianity could no longer seek to convert the Jews. His influence was both considerable and limited. He was a scholar but he was also a populariser, able to express in simple language the conclusions being increasingly voiced by historians and theologians. His output

---

<sup>61</sup> James Parkes, *Antisemitism: An Enemy of the People* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1945) pp 143-144.

<sup>62</sup> SUA MS 60, Parkes Papers 9/4, typescript pp 1 & 2. The destination of this article or talk is not given. Parkes dates his rejection of Christian missions to Jews from around 1934 (*Voyage of Discoveries* p 126).

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in his autobiography *Voyage of Discoveries* p 155. This phrase would seem to leave open the possibility that he counted it God’s will that Jews should become Jewish Christians. However, at this time Parkes was beginning to work out a theology of Judaism and Christianity as completing each other, a position which earned him a polite but firm letter of disagreement from the young Immanuel Jakobovits saying that Judaism did not need Christianity (SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 6/8/4/1, Jakobovits to Parkes, November 15<sup>th</sup> 1944).

<sup>64</sup> Kushner, ‘James Parkes, the Jews and Conversionism’ p 458.

<sup>65</sup> Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* p 175.

was prodigious in terms of books, articles and lectures. Sometimes he reached a mass audience, as with his broadcasts and with his Penguin book *Antisemitism: An Enemy of the People*, which had sold 105,000 copies in the UK and US by 1949 and was published in German in 1950.<sup>66</sup> At the same time his influence was limited, because although he had many contacts in the Church of England, and the support of Temple and others, he never held an official position within the church.

Sometimes Parkes felt this isolation himself. In June 1942 he wrote to Professor Selig Brodetsky at the Board of Deputies about the Council of Christians and Jews, from which he intended to resign, adding: 'My own isolation continually frightened me – as it does still ...'<sup>67</sup> Kushner believes that he relished being the outsider.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps, however, his marginalisation, while it gave him less influence within the Church of England, was essential to his clarity of vision about the Jews. Sometimes an outsider can see more clearly than someone who accepts without question the traditional way of thinking.

His character could be problematical. There was an element of hubris. In the middle of the war he seriously believed that he should be made a peer and appointed a minister for Jewish affairs, and lobbied Temple to this end.<sup>69</sup> However, the main problem for Parkes was simply that his message to the churches was unpalatable to those who believed that Christianity could maintain its attitude of superiority to the Jews, despite the events on the Continent. Hence he earned the disapproval of the veteran missionary William Paton, and he was

---

<sup>66</sup> SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers, 7/6/2/2, Parkes to Errington, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1949. Jewish organisations in the US were divided on the merits of the book: the Anti-Defamation League praised it and republished some of it in pamphlet form, but the American Jewish Committee condemned his readiness to attribute group characteristics to Jews. See SUA MS 60 Parkes Papers 7/6/3, Demarest to Parkes, September 24<sup>th</sup> 1946, and 7/6/5, review clippings.

<sup>67</sup> BoD 3121/C15/3/21/file 2, Parkes to Temple, January 31<sup>st</sup> 1942.

<sup>68</sup> Tony Kushner, 'Foreword' to Richmond, *Campaigner Against Antisemitism* p ix.

<sup>69</sup> LP William Temple Papers Vol 54 f 61, Parkes to Temple January 31<sup>st</sup> 1942.

equally opposed by Church Missions to Jews.<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, his response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was a response from *within* the churches, but not a response *of* the churches.

### William ('Bill') Simpson

Bill Simpson was a Methodist minister who became the first General Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews. His general facilitating of the negotiations around its first years played a key role in its success. Along with Parkes he became an early advocate of a new assessment among the churches of the Christian-Jewish relationship. His response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was to work for co-operation between Jews and Christians in opposing all prejudice. However, a survey of Simpson's work reveals a curious mixture of respect for Judaism mingled with primitive stereotyping. His response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was to try to make Britain as welcoming a society as possible to Jewish refugees, by defending their cause and speaking up for them. He also sought to oppose antisemitism. Simpson's loathing for antisemitism, and his desire for goodwill between Jews and Christians, were both very real. Yet he is a curious case, because while his journey led him to work closely with Jews and to call for a Christian re-assessment, his public words in the first half of the war show a strange ambivalence, even an unconscious dallying with antisemitic stereotypes. Simpson is a reminder of the extent to which even those of manifest goodwill towards the Jews were often on a learning curve.

Simpson recorded that it was during his years as a student at Cambridge (1926-1929) that he first became interested in Judaism. At that time, he said, Methodism

---

<sup>70</sup> Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries* pp 117 & 201.

‘appeared to have no interest in relations with Jews.’<sup>71</sup> He did a placement in London’s East End at a public school mission, beginning to make contact with Jews, and followed this by a time of study and travel, visiting Jewish missions in London and abroad. In 1935 he was put in charge of a Methodist church in an area of Hackney with many Jewish residents. He used the opportunity to build up contacts with Jews and Jewish organisations. From there he proceeded to work at Bloomsbury House, working with a fellow Methodist minister, Henry Carter, in co-ordinating the refugee work of the various Christian, Jewish and secular organisations who were there under one roof.

As will shortly be demonstrated, given his deep concern for the Jews he was surprisingly prone to use images of prejudice. Sometimes it seemed as if he could not utter a word in defence without conceding ground. For example, writing to the *Methodist Recorder* after *Kristallnacht* he said that German antisemitism was not the fault of the Jews, ‘who, like the rest of us, are admittedly imperfect.’<sup>72</sup> Why was it necessary to say this at all? It implied that somehow, the Jews shared the blame for the events.

In his first years as an advocate for Jews among Christians, Simpson showed a similar ambivalence. Take, for example, his booklet *Jews and Christians Today*, published in 1940.<sup>73</sup> The book arose from a series of lectures with the titles, ‘The Sin of Antisemitism’, ‘Relieving its Victims’, ‘Removing its Causes’ and ‘Jews and Christians Today’. He was clear that Christians were partly to blame for antisemitism. He said, for example, that weaknesses in the Protestant tradition in Germany created complacency towards Nazism, with both Lutherans and

---

<sup>71</sup> SUA MS 66 Simpson Papers, 6/2/1, notes for a history of the Council of Christians and Jews.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from Simpson, *Methodist Recorder* November 17<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 23.

<sup>73</sup> W.W. Simpson *Jews and Christians Today: A Study in Jewish and Christian Relationships* (London: Epworth, 1940).

Calvinists tending to separate the realm of faith from social and political upheavals (p 72). He followed the Jewish scholar Claude Montefiore in saying that Christian accounts of Judaism were often biased and inaccurate (pp 53-54). And yet he said that in Germany and elsewhere, Jews had assimilated rather shallowly. In times of crisis Reich Jews had shown 'a degree of political immaturity which is as great an embarrassment to their friends as it is a misfortune to themselves' (pp 22-23).<sup>74</sup> In cities like London, Leeds and Manchester, Jews were said to be aloof, suspicious, aggressive and ostentatious (p 26). Jewish 'restlessness' drew them towards the political left, especially communism (pp 77-78). Like some other Christians, Simpson used the phrase 'the Jewish problem' as if it is obvious that the Jews *were* a problem. Even while commending a positive image of Jews, the book also portrayed Jews as emotionally volatile, hostile, materialist (ie 'ostentatious') and Marxist.

Simpson achieved modest prominence during the war years as a broadcaster on Christian-Jewish relations. He broadcast once in 1941, three times in 1942 and once in 1943. In his June 1941 Sunday sermon he pleaded with his listeners to recognise the great debt that Christianity owed to Judaism, and to accept that Jews and Christians were 'allies in this struggle to establish a free spiritual kingdom founded on mercy and love'. However, the effect was considerably vitiated by his statement that he could understand why the broader community sometimes reacted negatively to Jews. He guesses that listeners might have had 'unfortunate dealings with some Jews in business', might have found Jews to be ostentatious and aggressive. Simpson said: 'I don't deny that there are many Jews whose behaviour justifies the criticisms levelled against them.' But they were not, he

---

<sup>74</sup> Simpson gives no examples.

said, typical. Jewish leaders tried to stop such things, and anyway, Jews were often reacting to the pressures caused by Christian discrimination against them: 'That aggressiveness and ostentation, for instance, which you find in certain types of Jews is a perfectly natural reaction from the repression which their fathers suffered for so many generations at the hands of their Christian neighbours.' Now, with Jews having been made scapegoats by Hitler, it should be seen that Jews and Christians were allies against Nazism. Christians, like Jews, could never give their full allegiance to a totalitarian state: 'Between these two religions and National Socialism, therefore, there can be no compromise and any extension of Nazi influence carries with it a threat to Jews and Christians alike.'<sup>75</sup> In sum, the sermon gave credence to stereotypes about Jews, with aggressiveness and ostentation once more mentioned, despite Simpson's intention to defend the Jews. Yet the end result so satisfied the BBC managers that they decided to print the sermon in their weekly *The Listener*.

Another broadcast in February 1942 entitled 'Jewish-Christian Co-operation in Refugee Work' was more straightforwardly positive. It was a brief resumé for an overseas audience of the contribution made by Jewish refugees in Britain. It stressed how they were 'enthusiastic supporters of every effort to overthrow Nazism', with 85% of them in employment or in the armed forces. He ended with this reflection: 'Doesn't all this make you feel, as it does me, that the word 'refugee' is inadequate? Their presence among us is a challenge to Christians and Jews alike to work for the ultimate victory of faith, hope and love over the forces of hatred, despair and unbelief.'<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> BBC/WA Script of Broadcast June 15th 1941. The script is to be found in the file titled Talks/Simpson/W. W. File 1 1941-54. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>76</sup> BBC/WA Script Pacific Service February 2nd 1942; North America February 10th & 11th.

Two other broadcasts in October 1942 on Jewish-Christian relations cannot now be traced. Correspondence about the scripts is available, however, including a letter from James Parkes who had been sent the scripts by Simpson. Perhaps Simpson's tendency to mix *apologia* for the Jews and tendentious stereotypes may explain Parkes's comment that 'the entire script of both broadcasts seems to me to be somniferous tripe ... It really is one of your worst efforts.'<sup>77</sup>

Simpson was invited to broadcast another sermon, for the Sunday service on August 22nd 1943. The BBC was uneasy about the script beforehand. On behalf of the Religious Broadcasting Dept the Revd Eric Fenn wrote to Simpson saying that it was vague and wandered all over the place. Simpson replied that he was trying to convey that persecution of the Jews had less to do with the Jews and more to do with prejudiced attitudes of others, including Christians. It is ironic that attached to this letter are pencil notes by Fenn which show the very attitude which Simpson sees himself as struggling against: 'I still think, in spite of what he says, that the average Xtians grouse against the Jews is not that their religion is "a narrow, outworn, negative system", but rather that the Jew is really rather a vast piece of work who will do you down, and make something out of you, if he gets half a chance.'<sup>78</sup> The sermon was duly broadcast, but remained diffuse. At least when it came to blaming the Jews for their own situation he restricted himself this time to saying: 'We have to reckon, I know, with the behaviour of certain types of Jews today, and I realize that from some points of view they are their own worst enemies.'<sup>79</sup> This represents a more muted form of blaming the Jews, but it still implied that they are at least partly the authors of their own misfortunes. Similarly, in a lecture published in 1945 Simpson was still repeating

---

<sup>77</sup> BBC/WA Parkes to Simpson, September 16th 1942. Talks/Simpson File 1.

his line that if the Jews were awkward people to live with then it was because of Christian discrimination against them: 'It was inevitable, therefore, that many of them should tend to develop characteristics which could hardly be expected to endear them to people who already had a prejudice against them'. Despite this blaming of the victims, Simpson says that three million Jews have already been murdered; he calls for action to stop the Nazi massacres, and asks for resistance to antisemitic propaganda.<sup>80</sup> A belief that Jews are ostentatious may seem a comparatively mild form of prejudice. In fact it relates to the view that Jews are materialistic and devoid of spirituality. Fear of Jewish wealth links in turn with fears of a sinister influence. Again, while Simpson's strictures about Jewish clubbishness are harmless enough, this too links with fear of Jewish power. His comments on Jewish 'aggression' (he actually does use the word) and sensitivity ring oddly at a time when Jews were being massacred daily.

Yet Simpson was aware how dangerous it could be to teach contempt of Jews contempt. In particular he was aware of how Sunday School teaching about the crucifixion of Jesus could influence children at an impressionable age, imprinting on them intolerant and distorted ideas about Jews and Judaism. With the help of Sidney Salomon of the Board of Deputies he wrote a series of articles for Sunday School teachers on how the crucifixion could be presented in a way that would not create prejudice.<sup>81</sup>

This mixture of a desire to see justice done to Jews, and a tendency to revert to antisemitic language, illustrates the difficulties facing Christians trying to break through traditional ways of thinking. Simpson gave his life to promoting good

---

<sup>78</sup> BBC/WA Simpson to Fenn August 3rd 1943, with memo from Fenn, Talks/Simpson File 1.

<sup>79</sup> BBC/WA Broadcast Home Service August 22nd 1943.

<sup>80</sup> W. W. Simpson *The Jewish Problem* (Le Play House Press: Malvern, 1945) pp 4 & 9.



relations between Christians and Jews. It would be a learning process for him. It was also a learning process for the churches themselves. Where Parkes could adopt a more confrontational approach with the churches, Simpson, as Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews, was necessarily limited to a more gradualist tactic in getting the churches to see their role within the developing history of antisemitism. Hence, perhaps, his desire to give a little ground, as if to win over those in the churches who might resent his approach in commending and defending Jews. It is as if he wants to win friends and influence Christians, by conceding that they are not *entirely* wrong in their suspicion of Jews, wrong only in so far as their fears are exaggerated or disproportionate. If so, he ended up conceding too much.

---

<sup>81</sup> The drafts of the articles, together with comments from Salomon, can be found in BoD 121/C15/3/20/2.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

In the early 1930s the Catholic Church in England presented a picture of both confidence and insecurity. The confidence came from a strong institutional ethos, certain of its message. The insecurity came from knowing that large parts of English opinion was suspicious of the Catholic Church, which was sometimes portrayed as an alien element in national life.<sup>1</sup> Historians use words like centralised, disciplined and conservative to describe the Catholic Church of the inter-war years.<sup>2</sup> Strengthened by immigration from Ireland, and given status by its links with the global Catholic Church, the Catholic Church had overtaken Nonconformity as the principal religious alternative to the Church of England.<sup>3</sup> In England and Wales in 1935 there were some 2.3m Catholics, served by 5,119 priests.<sup>4</sup> The Catholic body was strong both in personnel and in institutions, especially its network of schools, but it was numerically strong only in certain regions: Lancashire, West Yorkshire, London and Tyneside.

Alongside this sense of identity and purpose there ran an insecurity which derived from Catholic history. The power struggle between Catholic and Protestant during the Reformation era had ended with the Catholic faith proscribed in England. It did

---

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Ratcliffe, although a Scot, illustrates the kind of language used in anti-Catholic rhetoric in England as well: 'Roman Catholics, generally speaking, are traitors to the country of their birth or residence in the interests of the Papacy.' Quoted in Colin Holmes, 'Alexander Ratcliffe: Militant Protestant and antisemite' in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) p 202.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Edward Norman, *Roman Catholicism in England: From the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council* (Oxford: OUP, 1985): 'The centralized, clericalized, disciplined Church fashioned under ultramontane influence in the nineteenth century lasted until well into the middle of the succeeding one' (p 107).

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Parsons, 'Victorian Catholicism' in G. Parsons (ed), *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol 1: Traditions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press/Open University, 1988) p 180.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics from *Catholic Directory 1936* (London: Burns & Oates, 1936) p 623. Nuns were not enumerated separately in the Catholic year book, but with 170 convents in the diocese of Westminster alone, and another 70 in Liverpool, they were clearly a strong force in the life of the church

not help that two of the countries against which England vied for supremacy, namely France and Spain, were Catholic. Catholic clergy and those who harboured them were liable to execution, and a complex web of laws effectively excluded Catholics from national life. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Catholic Church gradually emerged from the shadows, but as late as 1780 the Gordon Riots showed that anti-Catholic violence still existed. French Catholics taking refuge in England during the French revolution aroused public sympathy. The process of emancipation advanced in 1791 with legalization of Catholic places of worship, and by 1829 was virtually complete. Prejudice lingered, especially in some of the larger cities. One historian of 19<sup>th</sup> century Judaism has suggested that in Victorian Britain, anti-Catholic prejudice was more intense than anti-semitism.<sup>5</sup>

The virtues of caution and of keeping a low profile had become deeply ingrained in Catholic consciousness. Despite a newer trend towards ultramontane triumphalism, an innate reserve remained. The Catholic Church did not relate to the body politic of England with the same ease as the Anglicans. David Mathew, surveying the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Catholic church, concluded that 'There were whole sections of English life which the Catholic community did not penetrate, the clerical and academic worlds, the new industrialism, the groups from which the Civil Service was then recruited. The great mercantile grouping of the City of London was alien soil to them.'<sup>6</sup> Catholics tended to be either recusant gentry or a largely Irish labouring class, with a small middle class of professionals. By 1930 this was

---

<sup>5</sup> David Englander, 'Anglicized Not Anglican: Jews and Judaism in Victorian Britain' in G. Parsons (ed) *Religion in Victorian Britain* Vol 1 p 239.

<sup>6</sup> David Mathew, 'Old Catholics and Converts', in George Beck (ed) *The English Catholics 1850-1950* (London: Burns & Oates, 1950) pp 225-226.

changing. Large-scale immigration from Ireland had given the Catholic Church substantial numbers of urban poor, and a necessary involvement in their social and educational welfare. The efforts of Catholic schools had begun a process of *embourgeoisement*. In some cities, such as Liverpool, the alliance of the Catholic working-class with the Labour Party had worked to mutual advantage and given the Catholic Church a presence in the political arena. But the institutional use of this presence was strictly limited. According to James Pereiro, although ‘The mass of the Catholic working-class ... voted overwhelmingly Labour’, the Catholic bishops limited their involvement in politics to ‘cross-party agitation for specific Catholic issues.’<sup>7</sup> As an institution, the Catholic Church in England showed a certain reserve about its participation in the body politic.

#### Catholic centralism and fascination with Fascism

Two factors inhibited the Catholic response to the Jewish situation under the Nazis. First, during the 1930s there was a significant amount of interest in, and even sympathy for, Fascism in Catholic circles in England. Second, the centralised and authoritarian nature of the Catholic Church meant that even Cardinal Hinsley had to tread carefully in matters of politics.

Despite the political caution of English Catholics, significant numbers of them were interested in Fascism. Catholics were well represented in the British Union of

---

<sup>7</sup> James Pereiro, ‘Who are the Laity?’ in V. A. McClelland and Michael Hodgetts (eds) *From Without the Flaminian Gate: 150 Years of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales 1850-2000* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999) p 175.

Fascists.<sup>8</sup> To be in favour of Italian-style Fascism was not the same as being pro-Nazi. But as Adrian Hastings points out, ‘the fear of Communism easily blinded [British Catholics] to the evils of Nazism, and the pro-Fascist lobby, mounted by a powerful section of the English Catholic intelligentsia, easily covered Germany too.’<sup>9</sup> In May 1942 Luigi Sturzo, the exiled founder of the Italian Christian Democrats, criticised English Catholics for their tendency to support authoritarian governments. He attributed this to their hope that the Catholic Church could regain a leading political role.<sup>10</sup> Fascination with Italian Fascism sometimes accompanied disdain for democracy. In February 1939 Douglas Woodruff, Editor of *The Tablet*, wrote that the European parliamentary system reflected ‘anonymous wealth and ... the subordination of national economies to an international financial order.’ In the same editorial he was well-disposed towards Italian Fascism and wrote that Communism was by far the greater danger to Britain.<sup>11</sup>

Paradoxical as it may seem, some of the Catholic interest in Fascism derived from the development of Social Catholicism from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Social Catholicism was a reaction to the growing problems brought by the accelerated social change of the period, especially poverty, unemployment and degraded living conditions. Social Catholicism was so diverse as to scarcely qualify as a movement, but it was the response of socially-minded Catholics in countries like France, Prussia, Belgium and Austria, seeking modes of employment that would encourage a sense of

---

<sup>8</sup> Kester Aspden, *Fortress Church: The English Roman Catholic Bishops and Politics, 1903-63* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2002) p 216.

<sup>9</sup> Adrian Hastings, *English Christianity* p 326.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Greene, ‘Vichy France and the Catholic Press in England: Contrasting Attitudes to a Moral Problem’ *Recusant History* 21.1 (1992) p 111.

<sup>11</sup> ‘The Lateran Treaty’ [Editorial], *The Tablet* February 11th 1939, pp 164-165.

mutual responsibility between employers and employed, as well as improved living conditions. Pope Leo XIII, who was pope from 1878 to 1903, kept in touch with some of the discussions within this movement, notably the Catholic Congresses of Liège in Belgium and the Fribourg Union, ‘a group of corporatist opponents of modern liberalism from Austria, Belgium, France, Italy and Switzerland who met each year to discuss Catholic solutions to social questions.’<sup>12</sup> Social Catholicism was one of the influences on his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) which tried to steer a middle way between socialism and unbridled capitalism. It was a cautious document but in its mention of workers’ rights and the importance of their just treatment, it seemed pioneering at the time. However, some of those involved in Social Catholicism promoted a corporatist model as the answer to economic and social problems. Corporatism envisaged a network of guild-like structures in work places, education, the arts and agriculture, encouraging mutual responsibility at all levels in society and enabling the people to speak with one voice and co-ordinate their efforts. Burleigh says that ‘In the twentieth century corporatism would act as a bridge between Catholic authoritarians and the Fascist extreme right, which shared their nostalgia for rural social harmony as well as amplifying their antisemitism to include Jews who were not liberal capitalists.’<sup>13</sup>

Much of this can be seen in the influential English Catholic writer Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), who praised Italian Fascism as offering a middle way between communism and capitalism. He was impressed by the French right-wing thinker Charles Maurras and his Action Française movement, despite its condemnation by the

---

<sup>12</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: Religion and Politics in Europe from the Enlightenment to the Great War* (London: HarperCollins, 2005) pp 408-409.

<sup>13</sup> Burleigh, *Earthly Powers* p 403.

Vatican in 1926. Belloc's contempt for parliamentary democracy was typical of fascist sympathisers. In a private letter he wrote:

The present Parliamentary welter throughout Europe is not *viable*. It is everywhere despised and at the same time it is oppressive and dreadfully corrupt. It means in practice government by a few rich men with an absurd preponderance of financial banking and largely Jewish power. That can't last.<sup>14</sup>

Hilaire Belloc had a particularly sinister effect within English Catholicism. He was a prolific writer of history, novels, biography and journalism. Hastings says of Belloc that in the inter-war years he was 'the major personal influence' in drawing English Catholics towards Fascism. Hastings adds: 'More and more his politics dissolved into a long sneer about the influence of Jews and a sort of unreal longing for some new Napoleonic figure.'<sup>15</sup> In his novels Belloc presented Jews as unattractive characters; in his history and biographies, he would portray Catholicism as the soul of European civilisation and the only valid spiritual influence.

In 1922 Belloc published *The Jews* which, while purporting to discuss the 'Jewish problem', played into the crudest antisemitism. He alleged that during the First World War, some half dozen Jews exercised 'complete control ... over things absolutely necessary to the nation's survival' and were 'completely indifferent' as to which side won, because war profiteering meant that 'the wealth of these few and

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted (without date) by Joseph Pearce in *Old Thunder: A Life of Hilaire Belloc* (London: HarperCollins, 2002) p 196.

<sup>15</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 182

very wealthy Jews has been scandalously increased.’<sup>16</sup> History-writing and reportage, he said, frequently overlooked ‘The special character of the Jew, his actions through the Secret Societies and in the various revolutions of foreign States, his rapid acquisition of power through finance, political and social, especially in this country.’<sup>17</sup> Against this Jewish advance into power the Catholic Church was said by Belloc to be the main safeguard: ‘The Catholic Church is the conservator of an age-long European tradition, and that tradition will never compromise with the fiction that a Jew can be other than a Jew. Wherever the Catholic Church has power ... the Jewish problem will be recognized to the full.’<sup>18</sup>

Belloc could write poetry saying of Piccadilly in London, ‘Here Rothschild lives, chief of the tribe abhorred/Who tried to put to death our Blessed Lord.’ He blamed Jewish bankers (and Oxford dons) for allowing Germany to re-arm.<sup>19</sup> Deicide, plutocracy, plotting and revolution: they were all grist to Belloc’s antisemitic mill.

Belloc’s friend G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) had a similarly eclectic career as a writer, though with a far greater output of journalism. Chesterton was a high-profile convert to Catholicism. In his novels Jews frequently appeared as alien and untrustworthy characters.<sup>20</sup> Chesterton promoted a home-spun political philosophy known as Distributism. It tried to be a ‘third way’ between capitalism and socialism, through encouraging guild-style craftsmanship and a ‘back to the land’ movement.

---

<sup>16</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (1983 reprint; 1922; no publisher given).

<sup>17</sup> Belloc, *The Jews* p 133.

<sup>18</sup> Belloc, *The Jews* pp 209-210.

<sup>19</sup> Rubinstein, *History of Jews in the English-Speaking World* pp 137-138. Belloc still has his defenders. For a recent apologia, see Joseph Pearce, *Old Thunderer*, pp 197-203; see also the words of Belloc’s biographer, Robert Speaight, quoted by Rubinstein on p 137.

<sup>20</sup> For a brief but useful survey of Jewish characters in the fiction of Belloc and Chesterton, see Pauline Paucker, ‘The Image of the German Jew in English Fiction’ in Werner Mosse *et al.* (eds) *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991) pp 323-325. She describes Belloc and Chesterton as motivated by ‘aggressive malice’ (p 325).



But Chesterton's critiques of corrupt capitalism sometimes seemed to have an antisemitic subtext, with Jews lurking in the background as monopolisers and exploiters.

Some English interest in Fascism sprang from sympathy with the Spanish Nationalists during the Spanish civil war, following the suffering of the Catholic Church in Republican-controlled areas. Douglas Woodruff threw the weight of the Catholic weekly *The Tablet* whole-heartedly behind Franco.<sup>21</sup> Such sympathy was particularly found in the ranks of the Catholic aristocracy. Some members of the English Catholic aristocracy also dallied with the pro-Nazi group the Link and the broader-based Anglo-German Fellowship.<sup>22</sup> English Catholicism was also influenced by fascist movements in Ireland, Italy, and France. There was a Fascist edge to Irish nationalism: a paramilitary-style Blueshirt movement associated with the Fine Gael party sought 'to combine the ideologies of nationalism, Catholic corporatism and Fascism.'<sup>23</sup> Some of the Blueshirts went off to fight for Franco.

The centralism of the Catholic Church in the 1930s is the second factor to be borne in mind when examining the response of the Catholic Church in England to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. This centralism derived from the power of the Pope and his officials, who were able to impose a high degree of conformity on the Catholic Church worldwide. Thus Kester Aspden considers that 'The logic of Roman centralization was such that national hierarchies came ever more to reflect papal

---

<sup>21</sup> Michael Walsh, *The Tablet 1840-1990: A Commemorative History* (London: Tablet Publishing, 1990) p 55.

<sup>22</sup> See the autobiographical memoir by Julia Camoys Stonor, *Sherman's Wife: A Wartime Childhood amongst the English Catholic Aristocracy* (London: Desert Hearts, 2006) pp 92-93.

<sup>23</sup> Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998) pp 95-96.

concerns and priorities.’<sup>24</sup> Just as the Pope and his officials ordered the life of the church across the world, so bishops wielded considerable power within their dioceses.

In a hierarchical and centralised church, much would always depend on the character of the leadership. In England the archbishop of Westminster was *ex-officio* president of the bishops’ conference of England and Wales and national spokesman for the Catholic Church. In this sense he was a national spokesman for the Catholic Church. There was a Catholic leadership vacuum in England in the early 1930s. The Archbishop of Westminster from August 1903-January 1<sup>st</sup> 1935 was Francis Bourne. He was seriously ill from late 1932 and a long decline set in until his death on New Year’s Day 1935. Arthur Hinsley was appointed Bourne’s successor in March 1935. Hinsley was 69 years old. He had been away from England for nearly 20 years, first as rector of the English College in Rome, then as Apostolic Visitor to British colonies in Africa, a kind of roving representative from the Vatican. His appointment to Westminster was unexpected and took Hinsley himself by surprise.<sup>25</sup>

Despite having spent long years in Rome, Hinsley soon fell foul of Vatican sensitivities by his comments on Italy and the Vatican. Relations between the Italian state and the Vatican had improved greatly with the signing of a concordat between the two in 1929, which had resolved the issues following the unification of Italy and the virtual disappearance of the Papal States. By the mid-1930s relations between Italy and the Vatican had become ‘almost cordial’.<sup>26</sup> Derek Holmes notes that ‘it was difficult to find an [Italian] episcopal sermon or pastoral letter after 1929 that did

---

<sup>24</sup> Aspden, *Fortress Church* p 3. The centralization had been greatly enhanced by revisions within the new Code of Canon Law published in 1917.

<sup>25</sup> John Heenan, *Cardinal Hinsley* (London: Burns, Oates: 1944) pp 15-16.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators 1922-1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1973) p 52.

not contain favourable references to the Duce'. There continued to be conflict with the Italian government over education, and Pius XI was increasingly critical of the Fascist claim that the state was the source and guarantor of ethical life.<sup>27</sup> But overall, there was considerable goodwill between the Vatican and Mussolini.

Hinsley's inauguration in 1935 coincided with rising tension between Italy and Abyssinia. The Italian invasion of Abyssinia launched in October 1935 was widely condemned in the League of Nations and elsewhere. There was a widespread perception in Europe that the Italian grievances against Abyssinia were pretexts that had been inflated out of all proportion. In theory, the Papacy was neutral in such a conflict. However, Pope Pius XI and many of his curial cardinals were Italian. Cardinal Schuster, the Archbishop of Milan, and many Italian bishops, had blessed the troops before their departure and taken a generally positive attitude towards Mussolini's Abyssinian adventurism.<sup>28</sup>

In Britain there were calls for an unequivocal papal condemnation of the invasion. The British press tended to imply that Mussolini and Pius XI were working in tandem. Alarmed by this rising antipathy to the Vatican, Hinsley wrote to the Vatican Secretary of State, in September 1935, calling for the Holy See to dissociate itself from 'what outside Italy is considered a violation of international agreements and an act of aggression'. Moloney calls this a 'private rebuke to the Holy See – an extraordinary act of moral courage on the part of the archbishop.'<sup>29</sup> Ten days after

---

<sup>27</sup> J. Derek Holmes, *The Papacy in the Modern World 1914-1978* (London: Burns & Oates, 1981) pp 59-62.

<sup>28</sup> Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators* pp 73-75. Abyssinia (now known as Ethiopia) was a Christian state, but its Coptic Orthodox Church was not recognised by the Catholic Church which tried to convert Coptic Orthodox Christians to Catholicism. Attacks on Italian Catholic missionaries were among the justifications given for the Italian invasion.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican* pp 49-50.

Italy invaded Ethiopia he preached a sermon in the Catholic Church at Golders Green, north London, condemning Italian Fascism and defending the Vatican. After pointing out that Pius XI could hardly be blamed when the League of Nations itself had proved ineffectual, he added that the Vatican was not a worldly power:

Well, what can the Pope do to prevent this or any other war? He is a helpless old man with a small police force to guard himself, to guard the priceless art and archaeological treasures of the Vatican, and to protect his diminutive State .... Can he denounce or coerce a neighbour power - a power armed with absolute control of everything and with every modern instrument of force? He could excommunicate ... [but] spiritual penalties for a world daily more godless are of little avail.<sup>30</sup>

The popular press seized with delight on Hinsley's description of Pius XI as 'a helpless old man'. The phrase itself was greeted with resentment in the Vatican, but his condemnation of Fascism annoyed them even more.<sup>31</sup> The Vatican intimated to Hinsley that he should avoid the subject of Mussolini's government and the papacy. The same signals were sent to the Jesuit publication *The Month*, edited by Fr Joseph Keating, which had been critical of Italy.<sup>32</sup> This early venture in political commentary had made Hinsley aware of Vatican displeasure.

Rome's dislike of English Catholic criticism of Fascism, and Hinsley's discomfort, can be traced through material in the British Jesuit archives in London. The Jesuit

---

<sup>30</sup> See *The Tablet* October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1935, for the full text.

<sup>31</sup> Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators* p 73.

<sup>32</sup> Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican* pp 51-53.

priest and writer Joseph Keating was probably Hinsley's closest adviser. Keating was editor of the Jesuit publication, *The Month*, from 1907 until his death in 1939. On July 27th 1937, Hinsley wrote to Keating as follows:

My dear Father Keating,

I enclose a letter from Mgr Pizzardo, which calls for some attention from the editor of *The Tablet*. The O.P. [Dominican priest, ie Order of Preachers] in question, and some others of the same order, do not seem always wise in what they write. In this case, we have to bear the odium of both the Vatican and the Fascisti of Italy. ... Of course, Rome connects the Archbishop with *The Tablet*, and so I shall be blamed.<sup>33</sup>

Although the Pizzardo letter is not in the file it is clear that the Vatican has rapped Hinsley over the knuckles. Giuseppe Pizzardo, the Vatican Under-Secretary of State, was a powerful figure. Hugh Montgomery, Chargé d'Affaire of the British Legation to the Holy See, called Pizzardo 'a man of very limited intelligence, who is genuinely hoodwinked by Mussolini's propaganda which is so persistently and unscrupulously leveled against Great Britain.'<sup>34</sup> The article in question in *The Tablet* was by a Dominican, Fr Hilary Carpenter, who had written that in both Germany and Italy, 'the State is the one thing of supreme importance. It is this supremacy of the State and the relative subservience of religion in respect to it that should cause Catholics to draw

---

<sup>33</sup> Hinsley to Keating, Jesuit Provincial Archives (SJ) file 3/3/1/6.

<sup>34</sup> Montgomery to Samuel Hoare, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1935, PRO FO 371/19162.

back with suspicion.’<sup>35</sup> Vatican criticism of this relatively anodyne article is the more surprising, given that in March 1937, only a few months before Pizzardo’s rebuke to Hinsley, Pope Pius XI had issued the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* criticising the very aspects mentioned by Carpenter. For example, the encyclical condemned ‘Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State ... and divinizes them to an idolatrous level.’<sup>36</sup>

Hinsley was therefore highly aware of Vatican scrutiny of English Catholic political commentary. It would have made him more cautious in criticising Italy and Germany. This may partly explain why he has little to say about the German persecution of the Jews, as it gathered pace throughout the 1930s. The Vatican preferred that any statements on Germany or Italy should come from the Holy See. Catholic leaders such as Hinsley would have been alert to signals from Rome. The signals about the persecution of the Jews were few and ambivalent. *Mit brennender Sorge* did implicitly criticise Nazi racial theory in paragraph 17, where Pius XI condemned ‘arbitrary alternatives [to the gospel] such as certain leaders pretend to draw from the so-called myth of race and blood.’ But this reference had been weakened by paragraph 15 in which Pius XI used antisemitic language in referring to ‘the chosen people repeatedly straying from God and turning to the world’, blinded by ‘ignorance and pride’.<sup>37</sup>

In 1938 Pius XI was becoming more alarmed by antisemitism, and it is said that only death prevented him from issuing an encyclical condemning antisemitism and

---

<sup>35</sup> Hilary Carpenter OP, ‘Catholics and European Political Development’, *The Tablet* May 29<sup>th</sup> 1937, p 783.

<sup>36</sup> *Mit brennender Sorge* paragraph 8. The full text of the encyclical can be found in *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939* (Raleigh: Pieran Press, 1990). Paragraph 8 is on page 527.

<sup>37</sup> *Mit brennender Sorge* paragraphs 15 & 17 in *The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939* p 528.

other forms of racism. At that time German pressure was forcing Italy to impose the anti-Jewish measures adopted by the Germans in the Nuremberg laws. The German absorption of Austria in March 1938 extended the Reich up to the Italian borders and opened Italy to further German pressure. A declaration on race by a group of Italian academics in July 1938 had called for vigilance against Jewish influence in Italy. In early September Jewish children were forbidden to attend Italian schools; this was followed by a stream of legislation over the next two months copying much of the Nuremberg laws.

In July that year Pius XI approached Jesuit scholar Fr John LaFarge and asked him to prepare material for an encyclical addressing the nationalistic misuse of racism, which the Pope considered to be a 'burning issue'.<sup>38</sup> Assisted by two others, LaFarge finished drafting a possible encyclical in September with the significant title *Humani Generis Unitas* (The Unity of the Human Race) but Pius XI was 82 and in poor health. He died on February 10<sup>th</sup> 1939, and the proposed encyclical was then sidelined. A reconstruction suggests that it contained an outright condemnation of antisemitism. It also contained some passages that repeated the traditional charge of deicide and the negative imagery of Jews that flowed from this. Susan Zuccotti comments that the putative encyclical bears witness to 'the tragic inability even of churchmen of good will to recognize the inherent evil of anti-Jewish legislation and the terrible, inexorable link between separation and elimination.'<sup>39</sup> Even Ronald Rychlak, an apologist for papal conduct, concludes that the proposed encyclical

---

<sup>38</sup> Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchecky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997) p 35, quoting the phrase 'burning issue' from LaFarge's autobiography. LaFarge was chosen because of his work for racial justice in the United States.

<sup>39</sup> Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows* p 33.

contained antisemitism ‘which would be very offensive by today’s standards.’ Many, he adds, feel that it was good for the Catholic Church that this draft remained unpublished.<sup>40</sup>

However, before his death Pius XI had spoken clearly against antisemitism. On September 6<sup>th</sup> 1938, when addressing a Belgian group visiting Rome he suddenly diverted from his written text. Recalling a phrase from the Mass which referred to Abraham as ‘our ancestor’ (*patriarchae nostri Abrahamae*) Pius XI continued:

Anti-Semitism is not compatible with the thought and the sublime realization expressed in this text. It is a deplorable movement, a movement in which we, as Christians, must have no part ... No, it is not possible for Christians to take part in anti-Semitism. We recognize that anyone has the right to defend himself against anything that threatens his legitimate interests. But anti-Semitism is inadmissible. We are spiritually Semites.<sup>41</sup>

The speech is sometimes criticised as being too little, too late.<sup>42</sup> But it was a signal picked up by Catholic bishops such as Hinsley, who used it to make their own condemnations of antisemitism. Phayer says that Pius XI’s speech ‘provided inspiration for Catholic rescuers during the Holocaust’.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Ronald Rychlak, *Hitler, the War and the Pope* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000) p 278.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Passelecq and Suchecky, *Hidden Encyclical* pp 138-139 . Realising that his impromptu words might not be printed in the official Vatican publications which would rely on the prepared text, Pius XI underlined his commitment to what he said by asking the Belgians to ensure that they were published. (Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* p 3.)

<sup>42</sup> Thus, for example, Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows* pp 45-46.

<sup>43</sup> Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* pp 3 & 52.



Hinsley approached the war years exercising great circumspection in political issues. He was aware that his knuckles had been rapped by the Vatican for being too outspoken politically. He knew also that the Vatican had complained over a relatively innocuous article which was critical of Fascism and Nazism. This was a sign of Vatican openness to Italian Fascism. It was also a sign of how easily Vatican ambiguity towards Fascism could implicitly seem to include Nazism. He also knew that there were Catholics who flirted with Fascism.<sup>44</sup> One literary critic has commented that to Catholic writers at that time it seemed natural to present Communism as the enemy of Christian civilisation, and it was ‘a dangerously easy next step’ to believe that Fascism defended that civilisation.<sup>45</sup> Adrian Hastings similarly considers that ‘even in 1938, in the majority judgement of the English Catholic intelligentsia, “civilised life” was not as such threatened by Nazism and Fascism, but only by Communism.’<sup>46</sup> However, Hinsley’s caution and relative reticence before the outbreak of war changed when new circumstances demanded that he speak out.

### The protests of Cardinal Hinsley

Before the outbreak of war, Cardinal Hinsley had scarcely been heard on the BBC.<sup>47</sup>

When it was proposed in October 1939 that he should broadcast, the initial response

---

<sup>44</sup> See the correspondence between Hinsley and BUF members and sympathisers in WDA Hi 2/76, in which he says that while Fascism purports to be a political movement like any other, its totalitarian (*sic*) exaltation of the state is inadmissible to Catholics.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Woodham, *Faithful Fictions: The English Catholic Novel in British Literature* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991) p 101.

<sup>46</sup> Adrian Hastings, ‘Some Reflexions on the English Catholicism of the late 1930s’ in Adrian Hastings (ed), *Bishops and Writers: Aspects of the Evolution of Modern English Catholicism* (Anthony Clarke: Wheathampstead, 1977) p 120.

<sup>47</sup> The index at BBC Written Archives, Caversham, Berks (BBC/WA) contains only four references for Hinsley for the period April 1935-September 1939; three of these relate to reports on his enthronement, and one to a charity appeal.

of BBC managers was that any comment on war aims should come from Anglican leaders such as Temple.<sup>48</sup> Then the BBC realised that in Hinsley they had a high-ranking Roman Catholic whose words would carry weight with Catholics elsewhere, making him a useful asset in the propaganda war. Harman Grisewood, Assistant Director of Programme Planning, thought that it absurd to keep Hinsley from talking on war aims:

A broadcast to Latin America by the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Great Britain is likely to be of the highest importance diplomatically. It is extremely important to elucidate our war aims to a bewildered S. America, where effective Fascist and Nazi propaganda has been at work for many years. If the Cardinal did not touch on the serious issues at stake in this war in talking to a Latin American audience from a national platform, it would be regarded as direct evidence of that feebleness and decadence which enemy propaganda has ascribed to us. There is a moral issue to elucidate and Hinsley, to that particular audience, would be expected to speak of it.<sup>49</sup>

The BBC immediately pressed Hinsley into service, not only in broadcasts to Spain, Portugal and Latin America, but also frequently to Poland. In November and December 1939 he broadcast to Poland, using trenchant language. For example, in his first broadcast he referred to Poland as ‘martyred ...[by] the forces of evil’, and

---

<sup>48</sup> BBC/WA, Memo, Controller of Programmes to Director of Talks, October 24<sup>th</sup> 1939.

<sup>49</sup> BBC/WA, Memo, Grisewood to DPP, October 29<sup>th</sup> 1939. Grisewood was himself a Catholic, and in touch with many of the leading Catholic artists and writers of his day.

suffering ‘mechanized butchery’.<sup>50</sup> In his broadcast the following month, Hinsley spoke of the German-Soviet subjugation of Poland as being an anti-Christian campaign, a theme he repeated in subsequent broadcasts.<sup>51</sup> Between November 1939 and December 1942 he spoke on the air to Poland at least six times.

Hinsley’s co-operation with the BBC was part of the propaganda war. Hinsley’s patriotism was beyond doubt. In May 1940, following Dunkirk, Hinsley wrote to Churchill urging him to continue the fight. He impressed Churchill who noted: ‘The Cardinal is vigorous and tough.’<sup>52</sup> Six months later Hinsley visited Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary. Eden recorded in an official minute that he had thanked Hinsley for a recent broadcast, with its ‘very vigorous’ condemnation of Nazism. ‘Cardinal Hinsley replied that he was always ready to give us any help in his power against the hated Nazi tyranny.’<sup>53</sup> Hinsley knew that he was being used in his broadcasts, and co-operated happily.

Hinsley’s condemnation of the Nazis became blunter as the war proceeded. In his first broadcast about Poland although condemning the invasion he did not even mention Germany or the Nazis by name. By January 1941 he was outspoken. In the broadcast which so impressed Eden, Hinsley said:

The new-order imposed by Nazi war-machines, by the dragooning of populations, by the mass executions in Poland, by prison camps can form no

---

<sup>50</sup> Some broadcast scripts have not been preserved at the BBC. However, they were published in a small book *Cardinal Hinsley: Friend of Poland* (London: Polish Catholic Mission, January 1944; no editor given). Broadcast of November [2<sup>nd</sup>] 1939 p 10. Typically the BBC would arrange for a Polish translation to be broadcast after Hinsley spoke.

<sup>51</sup> See for example *Friend of Poland* pp 13, 15 & 21.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Lukacs, *Five Days in London* p 191.

<sup>53</sup> PRO FO 954/31 Minute by Anthony Eden, January 28<sup>th</sup> 1941.

bond of peace ... Hitler's new-order and the ideal of Christian civilization are poles apart ... Nazism is more than a political regime; it is an 'ersatz' religion, a camouflaged paganism fiercely opposed to Christian civilization.<sup>54</sup>

Hinsley had found his own voice. The exigencies of war and the challenge to his patriotism had thrown him back on his own resources, and clarified his understanding of what was at stake. He saw the struggle as one for Christian values against evil. His strong condemnations of the Nazis in these broadcasts from early 1941 onwards show a man speaking his mind, not a man fearful of what the Vatican might say. It might have been the urgency of the moment; it might have been the fact that war made diplomatic communication with the Vatican more difficult and slow; it might have been the demands of patriotism. But whatever the reason, he was prepared to speak trenchantly.

Hinsley was able to tackle another difficult area, namely the Catholic attitude towards the Jews. English Catholic attitudes to the Jews varied from indifference to hostility. But Hinsley in the last two years of his life (1941-1943) began to speak strongly about the suffering inflicted by the Nazis on the Jews of Europe. He had already shown the pattern of his response when he spoke at the Albert Hall meeting of December 1<sup>st</sup> 1938. Hinsley said then that he spoke to uphold 'the dignity and rights of the human personality against the tyranny and persecution which have become the bane of the whole world, whether that persecution is inflicted on Jew or Gentile,

---

<sup>54</sup> BBC/WA, Typescript, 'Matters of Moment [series], 'The Bond of Peace', January 20<sup>th</sup> 1941, pp 1 & 3. This was broadcast to the Overseas Central region, North America and the Pacific.

whether on Catholic Christian or non-Catholic Christian, whether in Russia, in Mexico, in Spain, in Germany or elsewhere.’<sup>55</sup>

As a Catholic archbishop he was primarily devoted to the protection of Catholics and to their flourishing. However, with the outbreak of the war he began to speak increasingly frankly about Nazism as a paganism that would try to destroy Christianity. This allowed Hinsley to reach for apocalyptic language. In a broadcast on the BBC Home Service on a day of national prayer he said that the people of Britain were ‘pitted against the powers of darkness which have unleashed a savage campaign against God.’<sup>56</sup> Nazism was evil, and the struggle against it a struggle in which Christianity was fighting to survive. In this struggle Jews as well as Christians were suffering at the hands of a Nazi neo-paganism. For example, in a statement he issued to the press when Italy entered the war in June 1940, he said that Fascist leaders had ‘broken with the Christian civilization which built Europe’. Italian Fascism had become Nazism, and an Allied victory ‘would not only secure the freedom of many nations from tyrannical oppression but would also end the Nazi

---

<sup>55</sup> Typescript of Albert Hall speeches, December 1<sup>st</sup> 1938, BoD EO/3/281 p 4. In a broadcast a year later Hinsley initially intended to repeat this theme, when, at the invitation of F. W. Ogilvie, Director General of the BBC, he spoke on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1939 after the nine o’clock news on ‘The Sword of the Spirit’. The original script submitted contains these words: ‘I consider it my duty to protest against the persecution of the Christians of Poland ... as I have protested *against the persecution of Jews and others in Nazi Germany* ... the crimes committed against Christians in Russia, Poland, Mexico and Spain are every whit as worthy of condemnation as anything done against the Jews.’ However, in the actual broadcast he said: ‘I consider it my duty to protest aloud against any persecution of the Christians of Poland ... as I have protested in the past ... *against the persecution of religious bodies in Nazi Germany* ... the crimes committed against the Christians in Russia and Poland and elsewhere are worthy of the strongest condemnation’ (emphasis added). For original script, see Hinsley to Ogilvie, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1939. This, and the script of the actual broadcast, are in BBC WA. There is no indication of whether the removal of the direct mention of the Jews was at the request of the BBC or second thoughts by Hinsley himself, but compare the BBC censorship of William Temple mentioned in chapter three of this thesis, which similarly was over references to the Jews.

<sup>56</sup> WDA Hinsley Papers Hi 31/Bo/1/159/I, Typescript of Broadcast March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1941.

system of religious and racial persecution and general paganism.’<sup>57</sup> Hinsley’s analysis thus combined patriotism with a brisk rejection of Nazism for being an oppressive paganism opposed to Christianity. This analysis enabled Hinsley to set aside the traditional Catholic *hauteur* towards Judaism and to condemn the persecution of the Jews. He paralleled the plight of the Jews under the Nazis to that of Christians in Russia and Catholics in Spain. Hinsley in his speeches and broadcasts did not see the situation of the Jews as unique, but he did believe that Christians and Jews faced a common enemy, and this encouraged him to condemn with increasing vigour the persecution of the Jews.

Hinsley had good contacts with the Polish Government in Exile in London which expressed its appreciation of his broadcasts defending the Polish cause.<sup>58</sup> This may have given him early information about the tragedy overwhelming Jews within Poland from early 1942. His approach was always to bracket the persecution of Jews and Christians. It might be thought that he saw nothing distinctive, therefore, in the Jewish situation. Against this there is the letter he wrote to *The Times* in 1943:

Whatever can be done to save or to help the victims of Nazi persecution we most urgently support. Multitudes of Christians are among the victims, but the Jews are singled out for extermination. Blind racial hate ... is the motive of these unparalleled barbarities.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> WDA Hinsley Papers Hi 31/Bo/1/159/I Statement of June 10<sup>th</sup> 1940.

<sup>58</sup> Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican*, p 173.

<sup>59</sup> *The Times* January 26<sup>th</sup> 1943, p 5.

Hinsley had spoken up for the Jews six months previously. By early summer 1942 news of the massacres was seeping out of Eastern Europe and the Reich. The European Division of the BBC approached Hinsley and asked him to give a short message to Europe about the massacre of the Jews, which would be broadcast in several languages.<sup>60</sup> In his broadcast Hinsley took his usual approach of condemning the Nazis as ruthless oppressors of Jews and Christians:

I am going to set down things which cannot be gainsaid concerning the barbarities of these tyrannous invaders in their treatment of Jews and Christians in Poland ...

In Poland alone the Nazis have massacred 700,000 Jews since the outbreak of the war ... [they] have done to death without the semblance of justice countless innocent peoples both of Aryan and non-Aryan races. (...)

... Everything religious, whether Jewish, Catholic or Orthodox, is the target of the pagan hatred of the Nazi agents in Poland. ... Let me say a word to the Catholics in Germany ... Pius XII ... is declared to have been convinced of the truth of the reports he has received – all too completely confirmed - on the martyr's fate of Poland. The ferocity of Nazi persecution is directed ... against religion in general. The proud materialism of race, as Cardinal Hlond

---

<sup>60</sup> BBC WA, file RCONT 1, J. W. Welch, Director of Religious Broadcasting, to Assistant Controller, European Service, July 7<sup>th</sup> 1942.

writes, aims at blotting out the most essential spiritual elements of our civilisation. Yes, blotting out every moral value in blood and ruin. ...

I join with the Cardinal Primate of Poland and beg and pray that all Christian people everywhere, and you my fellow Christians in Germany particularly may listen to the voice of reason and humanity and resist these black deeds of shame.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to his customary forthright language about Nazi oppression as immoral and anti-religious, two intriguing features emerge from this broadcast. First, Hinsley implies that Pius XII similarly condemns the Nazis; then he goes on to appeal to the German Christian conscience not to collude with 'these black deeds of shame'.

Hinsley's co-option of Pius XII in judgement of Nazi persecution of Jews and Christians is an adroit move. It emphasises Hinsley's loyalty to the Holy See, and it makes Pius XII seem like a critic of Germany. However, it also flies in the face of the facts. After the invasion of Poland the Poles were angered by the Pope's silence. Pius XII made no direct comment on the situation until October 20<sup>th</sup> 1939, when he included a mention of Poland in the encyclical *Summi pontificatus*. Even then his words lacked incisiveness, for while he did refer to the blood of Poles who had been cruelly slaughtered, there was no mention of Germany or the Nazis, and no attribution

---

<sup>61</sup> BBC WA, Typescript of broadcast, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1942.



of culpability. In the words of Jose Sanchez, Pius XII ‘offered sympathy but no protest.’<sup>62</sup>

The encyclical did not quieten Polish feelings about Pius XII’s reticence. The exiled President of Poland, Wladislas Racziewicz wrote to the Pope from London in April 1941, asking him to break his silence. Racziewicz wrote again in January 1943, pointing out that Catholics in Warsaw at great risk had condemned the killing of Jews; why had Pius XII not done so? Carlo Falconi says of this letter that ‘every word ... is an indirect but total criticism of Pius XII’s reticent and tortuous behaviour.’<sup>63</sup> There are counterbalancing factors to be considered. The Pope hoped to help bring peace by playing a mediating role between nations, and condemnation of Germany could jeopardise that; he was aware of the decimation of Polish leadership, including clergy, at the hands of the Nazis, and feared to make things worse; and until April 1940 he authorised Vatican Radio to broadcast details about Nazi persecution of the Church in Poland.<sup>64</sup> In addition, of course, after June 10<sup>th</sup> 1940 when Italy entered the war on Germany’s side, his base in the Vatican City was surrounded by a belligerent nation. But given Poland’s historical role as the largest Catholic nation in Eastern Europe his silence was remarkable.

Hinsley must have been aware in mid-1942 of the growing criticism of Pius XII’s silence on Poland. Even D’Arcy Osborne, the British Minister to the Holy See, was aware of the growing unpopularity in England of Pius XII.<sup>65</sup> Hinsley was able to

---

<sup>62</sup> Jose Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust: Understanding the Controversy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002) p 155. Sanchez offers a good overview (pp 153-158) of how different historians interpret Pius XII’s wartime relations with Poland.

<sup>63</sup> Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* p 218, where the complete text of Racziewicz’s letter is given.

<sup>64</sup> Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust* pp 154-158.

<sup>65</sup> Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* p 207.

make his broadcast do double duty. On the one hand, he spoke clearly and firmly to condemn what Germany was doing in Poland. On the other hand, he was able to counter criticism of the Pope by making it seem as if Pius XII had also condemned Germany's massacres in Poland. The implication that Pius XII has publicly declared himself against the Nazis is heightened by the statement immediately following, that Nazi persecution is directed 'against religion in general'. But Pius XII had not made any public unequivocal statement on Poland under the Nazi heel. In referring to reports received by the Pope, Hinsley may have been referring to a detailed letter sent to Pius XII by Archbishop Adam Sapieha of Cracow in February 1942, in which Sapieha had given details of life in Poland and wrote that they lived 'in terrible horror'. Sapieha also referred to 'concentration camps, from which but few leave alive.'<sup>66</sup> In his broadcast about the massacres in Poland, Hinsley had little enough to go on, but by a mixture of religious language and allusion, he created the impression that the Pope had spoken. In reality, Hinsley had spoken, with his usual clarity of expression.

The impression that Hinsley was in part compensating for the reticence of Pope Pius XII is strengthened by another incident two years before this broadcast. When the Nazis invaded the Netherlands and Belgium the Foreign Office felt that Pope Pius XII's condemnation of the invasion was too elliptical to be any use. An indirect approach asked Hinsley if he would oblige with something stronger. Hinsley's secretary, Mgr Val Elwes, was contacted by his brother Guy Elwes, a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Economic Warfare. The Foreign Office had asked Guy to

---

<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Pierre Blet, *Pius XII and the Second World War according to the Archives of the Vatican* (New York: Paulist, 1999) p 81.

inquire through Val whether Hinsley would be prepared to issue a statement condemning the German invasion of the Low Countries. This story is reported by Thomas Moloney in *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican*. Unfortunately, when the Foreign Office records that he cites are examined, they turn out to be one month later and to deal entirely with the fall of France.<sup>67</sup> This citation does show a Hinsley reference: in this instance, Hinsley wrote at the request of the British government to Cardinal Suhard of Paris, to try and stiffen French morale. This may point to confusion in Moloney's note-taking. The likely veracity of the Elwes connection is increased by the fact that the other component parts are correct: the Pope's statement on the invasion was anodyne, and Hinsley did issue a statement in the form of a letter to *The Times*. Pius XII had written to the rulers of each of the Low Countries, in each case expressing concern but neither naming nor condemning the Germans. To Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands, for example, the Pope cabled:

On learning with profound grief that Your Majesty's efforts for peace have not been able to prevent Your Majesty's noble nation, against its will and against all justice, from becoming a theatre of War, We implore God, the supreme arbiter of the destiny of nations, to hasten by his all powerful assistance the re-establishment of justice and liberty.<sup>68</sup>

The blandness of this cable, sent to a nation invaded without cause by a vastly more powerful neighbour, contrasts sharply with Hinsley's letter to *The Times*, in which he

---

<sup>67</sup> Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican* pp 142-143, citing PRO FO 371/24301.

<sup>68</sup> Pierre Blet *et al.* (eds) *Records and Documents of the Holy See Relating to the Second World War*, Vol 1, *The Holy See and the War in Europe* (Washington DC: Corpus Books, 1968) pp 413-414.

wrote: ‘In the name of all we hold sacred, I appeal to the Catholics of this country and of all the world to condemn by word and deed the dastardly invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg by the merciless Nazi hordes.’ He then referred to Pius XII’s five principles for a just and lasting peace, before continuing, ‘everything in heaven and on earth that could possibly be of higher value – is sacrificed to Nazi ambition.’ He concluded with an apocalyptic call: ‘Awake! Or be crushed by the unleashed forces of evil.’<sup>69</sup> Again, we note that Hinsley refers to the Pope’s teaching, which would have been axiomatic for a Catholic prelate. But did he in this letter subtly and quietly compensate for the lack of an incisive statement by Pius XII?

Hinsley was intensely loyal to the Holy See. But given that the cables from Pius XII to the sovereigns of the Low Countries were sent on May 10<sup>th</sup>, and Hinsley’s letter appeared on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, it is possible that either consciously or unconsciously he was compensating for the Pope’s inability to take a stand on a pressing political issue. When we add to this the fact that he would have known through his secretary that the British government wanted a strong Catholic statement, it becomes more likely still that Hinsley wrote at least in full knowledge that his approach would be different to that of Pius XII. Some eight months after this letter, Hinsley went to meet the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. Eden congratulated Hinsley on his broadcasts, but expressed disappointment that the Pope’s Christmas broadcast of 1940 had not condemned the Italian invasion of Greece. Hinsley was discreet. He made no

---

<sup>69</sup> *The Times* May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1940, p 7.

comment on the criticism of Pius XII, but 'replied that he was always ready to give us any help in his power against the hated Nazi tyranny.'<sup>70</sup>

In December 1942 there is a similar stark contrast between Hinsley's bluntness and the periphrastic approach of the Pope. On this occasion, Hinsley's broadcast preceded that of Pius XII, and so could not have been influenced by it. Hinsley preached at a service in Westminster Cathedral marking the Day of Prayer for Poland on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1942. It was attended by representatives of the Polish government and armed forces. The pontifical high Mass was sung by Bishop Karol Radonski, Bishop of Wloclawek who was in exile in London. Three months previously Radonski had written to the Vatican complaining that the Pope's silence about Poland was alienating Polish Catholics and gave the impression that he was indifferent to Polish suffering.<sup>71</sup> Hinsley in his sermon first excoriated the Nazi campaign to stifle Polish culture by decapitating its leadership. Then he turned to the special suffering of the Jews:

I unite my voice to the loud denunciations uttered by Catholic bishops and peoples in France, Italy and other countries against the brutal persecution of the Jews. Poland has witnessed acts of such savage race-hatred that it appears fiendishly planned to be turned into a vast cemetery of the Jewish population

---

<sup>70</sup> PRO FO 954/31, Record of Conversation between Cardinal Hinsley and the Secretary of State on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1941.

<sup>71</sup> Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust* p 157.

of Europe. We appeal insistently to the whole civilized world that a speedy end may be made to this wholesale campaign of extermination.<sup>72</sup>

What is striking is both the clarity of his language and his understanding that Poland is the planned place of death for Europe's Jews. In view of criticism since then of the silence of the Catholic Church, it is also interesting that Hinsley saw himself as part of a wider outspokenness at that time.

That summer Jews had been rounded up in France, often separated from their children, kept in appalling conditions and then deported. In September 1942 four bishops in Vichy France, including Cardinal Gerlier of Marseilles and Archbishop Saliège of Toulouse, had protested publicly against this; Saliège instructed his clergy to protest the deportation of the Jews from the pulpit. This denunciation by French bishops was broadcast on the BBC and was cited by the hierarchy of the United States when they issued their own outspoken denunciation of the Nazi extermination of the Jews in November.<sup>73</sup> This explains Hinsley's reference to French protests. His reference to Italy, however, is baffling. There was no statement by Italian bishops comparable to that of the French. At this time, while antisemitic laws were in force in Italy and foreign Jews were interned, deportations of Jews did not begin until the German occupation of Italy in September 1943. This reference to Italy might have been a slip of the tongue; but it might also be another indication that Hinsley desired

---

<sup>72</sup> This extract was broadcast by the BBC (BBC WA December 8<sup>th</sup> 1942). The full text can be found in *Cardinal Hinsley: Friend of Poland* pp 44-46. The service was reported in *The Times* December 9<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 2.

<sup>73</sup> Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* pp 92-93.

to protect the image of the Catholic Church while still speaking forcefully on behalf of the Jews.

The Christmas message of Pius XII has been much criticised for its obliqueness at a time when he was under pressure to speak about events in Poland. In September 1942 the ambassadors of six nations presented him with a simultaneous *démarche* which warned him that his silence about Poland could diminish the moral authority of the papacy.<sup>74</sup> This approach was about Poland in general, not about the Jews *per se*, but the statement by the Allies on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942 left no doubt about the terrible situation of the Jews in particular. Osborne, the British diplomatic representative at the Vatican, brought the statement to Pius XII suggesting that he might like to endorse it.<sup>75</sup> Morley reports that during December 1942 the Pope was ‘besieged’ by telegrams from Jewish groups and leaders in the United States, Canada, Britain and Latin America asking him to intervene on behalf of the Jews of Eastern Europe.<sup>76</sup> In his Christmas broadcast of 1942 Pius XII did make a reference to the Jews. Well into his broadcast (paragraph 30) he lamented ‘the hundreds of thousands of innocent people put to death or doomed to slow extinction, sometimes merely because of their race or descent.’<sup>77</sup> As a condemnation of the Nazi extermination policy towards the Jews, the message was vague and has been much criticised. Even at the time many of the diplomats at the Vatican considered it to be rhetoric and generalities.<sup>78</sup> Writing in 1965, Carlo Falconi said that this address was no more than an ‘allusion ... to the mass murders’. John Cornwell comments that ‘The chasm between the enormity of

---

<sup>74</sup> Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* pp 27-28.

<sup>75</sup> Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* p 217.

<sup>76</sup> Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews* p 139.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* p 218.

<sup>78</sup> Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* p 219.

the liquidation of the Jewish people and this form of evasive words is shocking,' and he points out that the key words 'Jew', 'non-Aryan', 'German' and Nazi' are nowhere to be found. Phayer says that the script contains 27 words about the Jews out of 26 pages of text, and even this allusion is 'buried in a sea of verbosity'. Goldhagen says of the statement that 'its platitudinous vagueness is striking'.<sup>79</sup> The writers all cited make the broader point also that this was the most outspoken comment by the Pope during the war, and that in public he maintained a virtual silence about the massacre of the Jews. The Christmas broadcast is thus regarded as indicative of his overall reticence on the subject of the Nazis and their programme of extermination.

The scrupulous neutrality of the Pope's words in the Christmas broadcast of 1942 did not induce a similar caution in Cardinal Hinsley. If anything, he became more outspoken. By early 1943 he knew that his heart was failing, and he died on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Perhaps emboldened by the end of his years, he continued to speak about the situation of the Jews. In January the letter cited earlier appeared in *The Times*: 'Whatever can be done to save or to help the victims of Nazi persecution we most urgently support. Multitudes of Christians are among the victims, but the Jews are singled out for extermination. Blind racial hate ... is the motive of these unparalleled barbarities.'<sup>80</sup> Hinsley's last public message was sent to a protest meeting organised by the World Jewish Congress at Madison Square Gardens in New York on March

---

<sup>79</sup> Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* p 44; Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope* pp 293 & 297; Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* p 49; Daniel Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair* (London: Abacus, 2002) p 53.

<sup>80</sup> *The Times* January 26<sup>th</sup> 1943, p 5.



1<sup>st</sup>. In it he said that he denounced the persecution of the Jews ‘with utmost vigour’ and called for ‘stern retribution’ against the Nazis.<sup>81</sup>

Hinsley was not the only English Catholic voice speaking for the Jews. Richard Downey, the Archbishop of Liverpool, had a long record of friendship towards the Jews. Downey responded to *Kristallnacht* by addressing a protest meeting in Liverpool, where he called German policy ‘at once a crime against humanity and a menace to civilisation’ and thus it was the world’s concern.<sup>82</sup> Aspden says that he ‘enjoyed close relations with several Jewish leaders.’ A few other bishops were outspoken in criticising Nazi antisemitism, for example Thomas Henshaw of Salford. Other bishops were inhibited by the belief that the influence of Jews in Bolshevism was a destabilising force in the world.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, there was no groundswell of feeling expressed among the laity of the Catholic Church, no parallel to the Anglican and Protestant petitions and letters to MPs from groups of clergy, parishes and ordinary Christians, described in chapter four. The pre-Vatican II Catholic Church was hierarchical and centralised and the Catholic people had little voice. In sum, the voice of the Catholic Church that spoke for the Jews was that of Cardinal Hinsley. He had the authority to speak for the Catholic Church in England, and he was a national figure.

Hinsley’s outspoken comments stand in contrast to the Delphic caution of Pope Pius XII, who said very little. Did Hinsley compensate for the Pope’s reticence? He was a loyal Catholic, and would never have spoken as he did if he thought it would have been taken as an implicit criticism of the Pope. Yet there are good grounds for

---

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican* p 221.

<sup>82</sup> *Catholic Herald* November 25<sup>th</sup> 1938.

<sup>83</sup> Aspden, *Fortress Church* pp 215-216.

believing that his words betray an anxiety that the papal response had been less than ideal. There are three reasons for saying this. The first, discussed above, is that Hinsley spoke clearly in May 1940 (about the invasion of the Low Countries) and in January 1943 (about the mass killing of the Jews) in both instances after papal circumlocutions on these subjects. Secondly, there is an extraordinary letter that Hinsley wrote to the press on July 13th 1940. It is worth quoting in full. He wrote to the Editor of *The Tablet*, to the Editor of *The Times* and to the Manager of the Press Association. Although each covered the same ground, each letter was different. The one to *The Tablet* was the frankest.

#### NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Sir

This is a serious warning that a clever propaganda campaign is starting to make Catholics as such appear to have adopted an anti-British attitude. I do earnestly counsel you not to publish statements or comments, even if they purport to come from Vatican sources, tending to give support to the present Government of France. Recent quotations from the 'Osservatore Romano' and the Vatican Radio have given a wrong impression to many of our fellow countrymen – Catholics and Protestants – and to some loyal Frenchmen. The 'Osservatore Romano' and the Vatican Radio do not voice the judgement of the Pope; but people here regard these utterances as official papal pronouncements. Please accept this warning as most urgent. The utmost

caution is necessary in the existing confusion. Our loyalty to our faith and to our country is in question.<sup>84</sup>

*Osservatore Romano* was founded in 1861, owned by the Holy See and published from the Vatican City. *Osservatore Romano* and Vatican Radio existed to publicise the Vatican viewpoint to the wider world, including papal pronouncements. *Osservatore Romano* has been described as ‘the editorial voice of the Holy See’. Articles by its editors are considered to represent correct interpretations of Vatican thinking; articles by other contributors are ‘on their own responsibility’.<sup>85</sup> Hinsley was correct then in saying that the paper did not necessarily represent the papal point of view, but it was slicing the truth rather finely.

Hinsley had been spurred to write to the newspaper editors by an article in *Osservatore Romano* on July 8th 1940 which had hailed the establishment of the Vichy Government as ‘the dawn of a new radiant day, not only for France but for Europe and the world.’<sup>86</sup> Hinsley would also have been aware of some ambivalence on the part of some Catholic editors who, while loyal to Britain, were inclined to favour Pétain, not least because his policy stressing family and patriotism was keyed into traditional French Catholic values.<sup>87</sup> Hinsley’s letter was also written against the backdrop of a struggle between the Free French and the Vichy Government for the

---

<sup>84</sup> WDA Hi3/Bo/1/41 Hinsley Papers, Hinsley to Editor of *The Tablet*, July 13<sup>th</sup> 1940.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Osservatore Romano’ in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol 10 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) p 808.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Joan Keating, ‘Discrediting the “Catholic State”’: British Catholics and the Fall of France’ in Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin, eds, *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996) p 31.

<sup>87</sup> For this ambivalence, see Stuart Mews, ‘The Sword of the Spirit: A Catholic Cultural Crusade of 1940’ in W. J. Sheils, ed, *The Church and War* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell and the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1983) p 419. See also the following chapter of this thesis.

right be seen as the legitimate government of France, following the signing of an armistice between Pétain's government and Germany on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1940. Hinsley wrote only 10 days after British destruction of some of the French North African fleet at Mers El Kebir on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, when 1300 French sailors were killed, an event which produced strong anti-British feeling in France, intensifying the struggle for loyalties. In this struggle Pétain played the Catholic card, claiming that his government represented the ancient Catholic loyalties of France after decades of anticlerical government. The British Ministry of Information feared that Catholic sympathies in Britain might swing behind Pétain. Some of the Catholic press, notably the *Catholic Herald*, had sympathised with Pétain and the Ministry of Information had asked Hinsley to intervene.<sup>88</sup> The resulting letter is remarkable in its disingenuousness. Hinsley knew – as Catholic editors would have known – that *Osservatore Romano* and the Vatican Radio were sensitive to the nuances of papal opinion. But at this time *Osservatore Romano* was subject to immense pressure from Mussolini's government to conform to Fascist dictates, and on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1940 the Vatican had agreed that the only war news *Osservatore Romano* would carry would be the official communiqués of the Italians and Germans.<sup>89</sup> Hinsley was therefore exercising his own discernment about the position of Pius XII. Hinsley realised that the Vatican was constrained by its circumstances; but the same circumstances allowed Catholic leaders like himself who were in free countries speak their own minds.

The third reason for believing that Hinsley's candour was in part compensation for papal caution is the fact that an astute well-informed observer at the time thought so.

---

<sup>88</sup> Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican* pp 176-177.

<sup>89</sup> Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* pp 104-114.

When D'Arcy Osborne heard of Hinsley's death he wrote in his diary that he was a 'great patriot' and 'courageously outspoken' against the Nazis, in a way that would be unlikely to please 'the hypersensitive neutrals of the Vatican. They probably do not realise how much he has done to counteract the unfavourable effects abroad of their neutrality.'<sup>90</sup>

#### Excursus: The Debate over Pius XII

The debate about what critics call the silence of Pius XII has intensified in recent years, both in scholarly history and in books for a wider audience. This new wave of research builds on earlier work that emerged following the controversy over Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* (1962).

Only a brief summary of recent debate can be given here. Susan Zuccotti in her book *Under His Very Windows* surveyed the Vatican's response to the plight of Jews in Italy in general and in Rome in particular. She concludes the Vatican was interested only in those Jews who had been baptised – for example, seeking exemption from anti-Jewish legislation for them. She believes that the Pope's refusal to condemn the deportation of the Jews sprang from a mixture of personal aloofness, *Realpolitik* and institutional antisemitism. He did not speak directly about the Nazis even after June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 when the liberation of Rome left him safe. During the war he mentioned only twice that people were dying because of their 'descent': 'He never used the word "Jews" or mentioned the agent responsible for the deaths.'<sup>91</sup> She concedes that many Catholic institutions and people in Italy sheltered Jews, even in

---

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* p 220.

<sup>91</sup> Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows* p 308.

the Vatican territory itself, but says that this was done without encouragement or guidance from the Pope.<sup>92</sup> However, others have pointed out that she depreciates evidence that there was support from the Vatican for the hiding of Jewish refugees.<sup>93</sup> It is also the case that she depends too strongly on the absence of a written order from the Pope. Given the way that the Vatican leaks – and given the presence of Nazi sympathisers within it – Pius XII would have had to exercise extreme circumspection in making his wishes known. Indeed, Ronald Rychlak points out that in an earlier book Susan Zuccotti herself wrote: ‘Any direct personal order would have had to be kept very quiet to protect those who were actually sheltered.’<sup>94</sup>

For some, the key to Pius XII’s public silence on the Jews lies in his antisemitism. John Cornwell believes that ‘his silence had more to do with a habitual fear and mistrust of the Jews than a strategy of diplomacy or a commitment to impartiality.’<sup>95</sup> Yet this assertion co-exists uneasily with Cornwell’s other argument that Pius XII was trapped by the concordat he negotiated with Germany when he was papal nuncio in Berlin. The concordat shows, surely, exactly the importance Pius XII placed on diplomacy. The concordat forbade Catholic Church interference in the political affairs of Germany. Pius hoped that the concordat would constrain Nazi policy but found that it was used against him. Cornwell concedes that many found Pius XII to be holy, but in the form of a personal austerity that turned into emotional frigidity. Cornwell also points to the isolated, unreal life of the Vatican at the time, which he characterises as ‘detachment and timelessness within an earthly heaven set adrift from

---

<sup>92</sup> By mid-1944 there were around 40 Jews in the Vatican City (p 213).

<sup>93</sup> See the comment by Sanchez *Pius XII and the Holocaust* p 148 n28.

<sup>94</sup> Ronald Rychlak, ‘A Dangerous Thing to Do’ in Joseph Bottum and David Dalin, eds, *The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004) pp 34.

<sup>95</sup> Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope* p 296.

the mainland of life.’<sup>96</sup> While Cornwell sees the antisemitism as one of several factors at work, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in *A Moral Reckoning* sees antisemitism as the determinative element shaping Pius XII, antisemitism being the very air of Catholicism: ‘He had been brought up and lived his entire adult life in this profoundly antisemitic establishment of the Church, an institutional culture centrally animated by the belief ... that Jews were Christ-killers, and also by the notion that Jews were responsible for many of the perceived evils of modernity.’<sup>97</sup> As its title implies, Goldhagen’s book is more indictment than scholarly treatise.<sup>98</sup>

Michael Phayer rejects the assertion that Pius XII was a cold, unfeeling antisemite. Phayer is one of those who believes that the Pope’s fixation with diplomacy made him blind to wider issues. In *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*, Phayer argues that Pius XII wanted to negotiate a peace between Britain and Germany which would leave Germany in a powerful position in central Europe, and thus a bulwark against communism.<sup>99</sup> Phayer portrays a Pope passionate to protect his church and so haunted by communism that the situation of the Jews hardly impinged upon his consciousness. This diplomatic dimension was already reported in the earlier work of Carlo Falconi, and above all, John Morley.<sup>100</sup> More recent

---

<sup>96</sup> Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope* p 271.

<sup>97</sup> Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning* pp 61-62.

<sup>98</sup> His argument is not helped by occasional resort to guilt by association. See, for example pp 58-59, where Goldhagen draws a parallel between a memorandum probably written by Pacelli in 1919 and the language and imagery used by Streicher in *Der Stürmer*. Moreover, some scholars are uncertain whether the memorandum was written by Pacelli: see Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust* pp 72-73.

<sup>99</sup> See for example *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* pp 58-61 and 64-65. In part, Phayer is drawing here on the earlier work of Saul Friedländer in *Pius XII and the Third Reich*.

<sup>100</sup> In Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* see especially pp 93-97; John Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust*, for example p 127: ‘[Pius XII] ... was heavily inclined to maintain both the concordat and diplomatic relations at practically any cost’; or p 209: ‘The Vatican diplomatic system was such that it could have been an effective means to demonstrate humanitarian concern for all the victims of the war. That it was not was the responsibility of Pius XII who chose to emphasize diplomacy, then decided not to use it to its full effectiveness.’

research by Phayer has drawn attention to how, even after the war, Pius XII was reluctant to speak. In 1946 Jacques Maritain, the French Ambassador to the Holy See, sent a letter to the then Archbishop Martini in the Vatican, asking that Pius XII speak about what had happened to the Jews. Maritain asked the Pope 'to tell the truth to the world', including 'the part that many Catholics had in the development of antisemitism'. By way of reply Pius XII directed Martini to a statement he had made the preceding year, but Maritain was disappointed, because in the statement the pope had not directly mentioned the Jews or antisemitism.<sup>101</sup>

Also drawing on recent research in the Vatican archives Thomas Brechenmacher has also stressed the hidden fear in Rome that Nazism would (unless inhibited by a concordat) launch a new *Kulturkampf* against a vulnerable church.<sup>102</sup>

Pius XII has his defenders too. Their approach is generally iterative, using the same material with slightly different emphases and varying levels of scholarship. These books share other characteristics. Unlike, say, Zuccotti and Phayer, there is little underlying research and more reliance on published documents. Pierre Blet, for instance, in *Pius XII and the Second World War* attempts a vigorous defence of Pius XII by assembling evidence almost entirely from the 12 volumes of the *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*.<sup>103</sup> Most of the information that he draws on had been in the public realm for 30 years. Despite his

---

<sup>101</sup> Michael Phayer, 'A Plea Unanswered: Jacques Maritain, Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust' *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* XXI (New York: OUP for the Avraham Harman Institute, 2005) pp 6 and 9.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Brechenmacher, 'Pope Pius XI, Eugenio Pacelli, and the Persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939: New Sources from the Vatican Archives', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 27.2 (2005) pp 20-22.

<sup>103</sup> Pierre Blet, Angelo Martini, Burkhardt Schneider and Robert Graham (eds), *Actes et Documents du Saint Siège Relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale* (12 volumes in 11; Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1965-1981). At the start of each chapter of *Pius XII and the Second World War*, Blet gives references from this material.



motivation to defend Pius XII, he does not engage with the critics and sometimes defies a plain reading of the evidence. For example, with regard to papal statement about the invasion of the Low Countries (see above) he says that the Pope ‘sent three telegrams which, under the form of condolences to the three sovereigns, *unequivocally condemned* the invasion of the three states.’<sup>104</sup> The telegrams did no such thing; they breathed prayerful concern but avoided condemning or even naming Nazi Germany.<sup>105</sup> Blet portrays Pius XII as convinced that to speak out about the Jews would only make things worse for them. However, given that we know so little about what Pius XII thought about the Jewish situation, this defence is weak.<sup>106</sup>

Unlike Blet, Margherita Marchione ranges far and wide in her evidence to defend Pius XII, but the effect is of material amassed with little discrimination. Her book *Consensus and Controversy* is written in a breathless, resentful tone, and there are many errors. Despite engaging with the work of the critics, she moves to bald assertions like the following:

Pius XII did not fail. He set up a Catholic refugee committee in Rome, which provided thousands of Jews with baptismal certificates, financial aid and other arrangements so they could enter the United States as ‘Catholics’. He initiated

---

<sup>104</sup> Pierre Blet, *Pius XII and the Second World War* p 282, emphasis added.

<sup>105</sup> The text of the telegrams can be found in Blet *et al.* (eds) *The Holy See and the War in Europe* Volume 1 pp 413-414.

<sup>106</sup> On the Holocaust, see chapters 7-9 and pp 232-241. On Pius XII not wanting to exacerbate the situation, see pp 284-285.

and sustained rescue programs all over Europe, primarily through his nuncios.<sup>107</sup>

The rescue programmes she mentions were the initiative of individual nuncios and except for Roncalli in Sofia and later Istanbul, it is questionable whether they were programmes or discrete acts. As for the astonishing assertion that a papal rescue committee was established, no source is given for this. Marchione seems to be ascribing to the Pope the work of others, such as the Jewish defence and rescue organisation Delasem, and the French Franciscan, Pierre Marie Benoit. If so, Marchione is simply ignoring the argument of Susan Zuccotti that these rescue efforts received no papal encouragement. Yet Marchione has read Zuccotti and tries to undermine some of Zuccotti's conclusions.<sup>108</sup> A more successful defence of Pius XII is given by Ronald Rychlak in *Hitler, the War and the Pope*. Like Blet, he is convinced that explicit public condemnation by the Pope of Nazi activity would only have made things worse for those whom Pius XII would be trying to protect.<sup>109</sup>

Jose Sanchez in *Pius XII and the Holocaust* surveys the work of previous writers, including critics of Pius XII, and engages with them carefully. He concludes that Pius XII was not antisemitic, and did not temporise towards Nazism out of fear of communism. Sanchez does give some credence to the argument that Pius XII wanted to remain neutral in order to arbitrate if the occasion arose, and as a former diplomat

---

<sup>107</sup> Margherita Marchione, *Consensus and Controversy: Defending Pope Pius XII* (New York: Paulist, 2002) p 110. For mistakes, see on this page alone a list of cities that includes 'Le Claire' and 'Bloernfontein', presumably Le Caire [Cairo] and Bloemfontein.

<sup>108</sup> For Marchione against Zuccotti, see *Consensus and Controversy* pp 55-60.

<sup>109</sup> Ronald Rychlak, *Hitler, the War and the Pope* pp 169-172, citing Polish and Dutch experiences. He is wrong, however to see (p 172) that Protestant Jews in the Netherlands were not deported. In fact, some were. See J. Presser, *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry* (London: Souvenir Press, 1965) pp 312-313.

believed that diplomacy might succeed where other approaches did not. He concludes that Pius XII's main motivation for silence was his fear that speaking out might make things worse. However, to bolster this claim, he says that 'few people outside of the Nazi hierarchy knew that the Germans intended to kill *all* of the Jews. Did the Pope know this? Even if he had been told of it did he believe it possible, or even comprehensible?' <sup>110</sup> He cites Owen Chadwick to the effect that it was impossible at that time to conceive of what the Nazis were intending, and that this was a failure of imagination, not of nerve.<sup>111</sup> There is merit in this argument. Some Jews too, found it impossible to comprehend what lay ahead, even when warned. Against this has to be weighed the detailed information available to the Pope. As Saul Friedländer and others after him have pointed out, Myron Taylor, President Roosevelt's personal envoy to the Holy See, on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1942 handed a letter to Cardinal Miglione, the Vatican Secretary of State, with explicit details of the deportations and killings of Jews in Eastern Europe. It referred to 'butchering' several times.<sup>112</sup> The letter came from a combatant nation, and the information within it came from the Jewish Agency office in Geneva, so might have been doubted. But Morley shows that comparable information was coming in from elsewhere, chiefly from the Vatican's own diplomatic network throughout 1942 and 1943. Morley concludes that the Vatican Secretary of State was well informed.<sup>113</sup>

A failure of imagination is understandable; but in the light of the growing information available, it remains a failure, and points back to the character of Pius

---

<sup>110</sup> Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust* p 177.

<sup>111</sup> Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust* p 45.

<sup>112</sup> The text of the letter is in Friedländer, *Pius XII and the Third Reich* pp 121-122.

<sup>113</sup> Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy during the Holocaust* pp 202-203.

XII. Here it is useful to contrast the experience of Cardinal Hinsley and Pope Pius. Before becoming Archbishop of Westminster, Hinsley had been parish priest, high school headmaster, rector of a seminary and a roving archbishop representing the Vatican in British colonies in Africa. The latter experience in particular helped him sympathise with those in a different culture; when the Italians invaded Abyssinia in 1935 he said in a sermon that Africa, ‘that ill-used continent’, had become ‘a playground for scientific slaughter’, its people victims of the ‘avaricious purposes’ of white people.<sup>114</sup> Hinsley had also shown an unusual independence of character. He was a priest of the Leeds diocese, but he fell out with his diocese after the diocesan authorities rejected his plans to expand the school of which he was headmaster. Hinsley requested and was given a transfer to another diocese, a most unusual step for a Catholic priest and one that could have given him the reputation of a malcontent.<sup>115</sup>

By contrast with this experience of the world, the future Pope Pius XII had grown up in a family dedicated to Vatican service, and had passed most of his life after ordination within its diplomatic corps. Owen Chadwick says that the hesitancy shown by Pius XII in composing the encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* illustrated an aspect of his character, namely an indecisiveness that could have sprung from fastidiousness, or worry about being misunderstood.<sup>116</sup> Even John Cornwell, a fierce critic of Pius XII, does not doubt the man’s aspirations to holiness nor his austere piety.<sup>117</sup> But his upbringing and formation in life seem to have left him ill-equipped for a global leadership role during an international war with accompanying genocide.

---

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Heenan, *Hinsley* p 56.

<sup>115</sup> Heenan, *Hinsley* pp 28-29. In the Catholic system, diocesan clergy are tied to their own diocese.

<sup>116</sup> Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* p 83.

<sup>117</sup> Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope* chapter 15.

### Catholic non-Aryan Christians

The pre-Vatican II Catholic Church was at pains to safeguard its claims to be the true embodiment of the Christian Church. It felt that joint projects with other churches would erode this distinctiveness, and so when faced with the difficulty of helping Catholic refugees, Hinsley established a separate Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany. The Committee was formally constituted in London on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1938. It followed the usual pattern, with Hinsley as president, and a general committee of notables, chaired by Viscount Fitzalan. The Executive Committee was chaired by Fr Joseph Geraerts, with Fr Edward Quinn, a fluent German speaker as its secretary.<sup>118</sup> Notwithstanding Catholic separatism, the Catholic Committee soon moved into Bloomsbury House so that it could co-operate more closely with other Christian and Jewish refugee organisations.

The Catholic Committee was established to aid all Catholic refugees from Germany and Austria, but it included non-Aryan Catholics in its responsibilities. The formal public launch of the Catholic Committee took place at Archbishop's House in Westminster on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1938. A report by the Executive Committee tabled at this meeting said that in nine months the Committee had been involved with 1,425 cases, and 'the bulk are Catholics, converted from Judaism, married to Jews, or having some Jewish blood in their veins, whose only hope lies in immigration'. The Committee decided that instead of raising substantial funds itself it would seek to

---

<sup>118</sup> WDA Hinsley Papers Hi 2/84: Minutes, Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany (CCRG), March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1938. Quinn was appointed secretary in December 1938.

drum up support in the Catholic churches for the Baldwin Appeal for Refugees, and would be represented on the Allocation Committee of the Appeal.<sup>119</sup>

Early in January 1939 Hinsley sent out a letter to the bishops of England and Wales asking their support in fund-raising for the Baldwin Appeal, on the understanding that this would benefit the Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany. He enclosed a letter which could be read in churches, and background notes for the clergy. He quoted the words of Pius XI mentioned above, that spiritually Catholics were descendants of Abraham and that it was not possible for them to be antisemites. He said that ‘among those affected by the Aryan Laws are many thousands of our fellow-Catholics ... also many exiles who are suffering solely for their attachment to the Christian faith or the ideals of freedom.’<sup>120</sup> By May 1939 the Catholic Committee was anticipating an expenditure of £25,000 on refugee children over the next two years.<sup>121</sup> The Catholic Church co-ordinated its refugee work with that of the other churches from 1939 onwards. The Baldwin Fund gave money to the Christian Council for Refugees, which was the overall co-ordinating body for church work among refugees. The Council then allocated funds to its constituent organisations, including the Catholic Committee. The Catholic Committee agreed that for reasons of economy and efficiency a single case-working agency would be established for adult Christian refugees, and this was allocated to the Friends (Quakers), with Fr Edward Quinn assigned to work with them and to have special responsibility for some 1,900 Catholic adults. A separate Catholic Children’s Committee continued to work with the 650 refugee children in its care. Bankton

---

<sup>119</sup> WDA Hi 2/84, Minutes of General Committee, CCRG, December 19<sup>th</sup> 1938.

<sup>120</sup> WDA Hi 2/84, ‘A Draft of a Suggested Letter to be Read in the Churches’ January 8<sup>th</sup> 1939.

<sup>121</sup> WDA Hi2/84, David Matthew to Cardinal Hinsley, May 12<sup>th</sup> 1939.

House, Crawley Down, Sussex, was lent by the Davis family to be a reception centre and holiday home for refugee children.<sup>122</sup>

Many of the children who arrived came in the *Kindertransport*. Catholic representatives would attend the main reception centre for the children at Dovercourt near Ipswich, and seek out Catholic children. They would be found foster homes and places in schools. Many of the schools run by religious orders had offered places for refugee children. Franz Wahle, for example, arrived aged 10 from Vienna in 1939, and went to a foster home. When old enough he boarded at Stoneyhurst in Lancashire, a Jesuit public school.<sup>123</sup> For him it was a happy combination. Not so for the five-year-old Elfriede Colman who was placed by the Catholic Committee with a Lesbian couple who quarrelled over her. Later she was sent to a convent school where the German nuns were pro-Nazi.<sup>124</sup> Some others, however, had good memories of their convent or Benedictine school education.<sup>125</sup> Those children who could not be found homes were sent to the network of Nazareth Houses, run by the Sisters of Nazareth throughout England.

As in the campaign for non-Aryan Christians, these children and adult refugees were helped by the churches because they were Christian. More specifically, they were helped by the Catholic Church because they were Catholics. It was recognised that they were suffering because they were Jewish by descent. At the public launch of the Committee Cardinal Hinsley noted that in Germany

---

<sup>122</sup> WDA Griffin Papers, Gr 1/11/b, Report, *Catholic Committee for Refugees 1938-1951* [Typescript] p 3.

<sup>123</sup> Personal communication from Francis Wahle.

<sup>124</sup> Leverton and Lowensohn, eds, *I Came Alone* pp 59-60. The foster home was in Hendon. The *Catholic Directory* for the period shows a St Joseph's School there run by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ who also worked in the German parish in Whitechapel, St Boniface.

<sup>125</sup> See the recollections of Lilyann Rosenberg and Francis Steiner in Leverton and Lowensohn, eds, *I Came Alone*, pp 267 and 329.

The idolatry of 'Blood and Race' is being introduced into many corporate forms of German life ... the Nuremberg laws of September 15<sup>th</sup> 1935, and the administrative measures which have amplified them, not only disenfranchise all Jews and make it all but impossible for them to earn their living; they extend this ostracism to non-Aryan Christians also ... This affects a large number of Catholics, especially in Vienna.<sup>126</sup>

So, as with the non-Aryan Christians helped by Bell and his friends, these were Jews who were not quite Jews. Even so, Hinsley recognised clearly the racial element, with his reference to 'Blood and Soil'. He also understood the suffering and isolation brought by the antisemitic laws of the Reich. But the result was a campaign for Catholics to help their own, as Hinsley made clear in the notes sent to parish clergy to help them in drumming up support for the Baldwin Appeal: 'Catholics could not keep aloof from this movement, especially when it is realised that some one hundred and fifty thousand of the actual or potential victims are Christian, and the majority of them Catholics.'<sup>127</sup> Hinsley could have meant Catholics who were at risk because of political opposition to Hitler, as well as Catholics of Jewish descent, but either way the gist of the message was that Catholics should help Catholics.

Although most of those of Jewish descent who found refuge in Catholic circles were already Christian, there were some refugees who were Jewish *per se*. Some

---

<sup>126</sup> WDA Hi 2/84, Catholic Committee for Refugees, General Committee meeting, December 19<sup>th</sup> 1938, typescript, 'Catholic Refugees from Germany' p 1.

<sup>127</sup> WDA Hi 2/84, 'Observations on the German Refugee Problem which may be useful to Parish Priests'.



Catholics, like other Christians, encouraged Jewish refugees to convert to Christianity. As with Protestants, however, this tended to be a specialised ministry. For example, the Sisters of Sion, through the Catholic Guild of Israel, supported those Jews who had converted to Catholicism and prayed and worked for the conversion of Jews. They ran a correspondence centre in London which sent out literature in Yiddish and English explaining the Catholic faith. In a letter to Archbishop Bernard Griffin who succeeded Cardinal Hinsley, Sister Marie Baptista wrote: ‘We have also begun here a Home for Jewish children whose parents were the victims of Nazi persecution and we hope that when Europe is liberated our Convents there will have many parentless little ones to send to us.’<sup>128</sup> The inept phrasing suggests, surely, not that she hopes that Jewish children would be parentless; but that Jewish children who were parentless would find a home in the convents of her order and would be formed into Christians. Three years later, another Sister of Sion wrote to the now Cardinal Griffin, in response to a query from him, confirming that Jewish women and girls who had been refugees with the Sisters of Sion had been encouraged to convert. Most were Austrian, although ‘During the war ... we had several Jews of Czech origin under instruction, most of whom have since left for America or Brazil.’<sup>129</sup>

In sum, from a late start, the Catholic Church in England did play its part in helping Jewish refugees. However, these were mostly non-Aryan Christians. Some,

---

<sup>128</sup> WDA Gr 3/9, Sr Marie Baptista of the Sisters of Sion to Archbishop Bernard Griffin, May 14<sup>th</sup> 1944. The information about the Catholic Guild of Israel comes from a leaflet in the same file.

<sup>129</sup> Sister Marie Francisena to Cardinal Griffin, March 6<sup>th</sup> 1947, WDA Gr 3/9. The Sisters of Sion are now dedicated to Christian-Jewish relations and have taken a prominent role in combating antisemitism in the Catholic Church. They are embarrassed by the conversion aspect of their past. When I asked if I could consult their archives I was told that this would only be possible if I made no mention of their conversion work, and I declined the offer.

at least, of those who were not Christian but from the Jewish mainstream were regarded as possible converts to Catholicism.

A. C. F. Beales and *The Pope and the Jews*

The publication, shortly after the war ended, of a Catholic-sponsored booklet extolling the Vatican's record in helping Jews shows that even then there was concern about this matter. In mid-1944 Archbishop Bernard Griffin wrote to his assistant bishop, Edward Myers: 'I am receiving a number of criticisms about the various pronouncements made by the present Holy Father concerning the war.' He suggested asking Arnold Lunn to write a booklet explaining the approach taken by Pius XII.<sup>130</sup>

It is not clear from this letter whether Griffin was countering criticism specifically about the attitude of Pius XII to the papal attitude to the Jews. There is no record of any reply from Lunn. It is possible that this project eventually led to the booklet, *The Pope and the Jews*, written by A. C. F. Beales, and published by the Catholic-run Sword of the Spirit organisation in September 1945.<sup>131</sup> Sword of the Spirit was founded in 1940 and sought to bring together Catholics who were keen to debate and plan for a better post-war world on the basis of Christian democratic principles. Initially it had been ecumenical, but swiftly foundered on the rock of Catholic exclusivism. Beales was a lecturer in education in the University of London and active in Sword of the Spirit.

---

<sup>130</sup> WDA Gr 1/7 Griffin to Myers, June 9<sup>th</sup> 1944,.

<sup>131</sup> A. C. F. Beales, *The Pope and the Jews: The Struggle of the Catholic Church against Anti-Semitism during the War* (London: Sword of the Spirit, 1945). Arthur Beales was lecturer in education, King's College, London, and also 1941-1945 a producer of talks on the BBC.

Beales gave a straightforward *apologia* for the conduct of the Catholic Church towards the Jews during the war. He said that he wrote ‘to bring out ... the struggle of the Pope and the Church against the persecution of the Jews in our generation.’<sup>132</sup> He made expansive claims in grandiloquent language. Beales said that during the Nazi campaign against the Jews ‘the Catholic Church everywhere, from His Holiness the Pope down to the humblest parish priest in all the countries where the scourge [antisemitism] was rampant, has led the world in denouncing it and in trying to defeat it.’<sup>133</sup> In a country by country survey, Beales then highlighted Catholic action against antisemitism, including rescue activity. Generally his record was accurate. Regarding France, for example, he wrote about the protests of Cardinal Gerlier and Archbishop Saliège, and the rescue work of Fr Pierre Chaillet. There were inaccuracies: he cited the story of Pius XII making up a deficit of 14 kgs of gold demanded from the Jewish community of Rome, and also claims that the papal nuncio to France, Valerio Valeri ‘made an energetic protest to the Vichy Government’ in July 1942 against the deportation of Jews from France. However, these stories were widely believed at the time.<sup>134</sup>

What is interesting is that the book was felt to be necessary. Clearly, there was concern in Catholic circles in England lest the authority of the Church be weakened by any perceived indifference to the Jews. Not just the record of the Vatican, but also that of British Catholics was painted in the most favourable light, with the claim that ‘British Catholics were prominent from the start in the work of protest and relief that

---

<sup>132</sup> Beales, *The Pope and the Jews* p 4.

<sup>133</sup> Beales, *The Pope and the Jews* p 5.

<sup>134</sup> On the gold ransom, see Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows* pp 153-155; on Valeri, see Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust* pp 56 & 58. It is not clear what representations, if any, Valeri made to Vichy. Morley believes he may have spoken to some officials.

followed the Nazi pogroms in Germany.’<sup>135</sup> The reality was different. Senior Catholics had spoken at large public protest meetings, but until 1938 very little was done by the Catholic Church, when a Catholic committee joined the long-established the campaign to help non-Aryan Christians. When the war broke out, Hinsley became increasingly outspoken about the persecution of the Jews, and his broadcasts on the BBC were important in this regard. But he was a single voice. No groundswell of protest developed in the Catholic Church as it did in other churches after December 1942, and there were few other Catholic leaders who spoke as Hinsley did on this issue.

James Parkes was incensed by the Beales pamphlet. Parkes opened his review of it in the *Jewish Chronicle* with the words, ‘This is an unusually unpleasant piece of sectarian propaganda’ and described it as ‘contemptible’.<sup>136</sup> Parkes had also been irritated by the Council of Christians and Jews circulating *The Pope and the Jews*. (Beales was a Catholic representative on the Council.) Parkes wrote to Alfred Wiener calling the pamphlet ‘disgusting’ and said that when he had protested against its promotion by the Council, he was told that it would be impolitic for the Council to disapprove of a work by its Catholic representative. Parkes fumed that this was ‘blackmail’ and ‘typical Roman tactics’.<sup>137</sup> Charles Singer, professor of medical history at the University of London and an excoriant of Christian complacency,

---

<sup>135</sup> Beales, *The Pope and the Jews* p 33.

<sup>136</sup> *Jewish Chronicle* December 7<sup>th</sup> 1945, newspaper cutting in SUA MS/60/17/37.

<sup>137</sup> SUA Parkes Papers MS 60/17/37 item 32, Parkes to Wiener, November 24<sup>th</sup> 1945.

agreed with Parkes, wrote a four foolscap page rebuttal of the pamphlet and in a later letter called Beales 'a dirty dog'.<sup>138</sup>

The pamphlet and the ensuing controversy show that even in the immediate post-war period there was anxiety in Catholic circles about how to portray the Church's wartime attitude towards the Jews. The response was to produce a booklet putting the best possible face on the Catholic Church's record in these matters.

Hinsley had given the Catholic Church a presence in the national spotlight. He spoke clearly about the persecution of the Jews. This was especially important in his broadcasts, which were highly regarded within the BBC. In keeping with the Catholic Church's concern for itself, he always juxtaposed Catholic and Jewish suffering. This was self-interest at work, but it was more than that. Joining the suffering together gave him a locus in the whole area of persecution – and also subtly appealed to fellow-feeling of Catholics, whose memory of past persecution in Britain was strong. In speaking about the Jews Hinsley was trespassing on the international stage, which was watched carefully by the Vatican. He seems, in fact, to have grasped the issues and to have used the greater freedom of wartime to speak more openly than he would have otherwise. The booklet by A. C. F. Beales shows that concern about the record of Pope Pius XII is not a recent thing, and that even immediately after the war, there were those who wanted to make sure that history judged him kindly. Nothing, however, could erase the record of antisemitism in Catholic publications during this period, and to these publications we now turn.

---

<sup>138</sup> SUA Parkes Papers MS 60/17/37 item 50, November 7<sup>th</sup> 1945 (the four-page rebuttal), and item 19, Singer to Parkes, November 11<sup>th</sup> 1945.

## CHAPTER SIX:

## THE CATHOLIC PRESS ON THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS 1933-1945

For a community of some 2.3 million people, many of them working-class, the Catholic Church in England possessed a surprising number of newspapers and journals. This was partly because like Jews, Catholics had a strong sense of identity. No single publication had the predominance in the Catholic market that the *Church Times* had in the Anglican market. Accordingly three publications have been selected for examination: the weekly *Catholic Herald*; the monthly *Blackfriars*, published by the Dominican Order; and another weekly, *The Tablet*, which had more in-depth, analytical articles. The *Catholic Herald* was chosen because it had a substantial circulation and a record of antisemitism; *Blackfriars* because the Dominicans were an influential religious order with a progressive reputation; and *The Tablet* because of its wide circulation among the Catholic intelligentsia.

*Catholic Herald*

The weekly *Catholic Herald* had been founded in 1884. A writer on the Catholic press in the 1950 said that it aimed 'to deal with every-day world news of all kinds from the Catholic standpoint' and its readership of some 100,000 made it 'an established Catholic force'.<sup>1</sup> From 1934 to 1963 the *Catholic Herald* was edited by Michael de la Bedoyère, the son of a French count and English mother. With a background in public school and Oxford, he had roots in England, but his French

---

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Dwyer, 'The Catholic Press, 1850-1950' in G. A. Beck (ed) *The English Catholics 1850-1950* (London: Burns Oates, 1950) p 509.

background may have meant that he was particularly open to the influence of French theologians and writers, which was very strong in English Catholicism in this period. His French sympathies extended to Pétain when the Vichy regime was established. The prominent and almost unremitting antisemitism of the *Catholic Herald* during the period under consideration raises the question of whether he might have shared the antisemitism of Charles Maurras and *Action Française*, which saw the Jews as an essentially foreign element working with freemasonry to take control of French society. As will be seen, this was strikingly similar to views frequently expressed in the *Catholic Herald* under de la Bedoyère.

Even before his editorship, the paper had a record of antisemitism. From 1924 onwards the Board of Deputies of British Jews had been protesting against its antisemitic material. In 1929 the Board had asked the Chief Rabbi, Dr J. H. Hertz, to write to Cardinal Bourne about the paper's 'virulent anti-Semitic attacks'.<sup>2</sup> The Nazi accession to power in Germany occurred a year before de la Bedoyère took over the editorship. In that year the paper said that 'Jewry is the leading and bitter enemy of the Catholic Church'. Sometimes the paper echoed the traditional language of antisemitism, for example that the Jews were an accursed race: their rejection of the Messiah 'set the mark upon their brow which still rests there.'<sup>3</sup> The Jews were the authors of their own misfortunes, even ultimately of the Nazi attacks on them. The Jews, it opined, 'act and speak and make war against the people among whom they

---

<sup>2</sup> BoD BO4/CAR 011, Letter from Secretary to Chief Rabbi, October 11<sup>th</sup> 1929,. See also the letter of February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1924 to the Editor of the *Catholic Herald*, protesting a 'bitter attack on the Jews in your issue of 16<sup>th</sup> February'.

<sup>3</sup> *Catholic Herald* (CH) April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1932 p 5; and April 1<sup>st</sup> 1933, p 5. A characteristic of the paper was a curious mixture of reportage and comment. This was the case in these and other articles cited in this chapter.

live'. Jews besmirched their own name by engaging in prostitution, drug trafficking and numerous frauds. In fact, the Nazis were simply paying back to the Jews the Jewish people's own separateness and clannishness: 'Nazism is just Jewry reversed so far as national and racial and religious prejudice and intolerance are concerned.'<sup>4</sup>

In mid-1933 the *Catholic Herald* reported a meeting in a Catholic hall in West London to protest persecution of Christians in Russia, Mexico and Spain, where two speakers had pinned the blame on Jews. Captain A. E. N. Howard told the meeting that Jewish finance from America channelled through freemasonry was behind the revolutions in Spain and Mexico which had resulted in persecution of the Catholic Church in both countries. A woman chemist, Dr A. Homer, added that Jews 'aimed, by every means' to establish 'a Jewish Empire with Palestine as the centre and the gateway to the East ... They were after world domination.'<sup>5</sup> The *Catholic Herald* was so impressed by Dr Homer that it published a series of articles by her on the links between Bolshevism, Jews and financial manipulation. The series began on October 21<sup>st</sup> and ran for three weeks. There were many antisemitic assertions, such as:

The European War and its aftermath dealt staggering blows to Western (Christian) Civilisation. By contrast, however, International Jewry has emerged therefrom with enhanced financial and political power in all parts of the world.

---

<sup>4</sup> *CH* May 13<sup>th</sup> 1933 p 5; May 27<sup>th</sup> 1933 p 8; September 16<sup>th</sup> 1933, p 8. The latter article is headed: 'Nazis and Jews: Bigotry Common to Both: Jewish Racial Exclusiveness.'

<sup>5</sup> *CH* July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1933 p 9.



Through the use of the Money Power, International Jew Finance is now able to direct the internal and external policies of the Governments of the impoverished States of Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Homer had almost certainly been influenced by that notorious forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which first made its appearance in Western Europe in 1920 and which circulated through the world in millions of copies in the 1920s and 1930s purporting to describe how an international cabal of Jews plotted to take over the world.<sup>7</sup> On behalf of the Board of Deputies, B. A. Zaiman complained that such articles, amounted to ‘a libel ... intended to bring the Jews as a whole into the hatred and contempt of their fellow-citizens.’<sup>8</sup> This was the tradition that de la Bedoyère inherited. He expanded the list of writers for the paper, recruiting some well-known Catholic names; he raised the standards of writing and vastly improved the design. But the antisemitism remained.

The Nuremberg laws of September 1935 passed virtually without comment in the newspaper. In fact, the *Catholic Herald* seemed to think that they were rather a good thing. An editorial a little later described ‘Hitler’s own suggestion of a return to cultural segregation’ as being ‘helpful and constructive’ compared to liberal ideas.<sup>9</sup> Three years later *Kristallnacht* impinged more strongly on the consciousness of the paper. There was a front page editorial and two articles analysing the pogrom. The editorial said that the protests about *Kristallnacht* in Britain and elsewhere were

---

<sup>6</sup> *CH* October 28<sup>th</sup> 1933 p 4.

<sup>7</sup> Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Serif, 1996) pp viii and 29.

<sup>8</sup> Zaiman to the *Catholic Herald*, January 12<sup>th</sup> 1934, BoD BO4/CAR 013.

<sup>9</sup> *CH* January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1936, p 8.

insincere, because the same people had not protested about persecution of Catholics in Mexico and Spain. Inside, Arnold Lunn laboured through seven reasons for antisemitism and explained why each reason was flawed. Despite the air of defending the Jews, the article effectively conceded that the usual arguments against them were partly true.<sup>10</sup>

The *Catholic Herald* editorial the following week returned to the subject and ignored even Lunn's lukewarm defence to say that the Jews were responsible for their own misfortunes:

Persecution ... is at least understandable when the ideal of the State makes the expulsion or liquidation of certain hostile elements a real necessity ... Now in the case of Jewry there is no doubt of its being a hostile element to certain regimes. Jews, unlike Catholics, have a loyalty to their own society which is more than spiritual or moral; it is racial and physical. Jews are traditionally middlemen, money-lenders, financiers and wielders of secret influence through the control of purse-string; as such they will be repugnant to every regime which tries to diminish the power of money.<sup>11</sup>

A leading London Catholic wrote to Cardinal Hinsley to complain. Dr Laetitia Fairfield was Senior Medical Officer of London County Council and active in the Labour Party. Her letter to Hinsley protested about the attitude of the *Catholic*

---

<sup>10</sup> *CH* November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1938, pp 1 (editorial) and 7 (Lunn). The antisemitic arguments that Lunn dismisses are 1) The Bolshevist revolution was inspired by Jews 2) Jews lead subversive movements 3) 'Jews direct the world-wide campaign against Christian civilisation' 4) Jews are unpatriotic 5) They exploit vice 6) They are clannish and promote one another 7) They are financially extortionate.

<sup>11</sup> *CH* November 25<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 8.

*Herald* which had described *Kristallnacht* as ‘a fuss about a few burned synagogues’; the paper, she added, took a consistently anti-refugee attitude.<sup>12</sup>

The *Herald* did not change. Stanley James, a 73-year-old journalist, contributed two editorial page articles of vitriolic antisemitism in 1942. In January he wrote that Nazi racism was insignificant compared with Jewish racism, indeed amounted to ‘poetic justice for the racial fanatics who avoided any sort of contact with the Gentiles’, namely the Jews, who had been condemned to be ‘wanderers upon the earth’. The September article was his response to the news seeping out of Europe of the slaughter of Jews. Such news, he fretted, ‘must not blind us to the fact that the Jew *is* a problem’. The Jew ‘resists assimilation .... The case is made worse by his aggressiveness and by the superior abilities which enable him to push his way to the front in every profession or business he enters.’ James links the classic charge of deicide with the assertion that Hitler was not extreme: ‘No one would think of attributing Hitler’s anti-Semitism to an excessive hatred for those who, with the Roman authorities, were responsible for the Crucifixion.’<sup>13</sup>

Given this background, it is no surprise that the *Catholic Herald* doubted the reports from Europe about the deportation of Jews leading to mass killing. Throughout September 1942 the paper urged caution and warned that the Jews were not blameless. Referring to deportations from France, it commented that ‘There can be no doubt that Jews and refugees who found it so easy to establish themselves in Republican France contributed to her growing internal anarchy, and a new France was

---

<sup>12</sup> London Metropolitan Archive, London County Council Archives LCC/PH/Gen/03/026/001 Fairfield to Hinsley January 16<sup>th</sup> 1939. For Fairfield’s background, see *The Catholic Who’s Who*, *ad loc.* ‘Fairfield’.

<sup>13</sup> *CH* January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942 p 4; September 25<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 4.

entitled to deal with a problem that affected her well-being and security.’ The paper believed that the deportations were for slave labour.<sup>14</sup> The following week it repeated that readers ‘should avoid swallowing wholesale the current reports of the anti-Jewish persecution’ adding that because Jews were resented on the Continent, ‘it is false to assume that anti-Semitic measures are necessarily the result of Nazi influence.’<sup>15</sup> Following Eden’s statement to the House of Commons on December 17<sup>th</sup>, the *Catholic Herald* still urged caution and implied that the reports were exaggerated.<sup>16</sup>

Thereafter little appeared in the paper about the mass killings, until April 1945. On April 27<sup>th</sup> the *Catholic Herald* returned to the subject in an editorial, prompted by the liberation of Belsen by the British Army on April 15<sup>th</sup> (Belsen was the only camp named in the editorial). The editorial began promisingly enough, referring to the liberation of ‘terrible concentration and torture camps in the heart of Germany’, linking this to ‘reports of frightful Nazi atrocities, notably in Poland’. But the paper then went on to say that ‘it is clear that the horrors were the means of punishing not the enemies of Germany, but the enemies of the Hitlerite regime – a very different thing.’<sup>17</sup> Like the Anglican *Church Times* in its editorial on Belsen, the *Catholic Herald* did not mention the Jews.<sup>18</sup> This was in keeping with initial reports in Britain about Belsen which had downplayed the fact that Jews were a large proportion of the victims. Even so, by implying that the victims were ‘enemies of the Hitlerite regime’ the editorial missed the point that Belsen had become a site of mass death. It could be taken as a reminder that such people were not hostile to Germany, only to its dictator,

---

<sup>14</sup> CH September 11<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 4.

<sup>15</sup> CH September 18<sup>th</sup> 1942 p 4.

<sup>16</sup> CH December 24<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 4.

<sup>17</sup> CH April 27<sup>th</sup> 1945, p 4.

<sup>18</sup> For the *Church Times* coverage and more about Belsen, see Chapter 3 of this thesis.

and as such were innocent. Or it could be taken as implying that because the victims were enemies of Hitler, they were partly responsible for their own suffering. But neither interpretation makes much sense. The victims were not the enemies of Hitler, nor were they the authors of their own misfortune. The editorial misconstrued the situation, and by not acknowledging Jewish suffering at Belsen, it was in keeping with the rest of the paper's coverage of the Jews. The editorial did call for those guilty for the horrors to be punished, but it also said that the ordinary German people were victims of Hitler too, a claim that effectively wiped out the special suffering of Jews at the hands of the Nazi regime.

One striking feature of the *Catholic Herald* is how clearly the antisemitic stereotypes appear. Jews are materialistic, aggressive, and clannish; a people doomed to wander the face of the earth; rootless, they do not identify with the nation. They are Bolshevist revolutionaries, and capitalist manipulators; either way they aim for world domination.

The antisemitism could have been a lingering reflexive Catholic anti-Judaism. However it seems to have been strengthened by the French background of Michael de la Bedoyère. Under his editorship the paper contained many articles portraying the Catholic Church as a bastion against a host of enemies, represented by republicanism, Freemasonry, anticlericalists and Jews. These were not just enemies of the church, but also capable of undermining a nation from within. Even capitalists were partly to blame, for they promoted an urban, rootless society, rather than rural society with its traditional values. After the fall of France in 1940, de la Bedoyère blamed 'the secularisation of French education by the anti-clerical and Masonic powers that have

ruled France in the Third Republic'. The press in France had been controlled by 'capitalism and money-power'. This money-power, and 'pink intelligentsia' were also trying to ruin Britain 'for the sake of internationalisms whose magnetic poles are cosmopolitan New York and Moscow.'<sup>19</sup> This is simply coded language for Jews who were seen as in the van when it came to freemasons, capitalists, internationalists and Communists.

From the mid-1880s a right-wing element in French politics had increasingly blamed Jews for the ills of France, real and imagined. The journalist Edouard Drumont, founder of the antisemitic newspaper *La Libre Parole*, said that confiscation of the property of manipulative Jews would allow experiment of collective ownership of the factories by the workers. In such odd ways a 'progressive' stance was yoked together with antisemitism. John McManners says that the more extreme element of the right believed that Jews were 'responsible for the unnatural harshness of capitalistic society ... in which religion is scorned and the family imperilled.'<sup>20</sup> Parliamentary democracy was held to be no answer, for it played into the hands of crooked financiers.<sup>21</sup> One of the most prominent promoters of this approach was Charles Maurras. Of Maurras it has been said that his

love of monarchy, hierarchy, and the rural virtues was paralleled by his hatred of the republic democratic institutions, and of the ... recently naturalised foreigners, and above all the Jews. He believed that the Jews – together with

---

<sup>19</sup> CH July 5<sup>th</sup> 1940, p 4.

<sup>20</sup> John McManners, *Church and State in France 1870-1914* (London: SPCK, 1972) p 122.

<sup>21</sup> J. S. McClelland, ed., *The French Right from de Maistre to Maurras* (London: Cape, 1970), 'Introduction' by McClelland, p 32.

their allies, the Freemasons ... sought to control the entire political life of France.<sup>22</sup>

Much of this is reflected in the attitude of De la Bedoyère too, as is witnessed by material cited above from July 1940. Two years later his views had not changed. In a letter to Bishop David Mathew he wrote frankly that both himself and his newspaper were sympathetic to Vichy France.<sup>23</sup> Vichy appealed because Pétain's government embodied a good deal of this ideology of the right.<sup>24</sup>

The *Catholic Herald* on many occasions referred to Jews as the enemy of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular. The paper's worldview was one of the Church under attack. There was, indeed, severe persecution in the 1920s and 1930s. In the Soviet Union the Orthodox Church barely survived, and the Eastern Rite Catholics in the Ukraine had been wiped out. In Mexico, and in Civil War Spain, Catholics had died in a struggle which they saw as one for the freedom of the Church. The anguish felt by the *Catholic Herald* was well-founded. Both Cardinal Hinsley and the *Catholic Herald* referred to persecution of Catholics. But Hinsley made this Catholic suffering a means of solidarity with the Jews; the *Catholic Herald* made it an excuse to evade engagement with Jewish suffering. Hinsley saw Catholics and Jews as facing a common enemy, in the sense that ideologically driven barbarism was the same whether it was Communist or Nazi. The

---

<sup>22</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica* Volume 11 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972) 'Maurras, Charles' p 1135. Maurras (1868-1952) was an atheist, and his writings had been placed on the Index of forbidden books by the Catholic Church. Still, he admired the authoritarian nature of the Catholic Church and hoped the Church would rally to his own vision of traditional France.

<sup>23</sup> Downside Abbey Library, Mathew Papers, de la Bedoyère to Bishop David Mathew, May 28<sup>th</sup> 1942.

<sup>24</sup> McClelland, *The French Right* pp 34-36.

*Catholic Herald* said that since large sections of English society had not spoken out for the Catholics, their indignation about the suffering of the Jews was not sincere.

The *Catholic Herald* responded to the Nazi persecution of the Jews by a mixture of denial and hostility. The denial took the form of simply not reporting it. Compared with the Anglican *Church Times*, for example, there was very little in the *Catholic Herald* about what later generations would call the Holocaust. The hostility took the form of hinting, and sometimes saying outright, that Jews were at least partly to blame for their plight. In this inversion of reality, the paper's response was sometimes to make it seem as if the Jews were perpetrators, not victims. Thus in 1939, after repeated public humiliation of Jews in the streets of Vienna, the *Catholic Herald* published an article by a correspondent saying that 'The pogroms .... caused a revulsion of feeling ... not that the Austrian has any love of the Jew, having, like the Germans, suffered too much at his hands.'<sup>25</sup>

### *Blackfriars*

One of the most influential Catholic journals of this period was the Dominican monthly, *Blackfriars*. Like the Jesuits, the Dominicans are a religious order with a reputation for vigorous intellectual life and breadth of culture. For the Dominicans in Britain, the inter-war years were something of a renaissance. Houses were opened in Oxford in 1921 and in Cambridge in 1938, both seen by the Dominicans as the restoration of friaries suppressed at the Reformation. These houses symbolised the order's desire to be in touch with English intellectual life, bringing it a specifically Catholic dimension. Through their links with other Dominicans in Europe, the

---

<sup>25</sup> *CH* April 28<sup>th</sup> 1939 p5.



English Dominicans were in close touch with developments in European culture. For example, the English Dominican Victor White was one of the best-known collaborators with Carl Jung. The Dominicans sought to bring a Catholic influence to bear on the culture of their day. Nor was the traffic regarded as one-way: it was assumed that new understandings might enhance rather than diminish the commendation of Catholic faith.<sup>26</sup>

*Blackfriars* started in 1924 as part of this drive in Catholic cultural apologetics. Writers in the 1930s included Eric Gill, Nicholas Berdyaev, and Jacques Maritain. The range of articles was impressive. To take 1933 and 1934 alone, articles appeared on such subjects as suicide among the unemployed, the New Deal in America, Stalin, technocracy and poverty, psychoanalysis, Soviet jurisprudence and the future of India. The Dominican movement, if it may be called such, was probably as close as the English Catholic Church came to having a progressive wing at this time.

The pages of *Blackfriars* reveal little sympathy towards the Jews. In fact, shortly after the accession of Hitler to power, an unsigned editorial expressed broad sympathy with the Nazi position. According to the writer,

A definite attempt was being made in Germany to propagate degeneracy. Hitler maintains with some show of reason that this propaganda was financed by Jewish money. Certainly the whole movement of nudism has collapsed under the new regime. The nudist craze was against the ideal of human restraint. The new force does recognise the spiritual value of life, and is

---

<sup>26</sup> See Aidan Nichols, *Dominican Gallery: Portrait of a Culture* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1997) chapters 1 and 2.

opposed to the debasement of the will which is now being propagated here in our country by forces that are ignorantly lending themselves to degeneracy.

It would be difficult to prove that the Jews were really responsible for the indecencies in German literature, art, life; but even when themselves moral, people are often found financing immoral entertainments, not for the sake of the evil effects, but frankly for the sake of the monetary return from them.<sup>27</sup>

The editorial reproduces some of the themes of antisemitism, especially Jewish money-making and the promotion of immorality.

As Jewish suffering became more obvious, *Blackfriars* softened its tone and began to express sympathy, but always implying that there *was* such a thing as a Jewish problem. Several articles appeared in 1934 about Catholics and Fascism. The June issue also saw an article by a Dominican, Ferdinand Valentine, on 'The Film in Education', where he cited a French Catholic writer to the effect that 'the production and distribution of the film in England, America and most other countries is directed by Jews with the intention of undermining the Christian religion.' He immediately adds: 'This may or may or may not be true' - but then cites a litany of Jewish names in the film world, and darkly hints that their interest is not philanthropic.<sup>28</sup> As in the editorial which greeted the Nazi accession to power, this article sees Jews as an amoral force, opposed to Christianity. It typifies other comments about Jews in articles in *Blackfriars* during the 1930s, which first mention accusations about the

---

<sup>27</sup> *Blackfriars* August 1933, pp 640-641.

<sup>28</sup> *Blackfriars* June 1934, p 399.

Jews, then give a disclaimer along the lines of ‘Nobody knows how true this may or may not be’. This tactic successfully insinuates that the Jews are indeed a problem. Even in this intellectual Catholic monthly, there was considerable projection on to the Jews of negative traits and social ills, and the same tendency noted in the *Catholic Herald* to see Jews as the enemy.

This was not the official line of the journal, let alone of the Dominican order. Indeed, *Blackfriars* allowed a variety of viewpoints. A Dominican historian says that the editorial policy during this period ‘was to garner a breadth of material’, and the editorial policy also emphasised topicality.<sup>29</sup> The breadth of articles did allow a different perspective. In June 1936 an article by J. F. T. Prince attacked those were paranoid about Jewish conspiracies.<sup>30</sup> Initially, however, it was not the Nazis but the Communists that held the attention of *Blackfriars*. Throughout the 1930s many articles appear on communism and its threat. In particular, the years 1935-1937 saw considerable preoccupation with Spain and the horror of its civil war, where Dominicans were among those who were executed. There was little direct comment on events in Germany. In November 1935 an article by Luigi Sturzo attacked Nazi idolization of the state and said that Christians should have spoken up in defence of the Jew. He said that this would have been an unpopular step because Jews had undermined traders and taken jobs away from the unemployed - and of course it

---

<sup>29</sup> Allan White, ‘A History of *Blackfriars* and *New Blackfriars*’ in *New Blackfriars* July/August 1996 pp 323-324.

<sup>30</sup> *Blackfriars* June 1936 p 528.

would have put the churches on a confrontation course with the Nazis. Even Sturzo could impugn the Jews while seeming to defend them.<sup>31</sup>

Overall what is most striking about the period 1935-1937 is the *lack* of mention of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, despite the growing brutality within Germany. The Nuremberg laws left little register in *Blackfriars*. What attention there was on Germany came largely from the encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge* of March 1937. The writers in *Blackfriars* evince a growing distaste towards the Nazis, and a fear of what they may do in Germany, but it is a fear for the Catholic Church first and then for Germany as a whole. Jewish concerns are not singled out - even after *Kristallnacht*.

It would have been reasonable to expect that the editors of an intellectual Catholic journal would have reasonably been well-informed by 1939 about the suffering of German Jews. *Kristallnacht* had been headline news. In addition, the constant stream of Jewish refugees into Britain, worried about those they had left behind, slowly raised awareness of what was happening under the Nazis. Yet *Blackfriars* seemed curiously unaffected by these developments. Negative images of Jews persisted, even at this late stage. For example, *Blackfriars* ran an 'Extracts and Comments' section which printed summaries of articles from other periodicals. In April 1939 it summarised an article by Abbé Jacques Leclercq in *La Cité Chrétienne*. The article is an argument against racism, using the parable of the Good Samaritan. However, it begins by asserting: 'The Jews were the first racists. The racist idea is

---

<sup>31</sup> *Blackfriars* November 1935, pp 838-839. An Italian priest, Sturzo had founded the Popular Party in 1919, a forerunner of the Christian Democratic Party. He preferred to go into exile in 1924 rather than live in Italy under Mussolini. He lived in London until 1940 and then in the United States, before returning to Italy when the war ended.

quite alien to Western Europe. Modern German racism betrays its Semitic origin; there was nothing like it among the Germans of history at any period.’<sup>32</sup> It is the same phantasm noted earlier in the *Catholic Herald*. The Jews were, it would seem, to blame for Nazism itself which was only copying racism from the Jews.

Later in 1939 Catholic antisemitism was on full display in an article entitled simply ‘The Jews’, written by one of the best-known Dominicans of the time, Gerald Vann (although at this point he had published only four of the 22 books he was to write in his lifetime).<sup>33</sup> The article he wrote for *Blackfriars* is revealing in the way that it mixes genuine horror at antisemitism with an unconscious perpetuation of crude stereotypes about the Jews. The phrase ‘Jewish problem’ recurs throughout the article. On the one hand he wants to argue against antisemitism, which revolts him and which he clearly abhors. On the other hand, he is convinced that there *is* such a thing as the Jewish problem, typified by a Jewish control of money. So he has conceded more than he realises to antisemitism. He goes on to mention in passing some of the other stereotypes of antisemitism, taking for granted their truth: that Jews are ‘an outcast people’ and spiritually blind.<sup>34</sup> Here is a man of considerable intellect, disturbed by the suffering of the Jews under the Nazis. Yet he is unable to see how the stream of Catholic thought on the Jews which he himself perpetuates has helped to bring about the very situation he deplors.

As late as 1942 another depiction of Jews appeared in an article by an E. Lampert, ‘The Paths of Israel’:

---

<sup>32</sup> *Blackfriars* April 1939 p 398.

<sup>33</sup> For a survey of Vann and his writings, see Nichols, *Dominican Gallery* chapter 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Blackfriars* June 1939 p 419.

Even the most negative and repulsive features of Jewry, its conceit and ostentation, its greed and avarice, which arouse justified repugnance, have their depth, needless to say, concealed ... The Jew seeks to slake his thirst and assuage his torture even in Mammon. Money has a peculiar, mysterious and fascinating power for him ...

Jewish people suffered from a curse ('Israel crucified Christ ... in mad, suicidal self-denial') and were condemned to agony, rejection, exile and dispersion.<sup>35</sup>

Both Vann and Lampert make it clear in their articles that they are aware of contemporary antisemitism, but their preconceptions of the Jews make it impossible to find any analysis which comes to grips with the reality of events on the Continent. Vann is particularly muddled, wanting to combat the 'virulent antisemitism', which is found even in the Church, but he then repeats the very language of contempt which has encouraged antisemitism. His conclusion is that Christians should not 'vilify those who persecute the Jews' but seek 'to solve the problem where the problem exists.'<sup>36</sup> These two writers were certainly aware of Nazi antisemitism. But by utilizing the traditional language of Jews as accursed, grossly material and a threat, they gave a further spin to the antisemitism they claimed to resist. There is little engagement with the reality of the Nazi anti-Jewish campaign. The crisis is cast into some mysterious transcendent realm. *Blackfriars* in its spiritualising of the suffering of the Jews effectively distances itself and its readers from reality, despite occasional

---

<sup>35</sup> *Blackfriars* April 1942 pp 144 and 147-148.

<sup>36</sup> *Blackfriars* June 1939 pp 414 and 419.

statements that Christians should be doing something for this situation. There is little sense that the Catholic Church bears some responsibility.

Those responsible for *Blackfriars* were aware of the Jewish situation at that time. In February 1944 the whole issue was devoted to Judaism. The opening article by the editor, Conrad Pepler, began by asking how it was possible that Hitler 'should have already butchered nearly a fifth of the whole Jewish race.' It condemned antisemitism in the strongest terms and ended by saying that if Jews were exterminated then not only would it be 'a lasting shame upon Christians' but also 'They would have finally and utterly failed Christ.' Pepler's article is a call for Christians to recognise that God has irrevocably chosen the Jewish people, and to regard them as part of a divinely-willed mystery. The article trembles on the brink of recognising a historic and ongoing Christian complicity in bringing about the murder of the Jews of Europe, but cannot quite make the leap. The key passage comes when Pepler uses an interesting psychological approach, saying that Christian hatred of Jews is really a form of self-loathing, for Christians who attack Jews show in themselves the very characteristics that they claim to be attacking. However, Pepler does not say that Jews are blameless. Rather, the 'real wrong-doing and proud selfishness' found among Jews comes from 'those who have lost the spirit of Israel and retained only the intense racial desire for an earthly kingdom'.<sup>37</sup> Most of the other articles continued in this vein of intending to condemn antisemitism while effectively perpetuating a tradition of Christian hostility. An article by Edward Quinn, who at that point was working with Jewish Catholic refugees, asserted that

---

<sup>37</sup> *Blackfriars* February 1944, pp 41-45.

only with the conversion of Jews would the mystery - and again, the problem - of Israel be solved.<sup>38</sup>

Scattered throughout these and other articles is evidence of unease, of a dawning awareness that mass killing of Jews challenges the prevailing Christian attitudes to Judaism. But to admit this would be to admit errors in the teaching of Christian faith, a difficult thing to admit in pre-Vatican II Catholicism

### *The Tablet*

*The Tablet*, founded in 1840, was probably the most respected Catholic weekly journal in England during the period under review. From 1923-1936 it was edited by Ernest Oldmeadow, who had 'a decidedly Puritanical attitude in anything that he regarded as a question of morals.'<sup>39</sup> He was not an inspired manager, and in 1936 Cardinal Hinsley sold *The Tablet* to a group of laymen. Douglas Woodruff took over as Editor and stayed until 1967. With his arrival the journal immediately began to revive. Adrian Hastings comments that Woodruff aimed to draw contributors 'from the worlds of letters, art and even academia.'<sup>40</sup> At the time of his appointment Woodruff was a leader writer on *The Times* and connected through marriage to the cream of Catholic aristocracy. He was conservative by nature. The editor who succeeded him believed that Woodruff saw 'the [Catholic] Church as a complete society, Vatican-based, with all the answers for an unheeding world.'<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> *Blackfriars* February 1944 pp 51-53.

<sup>39</sup> Dwyer, 'The Catholic Press 1850-1950' p 487.

<sup>40</sup> Hastings, 'Some Reflexions on the English Catholicism of the late 1930s' p 108.

<sup>41</sup> Tom Burns, *The Use of Memory: Publishing and Further Pursuits* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1993) p 147. Burns may not be entirely unprejudiced. As he acknowledges, Woodruff disliked his approach and tried to get his appointment rescinded.



The themes of *The Tablet* with regard to the Jews were largely like those of the *Catholic Herald* and *Blackfriars*. To avoid being unduly repetitive, only a selection will be given in this section.

With the Nazi accession to power, and their boycott of Jewish businesses in early 1933, *The Tablet* showed openness to Nazi propaganda. The issue of April 8<sup>th</sup> mused that while German Jews numbered less than one per cent of the population, ‘they have hitherto occupied a very large percentage of lucrative positions’. It went on to say that Jews dominated commerce, and since two-thirds of the lawyers were Jewish, Gentiles who suffered at the hands of unscrupulous Jewish traders had no recourse. Turning to Britain, *The Tablet* said that ‘England, as well as Germany, has the problem of a very small Jewish minority with very great wealth and power.’<sup>42</sup> *The Tablet* repeated this in August, saying that in Britain ‘persons of Jewish and especially German-Jewish origin figure too prominently in shady transactions.’<sup>43</sup>

Six years later, after *Kristallnacht*, *The Tablet* had not changed its thinking. An article on Polish Jews said that since the Nazis came to power in Germany, ‘Aryans and Semites in Poland have become very aware that they belong to separate races.’<sup>44</sup> This article appeared in a three-part series on the Jews of eastern and central Europe by Roger de Craon-Poussy (January 21st, 28th and February 4th). The flavour is indicated by the claim that Austrian Jews were an ‘unhealthy and predominating influence.’<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> *The Tablet* April 8<sup>th</sup> 1933, pp 425-426.

<sup>43</sup> *The Tablet* August 26<sup>th</sup> 1933 p 260.

<sup>44</sup> *The Tablet* February 4th 1939, p 134.

<sup>45</sup> *The Tablet* January 21st 1939, p 69.

The image of Jews as manipulative plutocrats influenced the journal's response to *Kristallnacht*. Woodruff in *The Tablet* blamed 'hooligan mobs' before going on to assert that Germans 'undoubtedly suffer from Jewish enmity all over the world' and were treating German Jews as hostages against that enmity. Then Woodruff added:

But, equally, it is convenient to have a community of people *naturally devoted to acquiring wealth*, as bees collect honey, and to be able from time to time, on this pretext or that, to raid their hives ... the Jewish community is large enough to be *well worth shearing* from time to time.<sup>46</sup>

This treatment discounts the violence, calling it the work of hooligans when in reality it was a state-orchestrated pogrom. At the same time the journal implies that 'Jewish enmity' partly explains Nazi violence. Finally, the violence is again scoffed at by being compared to taking honey from a hive or shearing the sheep. Such dispossession is implicitly justified, because it is directed against a people preternaturally disposed to making money. Only the previous week *The Tablet* had repeated its formula of 1933, saying that 'Jews ... congregate ... get certain trades into their hands', and had added that antisemitism was a reaction to this sort of development: 'In Great Britain, the undoubted signs of the growth of anti-Semitism come step by step with the growth of Jewish influence and activities.'<sup>47</sup> To this leading Catholic weekly, Jews made too much money and were at least partly to blame for their own suffering.

---

<sup>46</sup> *The Tablet* November 19<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 661. Emphasis added.

<sup>47</sup> *The Tablet* November 12<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 631.

Following the Eden statement to the House of Commons in December 1942, *The Tablet* made the slaughter of the Jews the first item on its front page. The journal said that ‘Nothing like the horrors now going on in Eastern Europe has been seen before.’ It attributed this to German self-idolisation, and to the Enlightenment with its emphasis on humankind judging for itself without reference to God. *The Tablet* also called on the Allied powers to offer asylum and transit to any Jews.<sup>48</sup> Little appeared about the Jews throughout 1943, and what did appear was usually in the context of brief reportage, such as the full text of the Dutch bishops’ pastoral letter protesting *inter alia* the treatment of Jews. It also reported briefly the deportation of Jews from Rome and elsewhere in Italy.<sup>49</sup>

1944 begins to show something of a shift, with the weekly now aware of the reality of the Jewish situation, and keen to show a helpful Catholic response. A report from Poland in May 1944 read:

In the terrible ordeal which all Poland is going through, the Jews are suffering most ... sought out with a special malice and cruelty by the Germans for extermination. What the terrible total of cold-blooded murder is cannot, from the nature of the German methods, be ascertained exactly. But there is no question that at this moment thousands and thousands of Jews are being hidden and fed by their Gentile neighbours, and have been so hidden and fed at very great risk for months and years.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> *The Tablet* December 26<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 309.

<sup>49</sup> *The Tablet* April 10<sup>th</sup> 1943, p 175; December 18<sup>th</sup> 1943, pp 295-296.

<sup>50</sup> *The Tablet* May 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, p 218. Even this report, however, loses some of its edge by being lumped together with a report about the desertion of Jews from the Polish army in Britain. *The Tablet* sees this

If *The Tablet* could not estimate Jewish deaths in Poland at this time, how could it have known about what would later be called ‘Righteous Gentiles’? This report does show a concern to present the Catholic Poles in a good light. The same desire emerges with a report about the Italian Jews from liberated Rome. *The Tablet* reports a synagogue service at which Rabbi Israel Zolli thanked the Church for its help; in the same report the story appears of Pius XII supplying the shortfall of gold demanded by the Germans in ransom.<sup>51</sup> These reports might indicate a dawning awareness that the Nazi persecution of the Jews was a moral challenge by which the churches would be judged. Or it might simply be intended to show the moral superiority of Christianity. The effect was to subsume the Jewish situation into a Christian narrative.

In 1944, as in 1943, there were few mentions of the Jewish situation. In the first half of 1945, there were only a few brief reports or mentions of Jewish suffering (and of Jewish gratitude to the Catholic Church). Unlike the *Catholic Herald*, there were no first-hand detailed reports of the liberation of Belsen, nor details of extermination camps. It would be fair to say that mentions of the Jews decreased in *The Tablet* as the war progressed. Before the war, Jews had been mentioned in negative stereotypes; during the war, as the news percolated through about what was happening to the Jews, there was little said about them. This relative silence about

---

as evidence of lack of Jewish commitment to Polish citizenship. It seems unaware of the antisemitism in the Polish army.

<sup>51</sup> *The Tablet* June 24<sup>th</sup> 1944, pp 306-307. Zolli became a controversial figure after converting to Catholicism. He was previously dismissed from his post as Chief Rabbi of Rome among accusations that he had failed to help the community. See the bibliography on him in Zuccotti, *Under His Very Windows*, pp 369-370 note 8.

the Jews might indicate a subconscious realisation that the old way of writing about them could no longer be sustained.

The Catholic press has been shown, during the period in question, to have utilised long-standing antisemitic stereotypes in reporting on, and commenting on, the Jews. Jews were portrayed as 'international', ie not rooted in a national culture; they were essentially homeless. They were also portrayed as subversive, either through Bolshevism or through financial manipulation. All three publications repeatedly imputed great financial power to the Jews.

Did it matter what the Catholic press said about the Jews? It did, because these publications in their resort to stereotypes distorted the account they gave to the English Catholic community about the fate of the Jews. In so far as the Catholic press in England responded to the Nazi persecution of the Jews, it minimised sympathy for them and made it seem as if the Jews were at least partly responsible. Examples earlier in this chapter from the *Catholic Herald* showed that this newspaper regarded Jews as an enemy. The paper was even reluctant to admit reports about mass slaughter out of distrust of the Jews, and perhaps also afraid that to admit these reports would give the Jews moral leverage. At times in the *Catholic Herald* there is even a whiff of *Schadenfreude*. From a different angle, *The Tablet* could not sympathise with the Jews over *Kristallnacht*, because it saw the Jews as being so wealthy that they could justifiably be plundered. Even when writing in 'defence' of the Jews, these Catholic publications blamed the Jews for their own plight; the

articles would tend to say either ‘Not all Jews are ...’ (thus implying that some Jews were), or they would opine that ‘Despite their faults the Jews did not deserve this’ (saying that there must be some reason for Nazi hostility to the Jews – the ‘no smoke without fire’ argument.)

The reason for this sense of distance from the suffering of the Jews lies in the long history of Christian teaching about Judaism as a rival and hostile force to Christianity. Beyond that, however, there seem to be more recent influences. The *Catholic Herald* had clearly been swayed by French right-wing thought, mediated through its editor Michael de la Bedoyère. There are also the times when the three publications echo some of the distortions of Nazi propaganda. In the language used of the Jews, the Catholic press seems to have been influenced by Nazism without realising it. Both the *Catholic Herald* and *Blackfriars* use the language of race and blood to speak about the Jews, and not only in terms of reporting what Nazis say, but in asides about ‘Jewish blood’ of the ‘Jewish race’. Evidence was given above also of these publications believing that Jews had an unhealthy amount of economic power in Britain, a replication, of course, of what the Nazis were saying about Jews in Germany.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE FREE CHURCHES

This chapter aims to give a broadly panoramic record of the Free Churches, those churches from the Protestant tradition that were not part of the Church of England.<sup>1</sup> This survey is limited for various reasons: in the case of the Quakers, their refugee work has already been extensively researched.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the Methodists there is not much archival material to be consulted. The careful garnering of Methodist archives at the John Rylands Library in Manchester is comparatively recent, and a surprising amount of material had not been retained prior to this move. Stephen Koss has established that the papers of many Free Church leaders of the 1930s and 1940s have been lost.<sup>3</sup> The Congregationalists were very similar to the Baptists in polity and theology. To avoid repetitiveness, and for length reasons, the Congregationalists are not considered here. We will also omit the Presbyterians who were small in number. Moreover, although staunchly English and separate from the much larger Church of Scotland, they were inevitably influenced by their Presbyterian confrère to the north.

#### The Quakers

Quakers are more properly known as The Religious Society of Friends. They had their origin in the seventeenth century preaching campaign of George Fox who travelled England encouraging Christians to withdraw from the existing churches and to seek instead a direct, unmediated relationship with God. Fox taught that the divine presence - what he called the 'Inner Light' - could be experienced by

---

<sup>1</sup> The name 'Free Churches' is comparatively recent. During the period under consideration they were also known as the Nonconformists.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* pp 237-238.

each person. He formed his followers into congregations ('Meetings'). These meet in silence, without clergy, each person free to speak as they feel moved. Although the Quakers have no creeds, a commitment to non-violence is central to their way of life.<sup>4</sup>

By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Quakers had grown in influence. They were committed to plain living, but their hard work, sober lifestyle and seriousness of purpose brought them success in commerce and industry. This, together with a marked social conscience, gave them considerable influence, especially in the provinces. Birmingham alone had seven Quaker mayors before 1892.<sup>5</sup> Quaker influence remained out of all proportion to its numbers. In Britain in 1933 there were only some 19,215 members spread across 401 meetings.<sup>6</sup> This small but committed membership was well-informed about the state of the world and concerned to use its influence positively. The respectability and influence that they enjoyed in England was joined to an unusual willingness to question received wisdom, deriving from their spirituality. Quakers stressed 'the inward religion of the heart rather than doctrinal orthodoxy.'<sup>7</sup> They accordingly valued honesty, openness, dialogue. This articulate passion for truth, together with their philanthropic tradition, meant they were well placed to speak out about the suffering of the Jews. Yet the same positive approach to the world meant that they also believed that every person had within them the potential for good - even the Nazis.

---

<sup>4</sup> Gerald Priestland, 'Friends, Religious Society of' and 'Inner Light' in Alan Richardson and John Bowden (eds), *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1983), *ad loc.* Quakers do not think of themselves as a church, but as a free association of believers.

<sup>5</sup> Hylson Smith, *The Churches in England* pp 114-115.

<sup>6</sup> London Yearly Meeting Archives, Friends House Library, FHL/RCTS Box 32.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald Parsons, 'From Dissenters to Free Churchmen: The Transitions of Victorian Nonconformity' in G. Parsons (ed), *Religion in Victorian Britain* Vol 1: Traditions (Manchester: Manchester University Press/Open University, 1988) p 81.



The assessment of the Quaker response to the Jewish plight under Nazism has generally been highly positive. Alistair Heron, a Quaker historian, holds that 'British and German Quakers had taken extreme risks in their efforts to assist Jews and others, even after the point where it was obvious that the Gestapo would not tolerate such activity.'<sup>8</sup> John Punshon says that Quakers 'sought to assist the victims of the anti-Jewish laws ... and gave what support they could to those who were coming under persecution.'<sup>9</sup> Hans Schmitt finds that the response of the Quakers 'clearly deviated from a depressing norm', ie 'the indifference of international Christianity to the German refugee problem.'<sup>10</sup> However, a closer survey of the evidence shows a more nuanced picture.<sup>11</sup>

The Quakers responded speedily to the signs of oppressive cruelty in Nazi Germany, demonstrating an early awareness that the Jews were particularly at risk. The central body of the Society of Friends in Britain is known as the London Yearly Meeting (LYM). London Yearly Meeting functions as, in effect, a denominational headquarters, with its executive called the Meeting for Sufferings. In March 1933 the Meeting for Sufferings asked for the latest news from Germany. An open meeting for Quakers on March 27th at Friends' House heard reports of 'violence and terrorism' in Germany directed against leaders 'who are being victimised for their pacifism, internationalism or socialist sympathies.' The meeting also expressed strong concern about the future of the German Jews, and resolved to try and work with leaders of the Christian churches to develop a

---

<sup>8</sup> Alistair Heron, *Quakers in Britain: A Century of Change, 1895-1995* (Kelso: Curlew Graphics, 1995) p 44.

<sup>9</sup> John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1986 revd edition) p 242.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1997) p 56.

<sup>11</sup> For further discussion of the historiography, and for more references, see Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' pp 27-32.

practical response that would help the Jews.<sup>12</sup> On April 7th a Germany Emergency Committee (GEC) was set up to monitor developments in Germany and to take action as appropriate.

The Quakers sought to influence German policy-makers by engaging with them directly. Second, the English Quakers supported the work of Quaker centres in Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Prague, in helping refugees and others. Third, they established an office in London to work with the growing number of refugees in Britain.

The campaign to engage directly with influential German government figures began by seeking permission for Quakers to visit concentration camps. In July 1933 representatives of the GEC asked the German Ambassador in London to forward to Berlin a proposal for Quaker visitation of the camps. The request was refused.<sup>13</sup> In September the London Quakers tried again. Paul Sturge, a senior figure in the London Yearly Meeting, wrote to Hermann Goering saying that the treatment of political prisoners had brought 'such bitter suffering' that the result was to imperil 'the good name of Germany.' He says that since 'a wise and humane treatment of prisoners is a necessity for a Christian State we would suggest ... that the time has now come when these German Concentration Camps should forthwith be abandoned.'<sup>14</sup> No reply is recorded, but the matter did not rest there. The GEC sent William Hughes on journeys to Germany as its emissary. The Committee asked Hughes to try and see Goering. He did not succeed, but Goering passed the request on to Himmler, who warned that the

---

<sup>12</sup> FHL GEC 1, 'Report on Emergency Gathering of Friends on the Situation in Germany' March 27<sup>th</sup> 1933, ff 6 & 8.

<sup>13</sup> FHL/GEC 1 'Proposals submitted by representatives of the Society of Friends' f 63. See also Minutes of July 24th 1933, f 58, and letter to the German Ambassador of July 31st 1933, ff 60-61.

<sup>14</sup> FHL/GEC 1 Letter from Paul Sturge to Hermann Goering, September 1934 [*no day specified*] f 81.

Quakers should not be allowed to endanger Germany's welfare.<sup>15</sup> Eventually Hughes managed to get permission to visit Dachau in February 1935. Hughes reported to the GEC that Dachau was not as bad as he had feared, but that prisoners were still being added to the camp. He was aware that some effort had been made to show him the best face of the camp.<sup>16</sup> Gestapo suspicion about the Quakers was growing, and Hughes was briefly detained for questioning in May 1935. From now on he and other Quakers were not allowed to visit the camps.

The English Quakers continued their direct approach to Nazi leaders. Paul Sturge wrote to Hitler to suggest that the return of the Saar to Germany should be accompanied by 'the prompt release of all political prisoners in the German Reich', which would improve Germany's standing in the world.<sup>17</sup> And on July 5th 1935, the Meeting for Sufferings composed an appeal addressed 'To the German Chancellor and People.' It read in part:

We allude to the existence of Concentration Camps and to the continued oppressive measures of discrimination against some of those citizens who had hitherto imaged themselves to be possessed of equal rights and opportunities with others.

We do not presume to judge of the internal need for such measures, although our moral sense denies their validity in any and every case ...

What we do desire, however, at the present moment is to stress upon the German People the urgent necessity of looking at these measures in the

---

<sup>15</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 70, drawing on material in Prussian state archives.

<sup>16</sup> Hughes had already visited Lichtenburg concentration camp, and possibly also Fühlebüttel. See FHL/GEC 1 f 271, and Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* pp 70-71.

<sup>17</sup> FHL/GEC 1 f 237 for German and English texts of letter to Hitler; f 239, copy of letter from Catchpool to Dr Thomeson at Chancellery, March 6th 1935.

light of their repercussion on the world ... To suppose that such measures are to be permanent would be to dishonour a great nation. And it is to Germany as such that we appeal with all the weight of our desire for her welfare, urging her to put an end to these methods....<sup>18</sup>

The appeal was published, in English and in German, in the UK Quaker weekly *The Friend* on July 12<sup>th</sup> 1935. In essence it was an appeal to a sense of fair play, tolerance, and concern for a good name. This appeal, however, was not for Jews but for all held in concentration camps, and in 1935 the camps contained a wide range of people judged to be dissident by the Nazis, including Socialists, Communists, Pacifists, and others.

In effect, the Quakers were appealing to the conscience of those who had no conscience. This thesis referred earlier to how this kind of appeal, based on liberal values, often characterised such approaches and protests. Were the Quakers naïve in approaching the Nazis directly with the request that they change their ways? Schmitt senses the problem when he writes, ‘It was obviously the continued expectation of Friends that their example would in time persuade Nazis to moderate their stance on a host of local and international issues.’<sup>19</sup> In making this appeal the Quakers were being true to their roots. The doctrine of the Inner Light as taught by their founder George Fox held that there was something of God in everyone. Gerald Priestland puts it thus: ‘The conviction that everyone has a share of this light, no matter what their faith or moral reputation, has made Quakers natural mediators and peace-makers, impatient of religious obsessions

---

<sup>18</sup> FHL/GEC 1 f 279. The GEC minutes of July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1935 note a ‘very encouraging’ response in England to the appeal. They also note that individuals in Germany had received their copies of *The Friend* ‘with appreciation.’ Apart from this there is no indication of any German reaction (FHL/GEC1 f 282).

<sup>19</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 70.

with sin and total depravity.’<sup>20</sup> It was quintessentially Quaker to try to bridge divides and reach new understandings - even with those who were widely criticised.

One motivating element here was the traditional Quaker concern for mediation and reconciliation. Many Quakers felt that the Versailles Treaty had been unjust and that Britain, as an Allied partner dictating the terms of the treaty, was therefore partly to blame for the conditions in Germany.<sup>21</sup> Kotzin comments that

Quakers were anxious that critical commentary about Nazi actions against German Jewish nationals would not outweigh the message that, in Quaker eyes, these acts were a reaction to the imposition of the Versailles Treaty. Friends remained wedded to this belief and for this reason, public criticism of Nazi persecution was avoided ...<sup>22</sup>

This approach was under strain by October 1938, when the Meeting for Sufferings decided to set up a Committee on the Jewish Question. The Committee began to draft a possible statement defining a Quaker position on antisemitism, which referred to the bitter persecution of the Jews. The proposed statement did not, however, refer to the Nazis as the perpetrators. Even so, this trend seems to have disturbed some within the Quaker leadership, and in January 1939 the Committee on the Jewish Question was dissolved having achieved little.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Gerald Priestland, ‘Inner Light’ *ad loc.* (pp 302-303) in Alan Richardson and John Bowden (eds) *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> Although Quakers were probably unusual in their consensus about the injustices of the Versailles Treaty, they were not alone in their feelings. William Temple, for example, wanted the clause ascribing war guilt to Germany excised from the Treaty. See Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity* p 171.

<sup>22</sup> Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses to Jewish Refugees from Europe’ pp 39-40.

<sup>23</sup> Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses to Jewish Refugees from Europe’ pp 61-64.

It could be said that Quakers had made an appeal to German leadership about victims in general of Nazi persecution. A direct appeal to German leaders was a rare event. Failure was always the likely outcome, but the fact remains that it was done, and as such it was a small prophetic gesture that was rarely attempted by the other churches. On the other hand, it could be argued that while Quaker leadership as a whole was not naïve, there is evidence of individual Quaker ingenuousness. A clear example would be Corder Catchpool, the British Quaker who was director of the Berlin Quaker Centre, a place of small-scale social work for distressed people, discussion groups and Quaker religious education. An engineer by training, Catchpool and his wife Gwen were full-time workers for the Friends. He had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector in the First World War, and after the war had helped relief work in Berlin in 1919. In September 1933 Catchpool sent a report to the GEC entitled 'Reflections upon our Attitude to the National-Socialist Revolution in Germany.' He was hoping that the report would be published as an article, or possibly a pamphlet, by the Quakers in Britain. But the GEC was horrified at what it read. Catchpool eroded the grounds for condemning Nazi persecution by reminding his readers of the racism in Britain and the Empire. He insisted that Germany and its leaders were earnestly seeking peace. The overthrow of the Hitler government might make things worse. The way forward was to work with the League of Nations to remove injustices against Germany, while pursuing disarmament. The GEC immediately wrote to Catchpool banning publication.<sup>24</sup> Carl Heath, the liaison between Friends House and Quaker Centres on the Continent, wrote to Catchpool accusing him of lack of concern for the many Germans who were not Nazis. He added that foreign

---

<sup>24</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 63. No copy of this paper seems to exist in the archives; Schmitt was supplied with a copy held in private hands. For GEC reaction see FHL/GEC 1, September 11th 1933 f 82.

hostility to Germany came not from prejudice but from reaction to Germany's oppressive laws, ill-treatment of Jews and of political opponents, and the establishment of concentration camps.<sup>25</sup>

Catchpool remained keen to show to the Germans that he was impartial. In April 1935 he contributed an article to *The Friend* saying that German offers to disarm were sincere and were ignored by other nations because of an endemic distrust of Germany. Because of this distrust Germany was misunderstood and misrepresented. Equally remarkable was his benign interpretation of German ideas on race: 'National Socialism is not imperialist, its ideas of race are closely related to those of self-determination which became so popular in the War.'<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is remarkable since it was formulated at the same time that Nazi Germany was passing laws to exclude Jews from the civil service. In fact, awareness of antisemitism is strangely absent from Catchpool's occasional articles in *The Friend*. Catchpool's desire to promote peace with Germany lacked balance, and was exceptional even among the Society of Friends. Yet it remains the case that the Quakers felt that it was acceptable to print some of his apologies for Germany in their flagship weekly. And while others were not as naïve as he was, it is also true that his painfully earnest desire to encourage a dialogue between Germany and other nations reflected faith in the inherent good of human nature that was an important part of Quaker belief.

In addition to contacting German leadership directly, the Quakers maintained centres in Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Prague, which were able to offer direct help to some of those seeking aid.

---

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 64.

<sup>26</sup> Corder Catchpool, 'From Geneva and From Germany' *The Friend* Vol 93 No 16 April 26th 1935 p 362.

The Berlin Centre helped victims of persecution to leave Germany. Assisted by a small German Quaker staff, it kept in contact with embassies and consulates, to press the case of those who wanted to leave. Nearly two-thirds of the Berlin Centre's finances came from London, and were taken out by William Hughes who made many trips as a courier. It seems that Catchpool would also link Hughes with some of those who had approached the Berlin Centre desperate for financial help. In spring 1936 two Americans replaced the Catchpools in Berlin, and American Quakers increased their share of the finances there to one-half. In the summer of 1938 the American team was supplemented by another British representative, Roger Carter.<sup>27</sup>

After *Kristallnacht* there was intense pressure on the British Government to admit more Jewish refugees and on November 21<sup>st</sup> the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, announced that refugee children would be admitted without the formalities of passport or visa, but using a single form. This led to the *Kindertransport*, which brought nearly 10,000 Jewish children to Britain from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia between December 1938 and the outbreak of war. In the Berlin Quaker Centre, the pace quickened after *Kristallnacht*. Carter helped to break the bureaucratic logjam that threatened to derail the *Kindertransport*, working especially to persuade British officials to smooth the way for the children. Excluding these children, at least 1,135 individuals were able to emigrate with the help of the Berlin Centre, although Schmitt believes the true figure to be nearer 6,000.<sup>28</sup> It is clear, however, that as regards helping those desperate to emigrate, the Berlin Quaker Centre saw its priority as being to help non-Aryan Christians rather than Jews as such, until November 1938, when, in

---

<sup>27</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* pp 116-120.

<sup>28</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 121.



Schmitt's words, 'the focus on non-Aryan Christians was temporarily blurred ... [in view of] ... the frightful plight of all racially proscribed persons.'<sup>29</sup>

A centre in Paris had been created in 1932 by English, French and American Quakers to encourage Franco-German understanding. However, it rapidly had to switch to helping German refugees in France. It worked through a French organisation, L'Entr'Aide Européenne, to improve accommodation of refugees, provide a meeting-place for them, a kindergarten and establish a co-operative making toys, thus helping them to earn their living.<sup>30</sup> British Quaker support also went to the Service Internationale d'Aide aux Réfugiés de la Société des Amis, established in Paris by Paula Kurgass, herself a former socialist member of Berlin City Council and a refugee. In March 1935 this organisation was assisting 172 cases (393 people in all). The great majority (117) of the cases assisted were Jewish. By May 1938 Kurgass's office with English help had assisted and often subsidised 2,085 people stranded in Paris.<sup>31</sup>

Quakers from the LYM joined American Quakers at the existing Quaker Centre in Vienna and opened another centre in Prague. In both the main task quickly became working to help as many children as possible to leave. British policy was still not an open door. Children had to travel with a special document, issued in London for each child. After February 1939 they also had to have a guarantee of £50 lodged in their name, either from their own funds or by a sponsor in Britain.<sup>32</sup> The Quakers from England who helped run the centres in Prague and Vienna joined others in tasks such as applying for the London travel document, co-ordinating transport arrangements and going with the children as escorts. One

<sup>29</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 117. See also p 106.

<sup>30</sup> FHL/GEC1 Report of the GEC to LYM, May 25th, 1934 between ff 158 & 159.

<sup>31</sup> FHL/GEC 1 March 18th 1935, f 247; and Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 105.

<sup>32</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp 180-184. Theoretically, the money was to cover the expense of the children re-emigrating, ie being sent on to another country.

example in Prague would be Tessa Rowntree, from the famous Quaker family, who escorted several groups to England, often enduring harassment and questioning by the German authorities en route.<sup>33</sup> Similar work was done by the longer-established Quaker centre in Vienna. In 1934 it began by concentrating on helping some 400 non-Aryan refugees from Germany. With *Anschluss* in March 1938 the centre had to step up its work. Between March 15<sup>th</sup> 1938 and August 28<sup>th</sup> 1939 the Quaker Centre in Vienna registered 13,745 persons as wanting to emigrate, and helped 2,408 to do so. It also helped 882 children to leave Austria without their families.<sup>34</sup> Here again, though, the emphasis was on helping non-Aryan Christians. A report in September 1939 summarising the work of the Vienna Centre said that it ‘undertook to deal only with the Non-Aryan Christians and people without denomination’ – the latter category meaning people of partial Jewish descent but without any church affiliation.<sup>35</sup>

The flow of victims of Nazism included substantial numbers who came to Britain. The Quakers were the first Christian group to establish administrative machinery for helping the refugees. A Case Committee was formed in 1933 under the redoubtable Bertha Bracey, who operated from offices at Friends House in Euston. In May 1934 she was able to report that her office

has been open daily for interviews with German refugees seeking advice and assistance. Hospitality has been found for students, professors, social

---

<sup>33</sup> Emanuel and Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* p 109; Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 140. Others active in rescue from Prague included individuals such as Nicholas Winton and Doreen Warriner, as well as Zionist groups and other Jewish organisations. For a summary, see Gutman (ed) *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Vol 2, pp 608-609.

<sup>34</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* pp 138-140. For a personal account help given by the Vienna Quakers, see the story of 10-year-old Angela Carpos in Turner, *And the Policeman Smiled* pp 82-83. There were still 665 children awaiting transport when war broke out.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Kotzin, ‘Christian responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees’ p 70. Kotzin adds that the Prague Centre was more flexible and certainly helped fully Jewish children to escape to Britain.

workers, teachers and children. Small grants have been made in special cases and, in cooperation with other relief committees, temporary and occasionally permanent settlement of individuals has been possible.<sup>36</sup>

As of August 1937, the office was giving financial assistance in 90 cases, including 34 families; another 254 single men and women and 93 families were being assisted, but without financial support.<sup>37</sup> By the end of 1937, Bertha Bracey estimated that to meet cases already in hand for emigration and settlement, £3000 was required. At that point the GEC had only £140 in hand and had spent over £29,000 since its inception in 1933.<sup>38</sup> The scale of the work of the London office can be seen from the fact that when it moved to Bloomsbury House in 1939, it took with it an accumulated caseload of 14,000 files.<sup>39</sup> The move to Bloomsbury House came as a result of the increasing co-operation between Jewish and Christian efforts to assist victims of Nazism, and the desire that a physical proximity in sharing one building should facilitate this co-operation. The outbreak of war prevented the Quakers in England from taking any further part in helping Jews and others within the Reich. Those Jews who were refugees in Britain continued to be assisted by the Quaker office at Bloomsbury House, in close co-operation with other organisations. They were also prominent in helping to organise local refugee councils, which helped refugees in particular localities.

All in all, the Quaker record of assistance to victims of Nazi persecution is considerable. In particular, for such a small group to raise the considerable sums needed for relief work is impressive. There was, though, some ambivalence

---

<sup>36</sup> FHL/GEC 1 Report of GEC to FYM May 25th 1934, between ff 158 & 159.

<sup>37</sup> FHL/GEC 2 Minutes August 30th f 99.

<sup>38</sup> FHL/GEC 2 Minute to GEC December 2nd 1937 from FSC f 110.

<sup>39</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 104.

among English Quakers as to whether they were helping refugees regardless of their background, or whether their first call was to help their own. The emergency meeting at Friends House on March 27th 1933 which led to the GEC had decided to show 'a positive and practical Christian attitude towards anti-semitism and its victims.' The Meeting for Sufferings enjoined the newly-formed GEC to 'take any action which seems possible' to help Jews in Germany. Yet a month later the GEC took the following decision: 'As far as seems necessary, cases of distress among Jews, having no special claim upon Friends, are to be put in touch with Jewish organisations, and our Committee will deal with Friends and friends of Friends as far as possible.'<sup>40</sup> Kotzin draws attention to the assumption here, and elsewhere in Quaker sources, that Jewish agencies would look after Jewish victims of Nazism: 'Jews as a group of refugees, as far as GEC members were concerned, were already served sufficiently by their own committees ...'<sup>41</sup>

The same mixed picture emerges with regard to a school at Ommen in the Netherlands which was a joint venture of British, Dutch and German friends, although 80% of its opening budget came from the UK.<sup>42</sup> When it was mooted in 1933 Bertha Bracey said that the school was 'not intended for Jewish children only but for the children of friends of Friends and others of liberal tendencies who may find it difficult or impossible to have their children educated in Germany under present conditions.'<sup>43</sup> The phrase 'friends of Friends' seems to suggest that these were children of social democrat, liberal or pacifist parents. The school opened in April 1934. It had been suggested that Liberal Jews in Germany be invited to send their children there, but the GEC in London feared that 'An influx

---

<sup>40</sup> FHL/GEC 1, March 27th 1933 f 8; Apr 7th 1933 f 12; May 3rd 1933 f 28.

<sup>41</sup> Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' pp 40-44, quoting from p 44.

<sup>42</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 79.

<sup>43</sup> FHL/GEC 1, undated circular but probably late May 1933, f 39.

of purely Jewish children is likely to cause difficulties for a school which is trying to build up a Quaker atmosphere and tradition.’<sup>44</sup> By the end of June 1935 the majority of the children were ‘partly Jewish’, presumably non-Aryan Christian.<sup>45</sup> At the end of 1938 the school had 150 pupils. After the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940 school staff were divided over whether to comply with an order to segregate Jewish pupils or whether to help them to hide. The head decided to obey. Five Jewish children who hid survived. Nine who did not were deported to Germany and died.<sup>46</sup>

The school was a major project by the LYM to help suffering people in Germany. But it was for all the distressed, and there was no sense of Jews as especially vulnerable. Schmitt says regarding the school that ‘Quakers were never primarily concerned with helping one another but rather with pursuing a course that conformed to their traditions of helping the distressed.’<sup>47</sup> This is not quite accurate. The school did indeed serve as a haven for those who were under Nazi persecution - but at the same time the Quakers took care that its ambience reflected their own religious principles and that admissions to the school would not jeopardise this, even if it meant limiting Jewish recruitment.

The Quaker emphasis on practical help was in action again in April 1945 when the British Army liberated Belsen concentration camp where the administration had deprived the prisoners of food and water. A typhus epidemic brought many deaths. In the first five days following liberation, some 14,000 people died;

---

<sup>44</sup> FHL/GEC 1, June 25<sup>th</sup> 1934, f 166. The GEC also decided that children of Orthodox Jewish parents could be received, but only if they still attended the school Quaker meetings (September 17<sup>th</sup> 1934, f 185).

<sup>45</sup> FHL/GEC 1, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1935, f 265.

<sup>46</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* pp 199-201.

<sup>47</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p78.

another 14,000 died in the following weeks.<sup>48</sup> The British Army had not anticipated the need for food, water, and medical attention. English Quakers working under the Red Cross set up a water supply in one of the worst camps within a day, and in the following days cleaned out the blocked sewers – action credited with saving lives.<sup>49</sup> Even Rubinstein, sceptical about any possibility of rescue, concedes that ‘Immediate attention paid by the Allied armies ... to the desperate medical, physical and psychological needs of the Jewish survivors might well have made the difference between life and death ...’<sup>50</sup>

The response of the Quakers differed from that of other Christians in that alone among the churches they responded quickly and from the beginning to help the victims of Nazi persecution. They also stand out in their willingness to approach Nazi leaders directly. However, the very factor which impelled them to try the direct approach also weakened it. Their belief in the inner light, in the innate potential for good to be found in every person, led some Quakers to underestimate the depth of the evil facing them. They may therefore also have underestimated the evil intended towards the Jews. Hans Schmitt believes that it was correct for Corder Catchpool to try and achieve conciliation through giving Nazi officials ‘the benefit of his understanding’. This even-handed approach, says Schmitt, enabled Quakers ‘to succour the deprived without questioning their religious, moral or ideological credentials. They were equally solicitous for suffering Socialists, Communists, Jews and Christians. They worked to free Nazi activists from Lithuanian prisons ...’<sup>51</sup> Schmitt does not see that this even-handedness seems to place all suffering on a single plane, as if Nazi agitators in Memel were

---

<sup>48</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* Volume 1, ‘Bergen-Belsen’ pp 189-190.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Shephard, *After Daybreak* pp 82 and 194. For further tribute to the role of the Quakers in Belsen, see Lyn Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust* (London: Ebury Press, 2005) p 279.

<sup>50</sup> Rubinstein, *Myth of Rescue* p 139.

<sup>51</sup> Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis* p 216.

in the same situation as political prisoners in Buchenwald or Jews in Sachsenhausen.

Quakers were primarily motivated by concern to help suffering Germans. Jews were generally regarded as the concern of the Jewish community. Kotzin notes that after the initial interest in antisemitism in the spring of 1933, from then until 1938

GEC minutes devoted remarkably little space to the way in which Nazi measures particularly discriminated against Jews. Direct references and discussions to the specific nature of Jewish suffering under the regime were ... replaced by discussions on the difficulties of all refugees, political prisoners and concentration camp inmates.<sup>52</sup>

When Jews were helped, the effort was primarily directed to helping non-Aryan Christians. Kotzin suggests that the popular memory of Quaker work for refugees in general has created an impression of work for Jewish refugees *per se*. In fact 'For the most part, the GEC and the wider Quaker body did not see Jewish refugees as part of their rescue and relief remit'. Moreover, Quakers rarely criticized political antisemitism publicly.<sup>53</sup>

### The Methodist Church

In the eighteenth century the Church of England was in a state of torpor. In particular its parish and diocesan structures were inadequate when it came to

---

<sup>52</sup> Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' p 60.

<sup>53</sup> Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' pp 72-73, quoting from p 73.

meeting the needs of the rapidly-growing cities and mining areas.<sup>54</sup> The Anglican establishment seemed unable to respond to the opportunities created by the vigorous itinerant evangelistic ministry of John Wesley. Wesley's work 'has been interpreted as a piece of private enterprise, made necessary by the fact that the machinery of the Church of England was not equal to its missionary task and the state would not assume responsibility for bringing salvation to the people.'<sup>55</sup> Wesley's followers began creating their own ecclesiastical structure, the Methodist Church, initially within the Church of England. By the middle of the 19th century Methodism enjoyed a large working-class following, many of whom were enrolled in the system of classes and bands. From this experience of self-organisation and articulacy grew a tradition of working-class leadership.<sup>56</sup> Yet Methodism was also the church of rising entrepreneurs, of mill-owners as well as mill-workers. Hugh McLeod concludes that 'two quite different versions of Methodism were in collision' in the early to mid-19th century, one stream radical and challenging the social status quo, the other cautious and socially conservative. Even so, when socialism began to win acceptance in the 1880s and 1890s, 'many of the trade union and socialist leaders of this period came from a background of teenage conversion and lay preaching.'<sup>57</sup>

In theory, therefore, Methodism entered the 1930s with a tradition of a strong social conscience and a good membership base. In 1930 the various Methodist

---

<sup>54</sup> On the state of the Church of England, see Peter Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and the Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1980) pp 200-201, 215-218, 259-260. To create a new parish took an act of parliament – see G. F. A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1964) p 195.

<sup>55</sup> Keith Robbins, *Great Britain* p 241.

<sup>56</sup> For details see Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England, 1800-1850* (London: Epworth, 1937) and A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England, 1740-1914* (London: Longman, 1976).

<sup>57</sup> Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1984) pp 51 & 54.



bodies in Great Britain numbered 841,000 members. But numbers were falling. Membership of the leading Free Churches peaked just before the First World War.<sup>58</sup> Within the Free Churches as a whole there was alarm at the decline in church membership, and a tendency to attribute this to over-absorption in politics. Keith Robbins refers to ‘The intense politicisation of Nonconformity’ in the years before the First World War, when ‘Ministers were ready to produce *ex cathedra* pronouncements on any and every political argument of the day.’ This led, as he notes, to a backlash in which decline in Nonconformist membership was ascribed to this over-politicisation.<sup>59</sup> David Bebbington comments that ‘It became received wisdom among the inter-war leaders of the denominations with an evangelical heritage that the church, as a distinctively spiritual community, should beware of squandering her strength on the passing issues of the hour.’<sup>60</sup> Nonconformity’s political base was also ebbing during the 1920s and 1930s as the Liberal Party was superseded by the Labour Party. It was noted above that at the turn of the century many trade union and socialist leaders had a nonconformist provenance. Yet the links between Methodism and Labour were not strong. Maldwyn Edwards wrote in 1943: ‘In the new Methodist Church there is no large support for what is known as left-wing Christianity.’<sup>61</sup> Matching the decline in numbers was a Free Church decline in self-confidence.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> On the decline in numbers, see Hastings, *English Christianity* pp 265-266; also David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (London: Yale, 2005) pp 214-215.

<sup>59</sup> Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* p 113. Robbins adds that proponents of the social gospel claimed that ‘the working classes were indifferent to the churches because the churches were indifferent to social justice.’

<sup>60</sup> David Bebbington, ‘The Decline and Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern 1918-1930’ in John Wolffe (ed) *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980* (London: SPCK, 1995) p 180.

<sup>61</sup> Maldwyn Edwards, *Methodism and England: A Study of Methodism in its Social and Political Aspects during the Period 1850-1932* (London: Epworth, 1943) p 206.

<sup>62</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* pp 266-271.

The Methodist Church had fewer organs for discussion and opinion-forming than the Church of England. Anglicans had the Church Assembly, convocations, diocesan assemblies of different kinds and deep roots in the universities. Anglicans and Catholics could rely on prominent leaders like bishops to bring attention to bear on issues of the day. Methodism had a less prominent and more transient leadership. The nominal head of the church is the President of the General Conference, but he holds office only for a year. Governance is highly devolved through a system of circuits and regional meetings. Following earlier fissiparousness the main Methodist bodies had reunited in 1907 and, more significantly, in 1932. This meant that Methodists were still getting used to their new administrative machinery and finding their voice. Moreover, Methodists and other Free Church leaders would often defer to the Archbishop of Canterbury when statements were made on national matters. Making the Free Church voice heard was not helped by there being two similarly named bodies representing them, the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches (with a President) and a Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches (with a Moderator). They merged in 1941 to form the Free Church Federal Council.

Intra-Methodist discussions took place mostly through their weekly newspaper, the *Methodist Recorder*. Often running to 32 or more broadsheet pages, its 1930s issues contain many features about church openings, evangelistic campaigns and overseas work. Most of the social and political comment is in the anonymous 'Notes of the Week.' Its circulation of 60,000 in 1933 meant that the *Methodist Recorder* permeated its constituency.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Circulation from *Willings Press Guide 1933* p 140.

The first mention of the Jews comes soon after Hitler's accession to power and is prescient. On March 30th 1933, the writer comments: '[T]he campaign of imprisoning Communist leaders and stifling Socialist propaganda has been extended to disgraceful Jew-bating; and generally the country is being intimidated into a frame of mind that will accept tacitly any measures that the Nazi leader may impose.' The writer of these News Notes also criticized the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses and said that the German government 'has victimised outrageously the Jewish minority.'<sup>64</sup> The paper also reported the antisemitism in *Der Stürmer* condemned by Lang: 'Herr Streicher, in his organ, *Der Stürmer*, revives the hideously false tale of ritual-sacrifices, and illustrates it with horrifying pictures of Jews shedding Christian blood and drinking it from bowls.'<sup>65</sup>

There was support for 'the New Germany' too. Thomas Tiplady was minister in charge at Lambeth in south London, and in a fortnightly advertisement aired his thoughts and appealed for funds. In May 1933, he said that he had recently visited Germany and wanted to warn English people against the false and misleading propaganda they were receiving about Germany: 'Facts have been exaggerated, suppressed or given a twist ... We are witnessing a re-birth of Germany such as took place in England during the Puritan period.'<sup>66</sup> In 1935 Tiplady wrote again to defend Germany, saying: 'I have been greatly impressed by the religious feeling everywhere manifest and by the moral cleansing that has taken place in the cities.'<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> *Methodist Recorder [MR]* March 30<sup>th</sup> 1933, p 3; April 6<sup>th</sup> 1933, p 3.

<sup>65</sup> *MR* May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1934 p 3.

<sup>66</sup> *MR* May 11<sup>th</sup> 1933, p 8.

<sup>67</sup> *MR* May 9<sup>th</sup> 1935, p 22.

As the German campaign for the isolation of the Jews got under way, the *Methodist Recorder* criticised ‘the new campaign against the Jews’ and then went on to say: ‘The Führer may drive the Jews from eminent positions, harass them with restrictive legislation, even ruin them commercially; and this action, though deplorable, *would remain within the bounds of decorum*. But to stage Herr Streicher’s crude incitement of racial antipathy and social ill-feeling as an occasion of national importance is to demean the State.’<sup>68</sup> This condemnation of antisemitism on the grounds that Nazism is boorish seems to miss the point.

When the Nuremberg laws were passed, the paper made virtually no comment, like so many Christian publications as noted above. There is simply a passing mention of the laws, though the paper does go on to comment at length on the rival claims for the port city of Memel. The Jews, in fact, feature very little in the *Methodist Recorder* in 1935.

There was no sustained concern for the Jews until 1938. The change began in 1938 well before *Kristallnacht*, and may have reflected the increased British newspaper coverage of brutality against the Jews. In February that year the *Methodist Recorder* editorial turned to the subject of German antisemitism, which it deplored. However, the editorial opened by saying: ‘The Jews have always constituted a serious problem to the peoples among whom they have lived. They have always been a “peculiar people” and have not been easily assimilated.’<sup>69</sup> Here again we note the Christian tendency to say that in some measure the Jews were to blame for their situation. Given the high degree of assimilation of German Jews, the editorial was also ill-informed. On the other hand, ‘Notes of the Week’ called for more Jewish refugees to be allowed into Palestine and in

---

<sup>68</sup> *MR* August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1935, p 3; emphasis added.

<sup>69</sup> *MR* February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1938, p 16.

advance of the Evian conference, called for the UK and other countries to be generous in admitting more Jewish refugees.<sup>70</sup>

There were other factors at work in the sudden intensification in Methodist concern for the Jews. One reason was the call by Christian and Jewish leaders to make July 17<sup>th</sup> 1938 a day of prayer and intercession for those being persecuted in Germany. This fed into the Methodist Church's annual conference, its chief legislature and debating-chamber.

Another element was the growing concern of the Methodist minister Henry Carter. He became increasingly disturbed by what was happening to Jews under the Reich. Carter was the General Secretary and moving force of the Temperance and Social Welfare Committee from 1932 to 1942. The very name of the department and its committee, with the reference to temperance, hints at a Methodist Church stuck between the past and the present. The work of Carter's Temperance and Social Welfare Committee was significant in shaping Methodist concerns on social issues. During this time Henry Carter had moved steadily from a traditional evangelical emphasis on changing society by getting rid of sin, towards a more direct involvement in political and social concerns of the day, and he slowly persuaded the committee to broaden its horizon.<sup>71</sup>

Carter used his influence to direct Methodist attention to the issue. He was a quiet man capable of great empathy. He showed insight into Jewish feelings in an article published in July 1938. It even included a note of penitence for Christian antisemitism: 'A Christian ... must look back with sorrow and penitence on the cruelties which church-leaders have heaped upon Jewish communities in bygone centuries.' He went on to describe how the Nazi take-over of Vienna had been

<sup>70</sup> MR April 7th & 14th, 1938; June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1938, all p 3.

<sup>71</sup> E. C. Urwin, *Henry Carter, CBE: A Memoir* (Epworth: London, 1955) p 86.

accompanied by many humiliations for that city's Jews, who were left isolated.<sup>72</sup> That he did have some degree of insight is shown by another article written just before the events of *Kristallnacht*. It appeared on November 3rd 1938, headed 'Relentless persecution of the Jews in Germany: The Call for Christian help', and filled most of a page. It described some of the discriminatory laws against the Jews, and told of their impoverishment and gave four case-histories in the words of the men themselves. (All were non-Aryan Christians.) Carter asked for contributions to help non-Aryan Christians, he challenged Methodists to offer to take a Jewish refugee into their own home, and asked that they build up a friendly relationship with local Jews.<sup>73</sup>

The following week the paper carried extensive coverage of *Kristallnacht*. It returned to *Kristallnacht* the week after that, saying that 'The systematic "liquidation" of the Jews, carried out with a revolting cruelty and thoroughness, aims at but one thing – their complete extermination.'<sup>74</sup>

Carter worked with W. W. Simpson to bring a resolution condemning the Nazi treatment of the Jews to the Methodist General Conference meeting in Hull in July 1938. On the first day of the conference, July 12th, delegates had already been heard the incoming president, the Rev Dr W. L. Wardle, express Methodist concern about the persecution of the Jews. Wardle was Principal of Hartley Victoria College, Manchester, which trained men for the Methodist ministry. In his wide-ranging inaugural address, Wardle said that he wanted to make 'a solemn protest against the persecution of the Jews. I know that in our own country there

---

<sup>72</sup> *MR* July 7<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 15. The title of the article links with Christian antisemitism: 'Persecution Past and Present.'

<sup>73</sup> *MR* November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1938, p 12.

<sup>74</sup> *MR* November 24<sup>th</sup> p 17.

have been discreditable happenings of this kind, but when I read of the brutal treatment of the Jews in Europe today my blood boils.’<sup>75</sup>

A few days later the conference passed the following motion proposed by Henry Carter:

The Conference views with grave concern the spread of anti-Semitic doctrines and propaganda and the appalling increase of persecution of the Jews. It urges upon the Methodist people the importance of countering the effects of anti-Semitism

- (1) by the promotion wherever possible of understanding and goodwill between Jews and Christians and
- (2) by co-operation in the relief of suffering and distress consequent upon this devastating persecution, having regard especially to the needs of non-Aryan Christians who are victims of this policy of racial hatred.<sup>76</sup>

There is no report of any debate in the official conference journal or in the *Methodist Recorder*. It is interesting that the resolution seems to put ‘the persecution of the Jews’ in something of a vacuum. It could be referring to Britain, and indeed is intended to do so, by committing the Methodists to oppose antisemitism at home as well as abroad. But in consequence the resolution lacks a cutting edge, bewailing a crime seemingly without a criminal.

There was some reluctance in Methodist circles to name Germany. One reason was the strength of the peace movement. A section within the church wanted a strong declaration of a pacifist position, especially in the mid-1930s. Chana

---

<sup>75</sup> MR July 14<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 4.

<sup>76</sup> MA/JRL Conference Journal 1938 p 74. The *Methodist Recorder* of July 21st does no more than report the motion.

Kotzin has pointed out how ‘it was continually stressed that Methodists wanted to maintain friendly relations with Germany, and that any criticism was given in the spirit of friendship ... In contrast, discussions regarding the actions of a foreign state to its own minority within its borders was markedly more circumspect.’ Kotzin says that this was because the refugees were treated as a complex international issue in which Methodists could not become involved.<sup>77</sup> But another interpretation is possible. Methodist circumspection regarding antisemitism could be simply reluctance to criticise a sovereign state’s treatment of its own subjects, a reluctance strengthened by widespread British unease over the Versailles Treaty and a concomitant desire not to allow any *casus belli*.<sup>78</sup> There was also a reluctance to embarrass the small but indigenous Methodist Church in Germany.<sup>79</sup>

By contrast, when it came to contemplating the full scale of the killings near the end of 1942, the *Methodist Recorder* showed that the facts were now well known. It referred to men, women and children being gathered from all over Europe, and shipped in cattle trucks to eastern Poland where they would be slaughtered. Implicit in the paper’s comments is unease about the fact that it was a Christian nation that was responsible. In the ‘News of the Week’ a journalist wrote:

The new pogrom ... is the outcome of cool and calculated policy – a policy of liquidating the “Jewish problem” – that is being pursued systematically and with a sadistic callousness which brands with the mark of the beast not merely those who ordain it, but those thousands of

---

<sup>77</sup> Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees’ pp164-167.

<sup>78</sup> On attitudes to the Versailles Treaty, see Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* pp 91-92.

<sup>79</sup> See references in Kotzin, ‘Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees’ pp 164 and 171-172.



Germans who are party to it ... As far as can be discovered, no German voice is raised against it.<sup>80</sup>

This Methodist paper is in effect saying that those nominally Christian Germans who collude with this policy are in league with the devil.

The *Methodist Recorder* returned to this theme in an editorial three weeks later, noting that in times of war it took something exceptional to arouse strong feelings, and the assault on the Jews had done this. The paper noted that persecution of the Jews had 'a dishonourable place' in British history, both church and state having subjected the Jews to 'contempt and cruelty'. The editorial said that the mercy of God was needed not only for 'suffering Israel', but for Christians who had so lightly regarded their obligations. This editorial shows, then, a slowly emerging consciousness of the need for Christian awareness of the Christian complicity in the circumstances leading up to what we would now call the Holocaust.<sup>81</sup> At its conference in July 1943 the Methodist Church called upon Methodists to resist antisemitism, and on the government to do everything possible to rescue Jews, including assuring neutral nations that if any Jews escaped to them, then the Allies would accept responsibility for them.<sup>82</sup>

By this time Carter was one of the moving forces in the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, established on October 6th 1938. He was soon elected chairman of its Board of Management, and from 1939 onwards steadily withdrew from active participation in Methodist affairs in order

---

<sup>80</sup> *MR* December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942, p 10. The paper goes on to call for Britain to broadcast these facts to Germany.

<sup>81</sup> *MR* January 14<sup>th</sup> 1943, p 8.

<sup>82</sup> *MR* July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943, p 3.

to give himself to care of refugees.<sup>83</sup> Carter found his energies increasingly absorbed by the Christian Council for Refugees. In particular he found himself involved in negotiations with various British government departments, especially the Home Office. He also placed some 70 refugee children with a Methodist Children's home in Lancashire, 1939-1941, and kept in touch with their progress. Although the project was advertised to Methodists as one to help Jewish refugees, in fact the boys were Protestants of Jewish descent from Berlin and Vienna. Again, non-Aryan Christian work was confused with work to help the Jews. Kotzin comments that 'The impression gained was that Methodists had contributed to a fund for Jewish refugees and were now aiding Jewish refugee boys; in fact, neither was the case.'<sup>84</sup>

Carter became so renowned for his work in administration and advocacy that he was elected chairman of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission of the World Council of Churches in 1945, which co-ordinated the refugee work of churches in Western Europe, and worked closely with UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency.<sup>85</sup>

Once again, it was non-Aryan Christians who were initially foremost in the Christian conscience. The resolution which Carter moved at the General Conference in 1938 had called on Methodists to have special regard 'for the needs of non-Aryan Christians.' It is striking how a response which starts with the Jews ends up back with Christians. In response to *Kristallnacht*, the Methodist Church's International and Industrial Relationships Standing Committee unanimously expressed its 'deep abhorrence of the brutal and relentless persecution of the Jews, and its intense sympathy with the Jewish race throughout

---

<sup>83</sup> Urwin, *Carter* p 90.

<sup>84</sup> Kotzin, 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees' p 188.

<sup>85</sup> MA/JRL Carter papers, Box 3 and Urwin, *Carter* pp 90-95.

the world in the time of oppression, hostility and sorrow.’ The resolution asked Methodists to resist antisemitism and to befriend Jews in their own areas. Then it concluded by asking for practical support to be given to the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany, ‘in view of the fact that not less than half a million Christians of partial Jewish descent are involved in the fierce persecution against all Jews in the German Reich.’<sup>86</sup>

Apart from conference resolutions and discussions within the church, one of the ways the Methodists responded to the crisis was by releasing two of their ministers to specialise in different kinds of work. As described in chapter five, William (‘Bill’) Simpson gave the rest of his life to improving Christian-Jewish relations by helping to found and then co-ordinating the work of the Council of Christians and Jews. Henry Carter went to work for refugee agencies. There is a difference, though, between the two. Simpson was not well-known in Methodist circles, while Carter, as chair of the Social Welfare Committee, was in an influential position. One Methodist historian, Maldwyn Edwards, believes that in the inter-war years, ‘the main impact of Methodism on the life of the community was through the work of the Temperance and Social Welfare Department.’<sup>87</sup>

Finally, one of the ways that the Methodist Church responded was by supporting statements made by other Christian leaders. Methodism was a church playing a modest role in the life of England, and it comported itself accordingly. At the national level, this meant that the President of the Conference would associate himself with the statements made by the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the local level, as was seen earlier in this dissertation, Methodists, both ministers

---

<sup>86</sup> MA/JRL, Minutes of the International and Industrial Relationships Standing Committee, November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1938.

<sup>87</sup> Maldwyn Edwards, *Methodism and England: A Study of Methodism in its Social and Political Aspects during the Period 1850-1932* (Epworth: London, 1943) p 204.

and laity, were active in the raising of petitions asking from 1943 onwards that more be done to help the Jewish people under Nazi rule. The few Methodists who had expressed classical antisemitic notions in the *Methodist Recorder* mid-1930s were not representative of the Methodist Church as a whole.

### The Baptist Union

In the 1930s there was considerable and anxious debate in the Baptist Union about its declining membership. In 1930 there were 411,389 members; in 1934 there were 375,383. Baptists had placed great store in their Sunday School work, and the number of children enrolled here had been falling even more steeply, thus pointing to an aging membership.<sup>88</sup> There was also a geographical and social shift away from industrial Lancashire and Yorkshire, and from small towns, to suburbs and to the South-East of England. From being farm-workers and factory-workers, Baptists were becoming increasingly middle-class.<sup>89</sup>

The Baptist Union had evolved out of the Puritan movement of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when reformers sought a return to a more bible-based church, free of state control. Baptists had strong memories of the sufferings of their forebears against state coercion. This gave Baptists a strong belief in freedom of conscience. Their Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland was loosely structured, with a congregational polity. Their theology tended to emphasise a strong dividing-line between church and world, the saved and the not saved. This independence of spirit and eschatological theology meant that the Baptist Union

---

<sup>88</sup> Michael Goodman, 'Numeral Decline amongst English Baptists 1930-1939', *Baptist Quarterly* 36.5 (1996), pp 241 and 245. The author mixes his geographical references in a confusing way, but these statistics probably refer to the British Isles as a whole.

<sup>89</sup> Goodman, 'Numerical Decline' pp 243, 245 and 249.

had few institutions compared with, say, the Methodists. Instead, their resources had gone into missions overseas and in the poorer urban areas of England.<sup>90</sup>

Representatives met annually for a Baptist Assembly. The Baptist Assembly of the 1930s was generally a rather bland affair. Possible resolutions were circulated among the constituent congregations beforehand, the most popular ones chosen and then variant forms homogenised. The result was a rather sterile Assembly. Anyway, Baptist polity emphasised the local church, which at that time was expected to be 'self-sufficient and independent'.<sup>91</sup>

At this time Baptists were also becoming more distant from party politics. At the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 'a Baptist was, almost by definition, a Liberal .... Baptists shared with most other Nonconformists a willingness to see the Liberal cause as their own.'<sup>92</sup> The decline of the Liberal Party left Baptists with a diminished voice and diminished interest in the political world. David Bebbington considers that 'The termination of the public identification of Baptists with Liberalism brought with it something of a retreat from politics in its entirety.'<sup>93</sup> The Secretary of the Baptist Union from 1925 to 1951, M. E. Aubrey, felt that Baptists had been rather too close to the Liberals under his predecessor J. H. Shakespeare. Aubrey, says Bebbington, 'helped to create the apolitical tone of Baptist life around mid-century.'<sup>94</sup>

Concern for the Jews first appeared under the traditional Baptist concern for freedom of conscience. We may assume that the Jews and political prisoners of

<sup>90</sup> I am grateful to Dr Larry Kreitzer of Regents Park College, Oxford, for this point.

<sup>91</sup> L. G. Champion, 'Baptist Church Life in the Twentieth Century – Some Reflections' in K. W. Clements, ed., *Baptists in the Twentieth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983) p 8.

<sup>92</sup> David Bebbington, 'Baptists and Politics since 1914' in Clements, ed., *Baptists in the Twentieth Century* p 76.

<sup>93</sup> Bebbington, 'Baptists and Politics' p 78.

<sup>94</sup> Bebbington, 'Baptists and Politics' p 83. One of Shakespeare's sons was secretary to Lloyd George.

Nazi Germany were in their minds when the delegates met at the Baptist Assembly in Glasgow in 1933, because they deplored 'the action of Governments in denying freedom and the full rights of citizenship to well-disposed subjects on the grounds of race or of religious or political beliefs, and abhor all methods of repression and persecution.'<sup>95</sup> There is no record of any accompanying debate. It could be said that the Baptists saw the problem in terms of race and persecution, since these feature in the resolution. But Baptists, too, were being persecuted. The resolution removes the particularities of the Jewish situation by grouping together race, religion and politics as grounds of repression. Thereafter the issue seems to have faded in Baptist consciousness. Their weekly periodical, the *Baptist Times*, contains little about the pressing issues of the day.<sup>96</sup> In this respect it differs greatly from the Anglican *Church Times*, the *Methodist Recorder* or the Catholic publication *The Tablet*. All had sections which reported on social and political developments in Britain and abroad, and sometimes lengthy articles as well. The *Baptist Times* had a column 'Men and Matters' which commented *inter alia* on social issues but never in a sustained or particularly analytical way. The overall tone of the newspaper was devotional.

The Baptist Union also found a tension between criticism of Nazi Germany and the demands of fellowship with the small Baptist Union there. This tension emerged clearly during the congress of the Baptist World Alliance held in Berlin in August 1934. There was some unease in the Baptist community about the congress being held in a country whose government was trying to repress the Confessing Church, but in the end it was decided that the fraternity of the event

---

<sup>95</sup> *Baptist Handbook 1934* (London: Baptist Union, 1934) p 195, report on Annual Assembly May 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> 1933).

<sup>96</sup> From 1925 to 1941 it was edited by J. C. Carlile, Minister of Folkestone Baptist Church; he was succeeded by Townley Lord of Bloomsbury Baptist Church.

might be a good witness in Germany. Some 300 British representatives joined the 3,000 Baptists who gathered in Berlin. The congress passed a catch-all resolution condemning 'all racial animosity, and every form of oppression or unfair discrimination toward the Jews, toward coloured people, or towards subject races in every part of the world.' The broad sweep of the resolution tended to neutralise its effect. Moreover, C. E. Wilson in presenting the resolution said that it was not to be regarded 'as an attack on any particular persons, parties, or governments.' German Baptist delegates at the congress spoke variously to praise nationalism and to say of Hitler, 'God the Lord has given us, in Adolf Hitler, a man who recognises the needs of the time and its perils ...'<sup>97</sup>

In early 1938 the Baptist Union shared in the increased awareness found in England about the situation of the Jews. A lengthy resolution was passed at the annual Assembly, meeting in London:

We, the Members of the Assembly of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, mindful of the sufferings for conscience's sake of our brethren in Christ in various lands, would assure them of our deep sympathy with them in their trial of their faith ... We condemn any and every system which denies liberty of worship and witness ... Especially do we regret and condemn the persecution to which the Jewish race and descendants of the Jewish people are being exposed in Germany and some other lands in Europe, in view of which we ask His Majesty's Government to consider

---

<sup>97</sup> For the Congress, see Keith Clements, 'A Question of Freedom? British Baptists and the German Church Struggle' in Clements, ed., *Baptists in the Twentieth Century* pp 102-106. Wilson is quoted on p 106; the German delegates are quoted on pp 104-105.

measures for alleviating their sufferings and for promoting that international action which alone can meet so difficult a problem.<sup>98</sup>

Again, the issue is cast in the light of freedom of conscience. The resolution of 1933 had not mentioned Germany, but did mention racial persecution; the resolution of 1938 named Germany, and the Jews. At this point the Baptists still saw the persecution of the Jews primarily in terms of violation of freedom of conscience.

This misapprehension may explain the strong, even crude language with which some Baptists responded to the news of *Kristallnacht* a few months later. They were like a people suddenly disillusioned. The General Secretary of the Baptist Union, M. E. Aubrey, accused the Germans of atavism:

We have to remember that ... we are dealing with people [the Germans] who have not yet, as a people, emerged from barbarism. This their conduct clearly shows. It is natural that they should feel their inferiority to a race [the Jews] ... with great gifts of intellect, and with a cultural tradition going back thousands of years.<sup>99</sup>

The resolution passed by the Council of the Baptist Union was milder. It asked the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, to warn Hitler that the 'harsh and vindictive measures ... which have been taken against Jews' would prejudice relations between Britain and Germany, and had caused 'disappointment and

---

<sup>98</sup> *Baptist Handbook 1939* (London: Baptist Union, 1939) pp 214-215, report on Annual Assembly April 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 1938.

<sup>99</sup> *Baptist Times* November 17th 1938, p 863.



distress' to the people of Britain.<sup>100</sup> A month later a front page article in the *Baptist Times* returned to the subject, saying that 'The old Germany that we knew ... seems to have passed away, and a strange nation of pagan barbarians to have taken its place', a metaphor which captures the bewilderment of the writer and probably of many other Baptists.<sup>101</sup>

The strength of the reaction against Germany was probably heightened by widespread Baptist sympathy for Germany up to this point. Many Baptists felt that Germany had been treated badly in the Versailles Treaty. Some Baptists also had personal links with Germany, for 'It was to Germany that leading Free Church scholars had traditionally gone to complete their theological education. Some had formed life-long friendships arising out of their residence.'<sup>102</sup> Despite the strength of feeling against Germany following *Kristallnacht*, Arthur Porritt, in his column 'Men and Matters', cautioned against opening the doors to refugees: 'When we have nearly two millions of unemployed, there are obviously limits to the number of indigent refugees we could receive in Great Britain without caused disaffection, and ... there would be risk of a dangerous growth of the anti-Semitism already existent in this country if the Jews flooded in.'<sup>103</sup>

By 1943, the denomination had determined differently. The news of the mass killings of Jews had led the Assembly to pass another resolution. Meeting in London in May 1943, the Assembly called on the UK and US governments to find 'effective measures for enabling Jews and other victims of German brutality to escape and find refuge.' They referred to their 'strong abhorrence and detestation of the persecutors' and called upon Britain and other free countries 'to give

---

<sup>100</sup> *Baptist Times* November 17<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 864.

<sup>101</sup> *Baptist Times* December 15<sup>th</sup> 1938, p 961. The article, or editorial, is by the editor, J. C. Carlile.

<sup>102</sup> Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* p 156.

<sup>103</sup> *Baptist Times* December 1st 1938, p 907.

immediate aid, welcome and asylum.’ They asked the churches to be especially welcoming to refugees.<sup>104</sup> Despite this goodwill, one striking feature of Baptist publications during this period is the lack of any project or scheme to help refugees, as part of the Baptist Union’s response. There is a very occasional suggestion that donations may be sent to the General Secretary of the Baptist Union, for forwarding to the Christian Council for Refugees. That is all.

Just as the Quakers were influenced by their peace-making instincts, so the Baptists were probably influenced by their strong emphasis on ‘a personal confession of repentance and faith.’<sup>105</sup> Those words came from a British Baptist declaration of 1926. In the 1920s Baptists were moving away from earlier tendencies towards Free Church unity, preferring to stress what were called ‘Baptist distinctives’, which included a conversion experience and believer’s (ie adult) baptism.<sup>106</sup> In 1948 a Baptist document put it thus: ‘There is, we hold, a personal crisis in the soul’s life when a man stands alone in God’s presence ...’<sup>107</sup> Baptist theology thus stresses the individual’s own accountability before God. This emphasis on the individual rather depreciated the role of the community of faith in transforming society.

There *was* a tradition of Baptist social concern. During this era, for example, the Baptists were prominent members of campaigns for disarmament and were active in the League of Nations Union.<sup>108</sup> In 1934 a Baptist Ministers’ Pacifist

---

<sup>104</sup> *Baptist Handbook 1944-1946* (London: Baptist Union, 1946) p 170 report on annual Assembly May 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> 1943.

<sup>105</sup> Ernest Payne, *The Fellowship of Believers: Baptist Thought and Practice Yesterday and Today* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1944) p 103. This is from the text of an official statement by the Baptist Union in answer to the Anglican bishops at Lambeth.

<sup>106</sup> Ian Randall, *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century* (Didcot, Oxon: Baptist Historical Society, 2005) pp 128-129.

<sup>107</sup> Ernest Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1959) p 285 From the text of a declaration on the Baptist doctrine of the Church.

<sup>108</sup> Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* p 155.

Fellowship was formed, which soon numbered 580 ministers.<sup>109</sup> But running against this would be suspicion of too much worldly involvement as a substitute for that sense of individual accountability before God which Baptists held dear. Wilkinson describes Baptists in the Kirkstall area of Leeds as being ‘concerned above all to save souls.’<sup>110</sup> This was not the whole picture. Some churches such as the West Ham Mission in East London organised large-scale social ministry in areas of high unemployment and great poverty.<sup>111</sup> But a recent Baptist historian concludes that in the 1930s, ‘Although social changes were acknowledged, there was little analysis among Baptists of the prevailing social conditions ... Baptists spoke more often about problems associated with personal responsibility, such as drunkenness and gambling.’<sup>112</sup>

This inward turn may have been accentuated by the influence of Calvinism in the Baptist Union. Ernest Payne said that it was widely held among Baptists that ‘no other Christian body remains so loyally Calvinistic in essential belief as does the Baptist.’<sup>113</sup> Classical Calvinism is predestinarian, and some Baptist churches adopted this stance. Predestinarianism held that the saved were known to the divine will even before the creation of the world. Good works or acts of faith would not assure a place in heaven. Bebbington considers that ‘Traditional Calvinism was a restraint on the theologically most conservative among Baptists’. So, too, was a strain of popular pre-millennialism, which was ‘a potent force discouraging all political activity’.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Randall, *English Baptists* p 196.

<sup>110</sup> Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* p 76.

<sup>111</sup> See the account given by the West Ham Mission minister, Paul Clifford in *Venture in Faith: The Story of the West Ham Central Mission* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1950).

<sup>112</sup> Randall, *English Baptists* p 192. Thus also Bebbington, ‘Baptists and Politics’ p 86.

<sup>113</sup> Payne, *Fellowship of Believers* p 14. On the Calvinist history of the Baptist Union. see Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* Volume 1 pp 412-414.

<sup>114</sup> Bebbington, ‘Baptists and Politics’ pp 82-83.

In sum, Baptist spirituality created an other-worldliness which was instinctively cautious about a social gospel. The stress on the independence of the local church, the tradition of emphasising personal responsibility, and the problems associated with the decline of the Liberal Party all made for a church that was more introvert than extravert. Moreover, the long-standing Baptist concern for religious freedom meant that they saw the Jewish situation in Germany as largely one relating to religious freedom rather than Nazi racial politics.

Were there differences in the responses of the Free Churches? One of the clearest differences is in their involvement in relief work. The Quakers responded quickly in 1933 in seeking to help displaced Jews, and continued to do what they could through the war years. The Methodists had much smaller projects, but lent two of their ministers to full-time work, Henry Carter to refugee work and Bill Simpson to Jewish-Christian relations. The Baptists had virtually no institutional involvement in such activities.

One reason must be church polity. The Quakers have no hierarchy, no clergy even, and stress the ministry of every member. They make decisions by meetings which strive for clarity and consensus, and carry through the actions on which they have decided. The Baptists, by contrast, have a weak central administration, and seek to devolve as much authority as possible to the congregations. However, much would depend on the attitude of the ministers, and of their deacons. The Baptist Union was in decline during this period, and this may have preoccupied the clergy. An influential Baptist leader, Ernest Payne, wrote in the middle of the war that 'Recent decades have seen increasing hesitancy and loss of confidence on

the part of Free Churchmen.’<sup>115</sup> This decline also affected the Methodist Church which was also struggling to make a success of its recent re-union of various Methodist bodies.<sup>116</sup> However, the Baptist Union did use uncompromising language about the Germans, whose actions were ascribed to a national barbarism and innate brutalism. The contrast here is with the measured language of the Methodists, and the careful, even anodyne words of the Quakers who hoped that they would be able to achieve some kind of reconciliation and peace-making, in keeping with their pacifist principles. Finally, the Quakers took a lead in calling on the UK government to admit Jewish refugees, and played a key role in asking for government aid; the Methodists asked for Jewish refugees to be admitted from 1938; only in 1943 did an official Baptist resolution do so.

---

<sup>115</sup> Payne, *Fellowship of Believers* p 86

<sup>116</sup> For details see Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985* pp 265-267

## CONCLUSION

The advent of the Nazi Party to power in Germany came at a time when the English churches were handicapped in their ability to respond to events there. In the churches, as in England as a whole, there was an acute memory of First World War atrocity stories and the demonisation of Germany. Christians were well represented in the pacifist movement, partly because they felt that Christian faith demanded reconciliation with Germany. In addition, the massive casualty toll of that war had left a sense of grief and a feeling that anything possible should be done to prevent similar bloodletting in the future. Many in and out of the churches concluded that Germany should be given the benefit of the doubt.

The churches also lacked much of the institutional apparatus which they now take for granted in terms of information for social justice and international relations. Consequently, Lambeth Palace found itself floundering when seeking the truth about Nazi Germany. Encouraged by James Parkes, the Archbishop of Canterbury overcame his initial doubts and poor advice, to give his support to a large public rally in support of Germany's Jews in June 1933. This was one of many services Parkes was to render to the church in keeping the Jewish situation before Christian eyes. This question of attention was essential to the churches, for the response of the churches tended to be episodic, responding to new information about Germany, and then switching off. Thus the Church of England was aroused in turns by the boycott of Jewish businesses in April 1933, by the base antisemitic cartoons shown to Lang in May 1934, and by Bell's appeal for non-Aryan Christians March-September 1936. The surprise is that the passing of the Nuremberg laws in September 1935 caused

hardly a ripple. By contrast the events of *Kristallnacht* were widely condemned by the different churches and interest in the Jewish plight peaked, then fell as the war absorbed the attention of the churches again. Concern was renewed in the churches with the Allies' declaration of December 17<sup>th</sup> 1942, and Temple's high-profile activities lobbying the government on behalf of the Jews. Many churches of different denominations drew up petitions or wrote letters to MPs and ministers, asking why more could not be done to help the Jews.

One response by the churches was the presence of their leaders at big public meetings where resolutions condemned Nazi behaviour towards the Jews. These were remarkable demonstrations of ecumenism at a time when inter-church relations were dominated by caution and suspicion, and inter-faith events almost unheard of. Lang and church representatives from across the board appeared at the Queen's Hall in London in 1933; the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Liverpool jointly moved a motion in their city in 1938; Temple spoke at the Albert Hall in London with Cardinal Hinsley and Chief Rabbi Hertz in 1942. Jewish leaders were keen to have this kind of representation, because it brought wider public attention to their campaign. The community leadership also feared that if events in Germany were seen as a Jewish concern, then interest in England would be much reduced. Hence Neville Laski of the Board of Deputies was at pains to present the crisis as an issue of what we would now call human rights, and an affront to the world community of all civilised peoples. The consequence was that the persecution was portrayed in generic humanitarian terms, and not as a sustained assault on the Jewish people.

Jewish leadership would have been aware of lingering antisemitism, and wondered if this would inhibit Christian response. Stereotypes from Christian circles about the Jews have been cited throughout this thesis. Jews were inherently immoral (Headlam, for example, writing in 1933 in his diocesan newspaper and to *The Times* about Berlin). Jews were engaged in an international conspiracy to take power, either via Bolshevism or vast financial manipulations. This kind of allegation was found across the board. Examples were cited *inter alia* from the Anglican monk Gregory Dix, from the *Catholic Herald* and from evangelicals working to convert the Jews. This sense of Jews as a manipulative, self-promoting force in the background was one of the most enduring myths. Another typical antisemitic claim was that Jewish religion was dead and empty. Not surprisingly, this was found repeatedly in the speeches and articles of the missionary societies. Even Bill Simpson, who worked hard to help Jews and to promote a Jewish-Christian *rapprochement*, could say on the BBC that Jews were aggressive and ostentatious.

Sometimes this antisemitism revealed something uglier in the churches, namely the influence of Nazi propaganda. Headlam's public insistence, at least twice, that Berlin had been cleansed under the Nazis was a repetition of Goebbels' propaganda. Another example given above was Ruth Rouse, a laywoman on the Church Assembly, returning from a visit to Germany in 1934. She spoke, about the *Ostjude* who had been allegedly flooding in from the east, and about 'moral corruption' (her words) encouraged by Jews.

Did antisemitism make it more difficult for the English churches to take an interest in Nazi persecution of the Jews? Probing motivation or the lack of it is a difficult



area for the historian. Moreover, David Cesarani has concluded from a survey of English people who worked to save Jews that 'indifference or even hostility towards Judaism or dislike of Jews was actually no barrier to helping them.'<sup>1</sup> What we can say is that these myths about the Jews made it easier to blame the Jews for their suffering. It was said to be their own behaviour that had brought this on their heads. Sometimes this blaming the Jews took direct forms, other times indirect. This came sometimes from the lips of those who were trying to help, like Bishop Bell addressing the Church Assembly in 1935, conceding that some Jews 'of a low type' had exercised a subversive influence in Germany. There was Bill Simpson, writing to the *Methodist Recorder* after *Kristallnacht*, saying that German antisemitism was not the fault of the Jews even if they were, like everybody else, imperfect. Why was it necessary to say this at all? Examples such as these can be found from every denomination and from many levels of leadership.

In blaming the Jews there is much more than religious history making itself felt as a continuing presence. Kushner has pointed to the ambivalence of liberal culture. Those motivated by liberal values might respond positively to an appeal to support the Jews in a time of oppression. Yet these same defenders might find it difficult to accept the Jewish sense of a distinct identity within the nation state. From this perspective, since Jews were 'not like the rest', perhaps they shared the blame for what was happening to them. Thus liberalism could blame both the Jews and the Nazis. The Jews were blamed because they had allegedly not integrated sufficiently into the dominant culture; the Nazis were to blame for not living by humane, liberal values. Saul Friedländer believes that this liberal unease with Jewish particularity

---

<sup>1</sup> Cesarani, 'Towards a Taxonomy of Rescuers' p 51.

was one of the sources of antisemitism in the nation states of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe: 'Liberals demanded that, in the name of universalist ideals, the Jews should accept the complete disappearance of their particular group identity ...'<sup>2</sup>

The ethos of this culture with its emphasis on consensus, conciliation and co-operation also made it difficult to envisage radical evil gripping a state as effectively as it had done in Nazi Germany. It was difficult, too, for those formed in a liberal culture to grasp the racial foundation of the Nazi state. Violations of freedom, human dignity, and conscience were easily understood. Racism in the form of antisemitism was not always recognised for what it was.

Yet this leaves us with a question: How else were the churches to judge how to respond? Ideally a religion should provide a transcendent vantage point by which all cultures are scrutinized and their claims relativised. In reality it is very difficult for any of us to transcend our culture. The difficulty is hinted at by Cesarani in his survey of English rescuers, when he concludes that it is difficult to identify a common group of factors motivating them. The only experience he can find across his cohort is the fact that they were unusually well traveled and thus had experienced different cultures and societies, giving them 'an appreciation of tolerant societies in which diversity, of all types, was regarded as non-threatening.' He concedes that this is similar to what we would now call a multi-cultural approach.<sup>3</sup> But here we are in danger of assessing the past by the standards of the present.

Kushner's critique of liberal culture holds that the response in the Western democracies was both enabled by that culture, and also limited by that culture. In

---

<sup>2</sup> Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* p 82.

<sup>3</sup> Cesarani, 'Towards a Taxonomy' p 52.

accepting the broad lines of that critique, we need to remember two ways that it applied to the churches. First, it could be said that in some cases church leaders responded the way they did because they believed their own Christian values to be congruent with the best liberal values of their age. Second, in some cases church leadership reacted unsympathetically to the Jews precisely because they, the leaders, did *not* espouse liberal values.

In the first case it could be said that the liberal ethos, with its emphasis on the importance of a shared sense of humanity, fitted in well with incarnational Christian theology, especially all that was summed up in 'love of neighbour'. But there was more than this influencing the English churches. What is probably more significant is the way that English culture has often valued toleration and the accommodation of disparate viewpoints. This was typical of the Church of England. Anglican internal freedom was due in part to its 'long-standing commitment to comprehensiveness'.<sup>4</sup> There was a dual influence here between church and nation. The Church of England both expressed English characteristics and helped to shape these. Keith Robbins says of the Church of England:

Its ethos was the essence of the English ethos. It was comprehensive and dogmatically generous, with an apparently instinctive capacity for compromise and conciliation. The English church suited the English character and the English character had made the English church.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 114.

<sup>5</sup> Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* pp 87-88.

The Church of England was founded as a body both Catholic and Reformed. In time it was able to reconcile within its ample embrace widely differing movements or tendencies: catholic, evangelical, and liberal. This was linked to its role as a state church, where it was expected to be available for all types and conditions of people. It was hard to say what constituted membership in the Church of England. If they wanted to claim it, this was the birthright of each person in England. But this doctrinal flexibility had its limits, and indeed because it was so generous, it was all the harder for many Anglicans to understand why others might prefer to remain outside. It was more difficult, therefore, for a church of this kind to comprehend that even the most assimilated Jews might want to retain a sense of their own discrete identity.

It was difficult, too, for an established church to accept that a nation's government could become pathological in its treatment of its citizens. It is significant that Bishop Headlam was both antisemitic and strongly Erastian, believing that the church in Germany should be subservient to the state. This brand of Erastianism wanted church and state to be two sides of a single reality. It is significant, too, that Henson, one of the most outspoken bishops in defence of the Jews, was a rare example of an Anglican bishop who advocated separation of church and state in England. He campaigned for disestablishment and called establishment 'spiritual treason'.<sup>6</sup> The Free Churches, of course, were not included in the establishment, but on questions of international relations and politics, Lang as Archbishop of Canterbury would often speak for them too, sometimes even having consulted their leadership beforehand.

---

<sup>6</sup> Chadwick, *Hensley Henson* pp 204-205.

Although the Free Churches valued their independence, by the 1930s their values were increasingly those of the established church.<sup>7</sup>

The second qualification is that some church leadership (including prominent lay people) reacted *against* liberalism. The Catholic Church associated liberal theology with the heresy of modernism. This anti-liberalism also affected its response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews, indeed it helps explain why the Catholic press and above all the *Catholic Herald* responded to the Jewish situation so unsympathetically. Through its editor Michael de la Bedoyère the *Catholic Herald* was influenced by the French Catholic right, with its suspicion of Jews as manipulative financiers, secularizers, or Communists. The Catholic Church during this period has often been described as a fortress church, but a fortress church is characterized by defensiveness and even insecurity. There seems to have been some disabling fear here of the modernizing challenge which Jews were believed to represent. Hence the repeated descriptions of Jews as dangerous, even as the same Jews were being swept to mass death. The frequency with which Jews are described as left-wing conspirators speaks of Catholic fear that the working-classes might be seduced away from their faith.

The Catholic Church in England saw itself as part of a global Church, characterised by an instinctive loyalty to the Holy See. There was therefore a certain element of waiting for a lead from Rome. The Catholic Church also held that it was the fullest expression of Christian truth and indeed of religious revelation. In the spirit of the times this created hesitancy towards the Jews. To be too compassionate, to speak out on their behalf, might seem to compromise the Catholic Church's absolutism with regard to truth. The fear was that to speak up for the Jews might be

---

<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform?* Chapter 3; cf Hastings, *English Christianity* pp 109-112.

taken to imply that the Jews were in some way right after all. This was not specifically anti-Jewish. The Catholic Church refused to concede religious legitimacy to other Christian groups as well.

The Protestant missionary groups discussed in chapter four usually came from a conservative evangelical background that also rejected the tenets of liberalism. For them, too, there was an absoluteness of truth, and any help given to the Jews in their time of need was inseparable from the salvation of their souls by conversion to Christianity. Hence their suspicion of the Council of Christians and Jews. For the more evangelical Free Church people, social involvement generally meant encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their lives. Even the intense politicisation that had marked the Free Church struggle against Anglican schools funded by all ratepayers was increasingly a thing of the past.

If some church leaders responded to Jewish situation out of liberal values, while others responded out of opposition to liberal values, is there anything left in between? The answer lies in the challenge posed by the persecution of the Jews. If Christians saw a humanitarian challenge in the situation of the Jews, then that was surely good, so far as it went. But if that response took away the specificity of the Jewish situation, then it evaded the part of challenge to the English churches. It was as if what was happening to the Jews was something done by other people in other countries rather than a development from European and Christian history. The way Jews could be helped and yet criticized typifies this lack of self-examination. However, against this it must be said that one strong feature of the English churches was the number of voices calling for as many Jewish refugees to be admitted as

possible. The problem was not Christian opposition to Jewish immigration, but a government that would not listen.

In theory the established nature of the Church of England should have given it some suasive power in government circles, but the reality was that it had virtually none. (Even in its own area of interests the church had been defeated by the political system when it tried to win parliamentary approval of a new prayer book.) In response to Jewish suffering two archbishops of Canterbury had tried lobbying government ministers, but to no avail. Lang's attempts to interest ministers in the plight of Jews trapped in no-man's land had the virtue of being limited and specific requests, well within the power of government, asking ministers to make representations to foreign governments. Lang, who had been alerted by Rabbi Weissmandel, was ignored. The requests by Temple for the government to demonstrate an active concern to help the Jews in 1943-1944 were on a grander scale. The stakes were so much higher as the mass killings proceeded. Here, too he had no impact on government policy, although senior officials were aware of his campaign. Kushner's claim that a weak Christian response made it easier for the government to refuse to help refugees looks questionable when these interventions are taken into account.

This thesis has argued that some of the Christian pressure on the UK government, and especially the lobbying by Temple, demanded vigorous action. Temple wanted action that would demonstrate decisively the Allied concern for the Jews, even if such an act was largely symbolic. We must weigh against this the fear that such action might make the Jewish situation worse. The biographer of James Parkes admits his

surprise at finding Parkes writing to Temple in February 1938: ‘I have continually repeated to Jewish audiences ... that “protests have an infinite capacity for irritating those against whom they are directed and a negative power of assisting those on behalf they are made.”’<sup>8</sup> This fear of making a bad situation worse did not necessarily proceed from a lax or pusillanimous conscience.

It is sometimes said that a similar fear of making the situation worse inhibited Pius XII. Certainly the Vatican was aware that a protest at Nazi treatment of Dutch Jews in July 1942 by the Dutch bishops had resulted in Catholics of Jewish descent, hitherto spared, being deported also. By contrast some 400 Dutch Reformed Jews of Protestant descent survived the war.<sup>9</sup> As regards Poland, the Vatican feared that protests would cut off what links it had with the Polish bishops and lead to harsher measures against the Catholic Church.

A sustained Christian response to the suffering of the Jews was made more problematic by Bell’s campaign for non-Aryan Christians from late 1933 to 1939. The suffering of the non-Aryan Christians was real. They faced social isolation, and above all the loss of their livelihood under the Aryan Paragraph. But the numbers emigrating to England came nowhere near what Bell and his supporters had anticipated. Somehow, Bell could not accept this truth, and carried on with his campaign. The effect of this was to focus much of the Church of England awareness

---

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Richmond, *Campaigner Against Antisemitism* p 129.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the Dutch Reformed Church is represented by two groups, *Hervormde* and *Gereformeerde*. *Gereformeerde* pastors also read the protest from their pulpits but the *Gereformeerde* church then abrogated responsibility for the protest. Their Jewish members were left untouched. See Bob Moore, *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940-1945* (London: Arnold/Hodder, 1997) p 126. Regarding the Dutch Catholic Church, Phayer is sceptical of the story that Pius XII had prepared a statement about the round-up of Dutch Catholic Jews but destroyed it fearing further retaliation against the Catholic Church in the Netherlands. See Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust* pp 54-55.



on Christians of Jewish descent, rather than on the Jewish community *per se* of the Reich. Resolutions at meetings, and broadcasts and public addresses by church leaders, almost always mentioned non-Aryan Christians and Jews together. This eroded awareness of the special vulnerability of the Jews. The Christian conscience was primarily challenged to help their fellow Christians, the non-Aryan Christians, not to help the Jews.

It was already a leap of imaginative empathy for English Christians to contemplate the crisis overwhelming German and Austrian Jews. The focus on non-Aryan Christians as the prime objects of concern did nothing to decrease this emotional distance. Matters were not helped by Arthur Headlam and his robust defence of Nazi Germany, and his distrust and condemnation of the Confessing Church. His most malign effect was not in his occasional public and private comments about the Jews, but in the way he distracted the Church of England with the controversy about the Confessing Church.

There is another perspective, and it is that of the churches rising to the challenge. The ever-cautious Lang saw through the fog of myth fed him in 1933 to speak out that year and the next. Temple was even more impressive, harrying the government, marshalling his Church Assembly, raising a debate to the House of Lords. The conclusion of his speech in March 23rd 1943, might have been impassioned rhetoric: 'We stand at the bar of history, of humanity and of God.'<sup>10</sup> But this was impassioned precisely because he felt the issue so keenly. It released a flood of concern in churches across the country, which flowed into MPs mail boxes and the Foreign Office in the form of petitions and letters asking the government to do something.

---

<sup>10</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943, columns 812-822; this was cited in chapter 3 above.

Part of Temple's strength of feeling seems to have come from a growing awareness that here was an issue by which Christianity would be judged: the phraseology of 'standing at the bar' indicates precisely that. This emerges also in his two broadcasts to Hungary in 1944, where he spoke as a Christian leader to people of Christian culture, asking them not to do anything to harm the Jews. In the second broadcast in July he begged them, '*For the honour of our common Christianity* I implore you to do your utmost' ie to help the Jews.<sup>11</sup> He saw that the mass killing of Jews was a challenge to Christianity to live by the principles it professed.

There were other Christians who saw that the events must begin a process of self-questioning. Unlike Temple, they were on the margins of their churches. James Parkes wrote extensively about the need for a fresh look at antisemitism in Christian roots, but he never held an official position in the Church of England. Bill Simpson worked for Jewish-Christian rapprochement and was released for this work by the Methodist Church, which freed him but also meant that he grew more detached from his own church. He too saw the need for a fresh look at Christian attitudes to Jews. In both cases this might have happened without what later generations would call the *Shoah*, but the latter gave Parkes, Simpson – and Temple – a sense of urgency. There were a few others who saw the need for a new self-assessment by the churches. Henry Carter raised the issue in a preliminary meeting for the Council of Christians and Jews but it went nowhere. Indeed, there were signals from the Jewish side, too, that Christians were not expected to examine their past. Chief Rabbi Hertz emphatically opposed a proposal that the emerging CCJ should look at Christian portrayals of Judaism. Instead the CCJ responded to the life-or-death crisis of

---

<sup>11</sup> LP Temple Papers Vol 55 ff 180, 183 and 185, emphasis added; also cited in chapter 3 above.

European Jewry by seeking to maximize common ground with Christians, through focussing on shared ethical and cultural values. This was the same approach encouraged by the Board of Deputies at the big public rallies held in response to worsening developments.

During the editorship of Sidney Dark the *Church Times* responded vigorously to the persecution of the Jews. It called repeatedly for free emigration to Palestine, and for generous entry into the UK. It drew attention repeatedly to the news from the Continent. After Dark's retirement in 1942 coverage decreased significantly but remained concerned about developments in the Jewish situation. A greater contrast with the *Catholic Herald* can hardly be imagined.

The role of leadership was crucial in breaking through the limitations of the different churches. Just as Temple took a lead in shaking up the Church of England, pushing it towards greater concern for social justice, so Cardinal Hinsley tried to galvanise the Catholic Church into greater social concern. Pius XII was preoccupied in Rome with his own difficult situation. This seems to have given Hinsley more freedom to act according to his own best understanding. Given Catholic particularism, it is impressive that Hinsley responded to persecution of the Jews by joining other Christian leaders at public meetings. He also spoke forthrightly in his broadcasts about their persecution in Poland and elsewhere, and sent a message literally from his deathbed expressing solidarity with the Jews. In all of this, he almost always paralleled the persecution of the Jews with that of Catholics. This relativised the Jewish position, although it also gave the Catholic Church a *locus* from which to speak.

However, Hinsley remained an isolated figure. Even the Dominican order, with its reputation as an intellectual avant-garde, in its publication *Blackfriars* saw the Jews in stereotypical terms. As part of his response to the situation, Hinsley took the Catholic Church into the Council of Christians and Jews by becoming one of its presidents. His successor Cardinal Bernard Griffin refused in July 1944 to sign a declaration that 'there is a natural and civil right to religious freedom'.<sup>12</sup> In 1954 Griffin was ordered from Rome to resign the presidency which he did, followed shortly thereafter by the other Catholic members of the CCJ Council. It seems that the Vatican feared that membership might seem to imply Catholic indifferentism.<sup>13</sup>

These misgivings about seeming to accept Jews on their own terms were shared by the evangelical missionary societies. The missionary societies responded to the persecution of the Jews by wanting to exploit it, to bring about conversions. One of the factors at work here was a strain of evangelical eschatology which believed that the persecution of the Jews was predicted in the scriptures, and was a sign of the end of the world and of the Second Coming. Even as the war drew to a close there was little realisation that the facts on the ground of their 'mission territory' had changed irretrievably.

The Quakers showed a very different approach. Theirs was simply a desire to be of practical help to people in need. Given the small membership base with which they operated, their achievements were astonishing. The school at Ommen in the Netherlands, with many Jewish pupils, funded by English and American Friends, is a

---

<sup>12</sup> Hastings, *English Christianity* p 396. Although Hastings does not say so, in refusing to sign this declaration Griffin was faithful to Catholic teaching in Pius IX's encyclical *Quanta Cura* with its attached *Syllabus of Errors*.

<sup>13</sup> Braybrooke, *Children of One God* pp 33-38. The Catholic Church rejoined CCJ in 1964.

rare example of a case where Quakers expected some kind of conformity to their practices from the Jews. Yet the same principles which allowed the Quakers to accept the Jews also inhibited their full understanding of what Nazism was doing to the Jews. The Society of Friends sought to find the good in each person, believing that each person had the inner light within them. They sought, therefore, dialogue and reconciliation. In this spirit they viewed the Third Reich not as a dangerous enemy of the Jews and of the whole world for that matter, but as a nation whose leadership could still be invited to find the right path. Many in Britain viewed the Versailles Treaty as fundamentally unjust, including the way it blamed Germany for the First World War. This made it easy for Quakers and many other Christians to believe that Germany too had been wronged. The peace movement was also strong in the Baptist Church, which, however, had strong pietistic instincts and as such was less concerned with day-to-day challenges in the world.

Methodists – and Baptists – were grappling with the steady erosion of membership that was affecting all the Free Churches. The latter were also suffering a crisis of identity, being less sure of what they stood for and represented. Their political ally, the Liberal Party, was visibly in decline. Methodists were also trying to make a success of their recent reunion.

The response of the English churches to the Nazi persecution of the Jews was sincere, but limited. It was limited by the confusing flow of information and propaganda. The response was also limited by the desire not to embarrass their fellow-Christians on the Continent. It was limited by the Church of England's lack of influence with the state (despite its established status) and by the Catholic Church's

tendency to await orders from above. The response of the churches was limited by the temper of the times which interpreted the situation as a humanitarian issue complicated by Jewish alterity. The churches did question government policy, but fitfully and spasmodically. The churches did not question themselves, and the assumptions about the Jews that they had inherited.

BIBLIOGRAPHY  
PRIMARY SOURCES

(A) UNPUBLISHED

- BBC/WA      BBC Written Archives, Caversham, Berkshire
- BoD          Archives of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, London  
                Metropolitan Archive
- BUA          Baptist Union Archives, Regent's Park College, Oxford
- CBMS        Conference of British Missionary Societies Archives,  
                at School of Oriental and African Studies Library,  
                University of London
- Downside Abbey      David Mathew Papers
- DWA          Diocese of Westminster Archives  
                Bourne Papers  
                Hinsley Papers
- FHL          London Yearly Meeting Archives of the Society of Friends,  
                Friends House Library, London  
                GEC    German Emergency Committee  
                FSC    Friends Service Committee
- IMC          International Missionary Council Archives  
                Committee on the Church and the Jewish People  
                - on microfiche at Library of School of  
                Oriental and African Studies, University of  
                London
- LP            Lambeth Palace Library  
                Bell Papers  
                Headlam Papers  
                Lang Papers  
                William Temple Papers  
                Diary of Alan Don
- MA/JRL      Methodist Archives, John Rylands Library, Manchester  
                Carter Papers

General Conference Journal

International and Industrial Relationships Standing  
Committee Minutes

PRO Public Record Office, Kew, London

FO Foreign Office

HO Home Office

PREM Prime Minister's Office

SJ Archives of the British Province of the Society of Jesus

SUA Southampton University Archives

Parkes Papers

Simpson Papers

Archives of the Council of Christians and Jews

(B) PUBLISHED

REPORTS AND COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Blet, Pierre *et al.* (eds)

*Records and Documents of the Holy See Relating to the Second  
World War: Vol. 1, The Holy See and the War in Europe,  
March 1939-August 1940*

Washington DC: Corpus Books, 1968

Black, James (ed) *The Christian Approach to the Jew: Being a Report of Con-  
ferences ...held at Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927*

London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927

[First] *Survey of the Affairs of the Continental Churches*

London: Church Assembly, 1934

*Second Survey of the Affairs of the Continental Churches*

London: Church Assembly, 1935

*Fourth Survey of the Affairs of Continental Churches*

London: Church Assembly, 1937

*House of Commons Hansard*



*House of Lords Hansard*

## NEWSPAPERS AND WEEKLY JOURNALS

*Baptist Times**Blackfriars**Catholic Herald**Church Times**The Friend**Jewish Missionary Intelligence**Methodist Recorder**The Tablet**The Times*

## PUBLISHED MATERIAL FROM THE PERIOD 1933-1945

- (Anon, ed.)            *Cardinal Hinsley, Friend of Poland*  
London: Polish Catholic Mission, 1941
- Beales, A. C. F.        *The Pope and the Jews: The Struggle of the Catholic Church  
against Anti-Semitism during the War*  
London: Sword of the Spirit, 1945
- Bell, George            *Humanity and the Refugees*  
The Fifth Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture  
London: Jewish Historical Society, 1939
- 'Tragedy of the Christian Outcasts'  
*The Listener* September 30th 1936 p 607
- Bentwich, Norman    *The Refugees from Germany: April 1933 to December 1935*  
London: Allen & Unwin, 1936
- Bevan, Edwyn         'Considerations on a Complaint Regarding Christian Prop-  
aganda among Jews'  
*International Review of Missions* 22.4 (1933) pp 481-499
- Dark, Sidney            *The Jew Today*  
London: Nicholson & Watson, 1933; repr., 1934

- Dark, Sidney; and  
Sidebotham, Herbert *The Folly of Anti-Semitism*  
London: Hodder, 1939
- Gollancz, Victor *'Let my People Go': Some Practical Proposals for Dealing  
with Hitler's Massacre of the Jews and an Appeal to the  
British Public*  
London: Gollancz, 1943
- Headlam, Arthur *Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia: A Sermon Preached at the  
Church of the Holy Trinity, Kingsway, on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1943*  
(np, nd)
- Gutteridge, Richard 'German Protestantism and the Hitler Regime'  
*Theology* 36.12 (1933) pp 243-264
- Heenan, John C. *Cardinal Hinsley*  
London: Burns, Oates, 1944
- Parkes, James *Antisemitism: An Enemy of the People*  
Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1945
- Simpson William. *The Jewish Problem*  
Le Play House Press: Malvern, 1945
- *Jews and Christians Today: A Study in Jewish and Christian  
Relationships*  
Epworth: London, 1940
- Singer, Charles *The Christian Failure*  
London: Gollancz, 1943
- *The Christian Approach to Jews*  
London: Allen & Unwin, 1937

#### AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, SPEECHES AND PUBLISHED LETTERS

- Bell, George *The Church and Humanity 1939-1946*  
London: Longman, 1946
- Braley, E. F. (ed) *More Letters of Herbert Hensley Henson*

- (London: SPCK, 1954)
- Burns, Tom *The Use of Memory: Publishing and Further Pursuits*  
London: Sheed & Ward, 1993
- Dark, Sidney *I Sit and I Think and I Wonder*  
London: Gollancz, 1943
- Leverton, Bertha  
& Lowensohn,  
Shmuel (eds) *I Came Alone: The Stories of the Kindertransports*  
Lewes, Sussex: Book Guild, 1990
- Parkes, James *Voyage of Discoveries*  
London: Victor Gollancz 1969
- Stonor, Julia Camoys *Sherman's Wife: A Wartime Childhood amongst the English  
Catholic Aristocracy*  
London: Desert Hearts, 2006
- Tillich, Paul *My Travel Diary 1936: Between Two Worlds*  
London: SCM, 1970

## SECONDARY SOURCES

### (A) UNPUBLISHED

- Kotzin, Chana 'Christian Responses in Britain to Jewish Refugees from  
Europe: 1933-1939'  
(Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southampton, 2000)

### (B) PUBLISHED

#### BOOKS AND ARTICLES

##### 1. Reference books and encyclopedias

###### a) Reference

*Baptist Handbook 1933*

London: Baptist Union, 1933

*Catholic Directory 1936*

London: Burns & Oates, 1936

*Dictionary of National Biography*

- 1941-1950 L. G. Wickham Legg and E. T. Williams, eds  
London: OUP, 1959
- 1971-1980 Lord [Robert] Blake and C. S. Nicholls (eds)  
Oxford: OUP, 1986
- 1981-1985 Lord [Robert] Blake and C. S. Nicholls (eds)  
Oxford: OUP, 1990

*Official Yearbook of the Church of England 1933*

London: Church Assembly/SPCK

*The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939*

Raleigh NC: Pieran Press, 1990

*Who's Who 1946*

London: A & C Black, 1946

*Willings Press Guide 1933*

London: Willings & Son, 1933

*Whitaker's Almanack 1931*

## b) Encyclopedias

- Cross, F. L. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*  
London: OUP, 1957
- Gutman, Israel (ed) *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (4 vols)  
New York: Macmillan, 1990
- Laqueur, Walter (ed) *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*  
New Haven: Yale, 2001
- Marthaler, B. L. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*  
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967
- Richardson, Alan  
& Bowden, John  
(eds) *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*  
London: SCM, 1983

Roth, Cecil

(editor-in-chief) *Encyclopedia Judaica* (16 vols)  
Jerusalem: Keter, 1972

## 2. General Books

- Alderman, Geoffrey *Modern British Jewry*  
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992
- Anderson, M. D. *A Saint at Stake: The Strange Death of William of Norwich*  
London: Faber, 1964
- Aspden, Kester *Fortress Church: The English Roman Catholic Bishops and Politics, 1903-1963*  
Leominster: Gracewing, 2002
- Bebbington, David 'The Decline and Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern 1918-1930' in John Wolffe (ed) *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain, 1780-1980*  
London: SPCK, 1995
- 'Baptists and Politics since 1914' in K. W. Clements, ed.,  
*Baptists in the Twentieth Century*  
London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983, pp 76-95
- Beck, G. A., ed *The English Catholics 1850-1950*  
London: Burns Oates, 1950
- Belloc, Hilaire *The Jews*  
No publisher given; 1983 reprint of 1922
- Bentley, Eric (ed) *The Storm over The Deputy*  
New York: Grove Press, 1964
- Bentwich, Norman *They Found Refuge: An Account of British Jewry's Work for Victims of Nazi Oppression*  
London: Cresset Press, 1956
- Best, G. F. A. *Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England*

- Cambridge: CUP, 1964
- Blet, Pierre *Pius XII and the Second World War according to the Archives of the Vatican*  
New York: Paulist, 1999
- Bolchover, Richard *British Jewry and the Holocaust*  
(Cambridge: CUP, 1993)
- Braybrooke, Marcus *Children of One God: A History of the Council of Christians and Jews*  
London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1991
- Brechenmacher, Thomas 'Pope Pius XI, Eugenio Pacelli, and the Persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939: New Sources from the Vatican'  
*German Historical Institute London Bulletin*  
27.2 (2005) pp 17-44
- Breitman, Richard *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew*  
London: Allen Lane, 1998
- Browning, Christopher *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers*  
Cambridge: CUP, 2000
- *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*  
New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985
- Brown, Callum *The Death of Christian Britain*  
London: Routledge, 2001
- Brown, Kenneth *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800-1930*  
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982
- Burleigh, Michael *Earthly Powers: Religion and Politics in Europe from the Enlightenment to the Great War*  
London: HarperCollins, 2005
- *The Third Reich: A New History*  
London: Macmillan, 2000

- *Ethics and Extermination: Reflections on Nazi Genocide*  
 Cambridge: CUP, 1997
- Büttner, Ursula 'The Persecution of Christian-Jewish Families in the Third Reich' *Leo Baeck Yearbook* Vol 34 (1989) pp 267-289
- Cesarani, David 'Dual Heritage or Duel of Heritages? Englishness and Jewishness in the Heritage Industry' in Tony Kushner (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* pp 29-41  
 London: Frank Cass, 1992
- 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen: Towards a Taxonomy of Rescuers in a "Bystander" Country – Britain 1933-1945' in Cesarani and Levine (eds) *Bystanders to the Holocaust: A Re-Evaluation* pp 28-56
- Cesarani, David 'Great Britain' in David Wyman (ed), *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*  
 Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996
- Cesarani, David  
 and Levine, Paul (eds)  
*'Bystanders' to the Holocaust: A Re-Evaluation*  
 London: Frank Cass, 2002
- Chadwick, Owen *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War*  
 Cambridge: CUP, 1986
- *Hensley Henson: A Study in the Friction between Church and State*  
 Oxford, OUP 1983; reprint, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1994
- *The Victorian Church Part 1*  
 London: Adam and Charles Black, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1971
- Chandler, Andrew *Brethren in Adversity: Bishop George Bell, the Church of England and the Crisis of German Protestantism, 1933-1939*  
 Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997
- 'Lambeth Palace, the Church of England and the Jews of

- Germany and Austria in 1938'  
*Leo Baeck Yearbook* Vol 40 (1995) pp 225-247
- 'A Question of Fundamental Principles: The Church of England and the Jews of Germany 1933-1937'  
*Leo Baeck Yearbook* Vol 38 (1993) pp 221-261
- Chazan, Robert 'Medieval Anti-Semitism' in David Berger (ed) *History and Hate: The Dimensions of Anti-Semitism*  
 Philadelphia: JPS, 5747/1986 pp 49-65
- Clements, K. W. *Baptists in the Twentieth Century*  
 London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983
- 'A Question of Freedom? British Baptists and the German Church Struggle' in Clements, ed., *Baptists in the Twentieth Century* pp 96-113
- Clifford, Paul *Venture in Faith: The Story of the West Ham Central Mission*  
 London: Carey Kingsgate, 1950
- Cohen, Jeremy *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*  
 Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982
- Cohn, Norman *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*  
 London: Serif, 1996
- Conn, Werner 'Bearers of a Common Fate? The "non-Aryan" Christian "fate-Comrades" of the Paulus-Bond, 1933-1939'  
*Leo Baeck Yearbook* 33 (1988) pp 327-365
- Cornwell, John *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*  
 London: Viking, 1999
- Curtis, Michael *Verdict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime*  
 London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002
- Dunn James D. G. 'The Question of Anti-semitism in the New Testament Writings of the Period' in James D. G. Dunn, ed, *Jews and*



- Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70 to 135*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999 pp177- 211
- Dwyer, J. J. 'The Catholic Press, 1850-1950' in G. A. Beck (ed) *The English Catholics 1850-1950*  
London: Burns Oates, 1950 pp 474-514
- Edwards, Maldwyn *Methodism and England: A Study of Methodism in its Social and Political Aspects During the Period 1850-1932*  
London: Epworth, 1943
- Elon, Amos *The Pity of it All: A Portrait of the Jews in Germany 1743-1933*  
London: Penguin, 2002
- Emanuel, Muriel,  
and Gissing, Vera *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation*  
London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001
- Endelman, Todd *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000*  
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002
- 'The Social and Political Context of Conversion in Germany and England, 1870-1914, in Todd Endelman, ed, *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*  
New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987 pp 83-107
- Englander, David 'Anglicized Not Anglican: Jews and Judaism in Victorian Britain' in G. Parsons (ed) *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol 1: Traditions*  
Manchester: Manchester University Press/Open University, 1988 pp 235-273
- Erdheim, Stuart 'Could the Allies have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau?' in Neufeld and Berenbaum (eds) *The Bombing of Auschwitz*  
New York: St Martin's Press, 2000, pp 127-156
- Ericksen, Robert *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch*  
New Haven: Yale, 1985

- Ettinger, Shmuel 'Jew-hatred in its Historical Context' in Shmuel Almog (ed) *Antisemitism through the Ages*  
Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988 pp 1-12.
- Evans, Richard 'Introduction', *Journal of Contemporary History*  
39.2 (2004) pp163-167
- Everett, Robert *Christianity without Antisemitism: James Parkes and the Jewish-Christian Encounter*  
Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993
- Falconi, Carlo *The Silence of Pius XII*  
London: Faber, 1970
- Flannery, Edward *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Hate*  
New York: Macmillan, 1964
- Friedländer, Saul *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation*  
London: Chatto and Windus, 1966
- Fuchs, Abraham *The Unheeded Cry*  
New York: Mesorah Publications, 1985
- Gilbert, A. D. *Religion and Society in Industrial England, 1740-1914*  
London: Longman, 1976
- Gilbert, Martin *Atlas of the Holocaust*  
Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988
- *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War*  
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985
- *Auschwitz and the Allies*  
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1981
- Goldhagen, Daniel J. *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*  
London: Abacus, 2002
- Goodman, Michael 'Numerical Decline Amongst English Baptists 1930-1939'  
*Baptist Quarterly* 36.5 (1996) pp 241-251
- Greene, Thomas 'Vichy France and the Catholic Press in England: Contrasting

- Attitudes to a Moral Problem'  
*Recusant History* 21.1 (1992) pp 111-133
- Griffiths, Richard *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-39*  
 Oxford: OUP, 1983
- Gutteridge, Richard 'The Churches and the Jews in England, 1933-1945' in Otto Dov Kulka and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds) *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National Socialism*  
 Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1987
- *Open thy Mouth for the Dumb! The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1879-1950*  
 Oxford: Blackwell, 1976
- Hastings, Adrian *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985*  
 London: Collins, 1987
- 'Some reflexions on the English Catholicism of the late 1930s' in Adrian Hastings (ed), *Bishops and Writers: Aspects of the Evolution of Modern English Catholicism*  
 Anthony Clarke: Wheathampstead, 1977
- Headlam, Arthur *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*  
 London: John Murray, 1923
- Heilbronner, Oded 'German or Nazi Antisemitism' in Dan Stone, ed, *The Historiography of the Holocaust*  
 Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004 pp 9-23
- Hellig, Jocelyn *The Holocaust and Antisemitism: A Short History*  
 Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003
- Helmreich, E. C. *The German Churches under Hitler*  
 Detroit: Wayne State Univ Press, 1979
- Hempton, David *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*  
 New Haven: Yale, 2005
- Heron, Alastair *Quakers in Britain: A Century of Change, 1895-1995*  
 Kelso: Curlew Graphics, 1995

- Herzstein, Robert E. 'Is it Time to Stop Asking Why the West Failed to Save More Jews?'  
*Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12.2 (1998) pp 326-338
- Hsia, R. Po-Chia *Trent 1474: Stories of a Ritual Murder*  
Princeton, NJ: Yale & Yeshiva University, 1992
- Hilberg, Raul *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945*  
London: Secker & Warburg, 1995
- Holmes, Colin 'Alexander Ratcliffe: Militant Protestant and Antisemite' in  
Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds) *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain*  
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989 pp 196-217
- Holmes, J. Derek *The Papacy in the Modern World 1914-1978*  
London: Burns & Oates, 1981
- Hylson-Smith,  
Kenneth *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II*  
(3 volumes)  
London: SCM, 1998
- Iremonger, F. A. *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury: His Life and Letters*  
London: OUP, 1948
- Jasper, Ronald *George Bell, Bishop of Chichester*  
London: OUP, 1967
- *Arthur Cayley Headlam: The Life and Letters of a Bishop*  
London: Faith Press, 1960
- Jessop, A. J. &  
James, M. R. *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich*  
Cambridge: CUP, 1896
- Julius, Anthony *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form*  
Cambridge: CUP, 1995

- Keating, Joan 'Discrediting the "Catholic State": British Catholics and the Fall of France' in Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin, eds, *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996) pp 27-42
- Keogh, Dermot *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1985)
- Kitchens, James 'The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-Examined' in Martin J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum (eds) *The Bombing of Auschwitz* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000) pp 80-100
- Klein, Charlotte *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (London: SPCK, 1978)
- Kolb, Eberhard *The Weimar Republic* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988)
- Kushner, Tony 'Britain, the United States and the Holocaust: In Search of a Historiography' in Dan Stone, ed, *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) pp 253-275
- "Pissing in the Wind?" The Search for Nuance in the Study of the Holocaust "Bystanders" in David Cesarani and Paul Levene, eds, *'Bystanders' to the Holocaust: A Re-evaluation* (London: Frank Cass, 2002) pp 57-76
- *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)
- *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* pp 29-41 (London: Frank Cass, 1992)
- 'James Parkes, the Jews and Conversionism: A Model for Multi-Cultural Britain?' in Diana Wood (ed) *Christianity and*

- Judaism* (Studies in Church History, Vol 29)  
Oxford: Blackwell, for The Ecclesiastical History Society  
1992 pp 451-461
- 'Ambivalence or Antisemitism?: Christian Attitudes and Responses in Britain to the Crisis of European Jewry during the Second World War' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5.2 (1990) pp 175-189
- 'The Impact of British Antisemitism, 1918-1945' in David Cesarani (ed) *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990) pp 191-208
- *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society During the Second World War*  
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989
- Laqueur, Walter 'Final Solution: Public Knowledge' in Laqueur (ed) *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*  
New Haven: Yale, 2001 pp 198-204
- *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*  
Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2000
- *The Terrible Secret*  
New York: Henry Holt, 1980, new introduction, 1998
- Lawson, Tom 'Constructing a Christian History of Nazism: Anglicanism and the Memory of the Holocaust, 1945-1949'  
*History and Memory* 16.1 (2004) pp 146-176
- Lebzelter, Gisela *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939*  
London: Macmillan, 1978
- Levene, Paul 'Attitudes and Action: Comparing the Responses of Mid-level Bureaucrats to the Holocaust' in David Cesarani and Paul Levene (eds) *'Bystanders' to the Holocaust: A Re-Evaluation* pp 212-236  
London: Frank Cass, 2002

- Levi, Primo *If This Is a Man* and *The Truce*  
London: Abacus, 1987
- Lewy, Guenther *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*  
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964
- Littell, Franklin 'Inventing the Holocaust: A Christian's Retrospect'  
*Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9.2 (1995) 173-191
- Lockhart, J. G. *Cosmo Gordon Lang*  
London: Hodder, 1949
- London, Louise *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British Immigration  
Policy and the Holocaust*  
Cambridge: CUP, 2000
- Ludlow, P. W. 'The Refugee Problem in the 1930s: The Failures and  
Successes of Protestant Relief Programmes'  
*English Historical Review* No 356 (1975) pp 564-603
- Lukacs, John *Five Days in London: May 1940*  
New Haven: Yale, 1999
- McClelland, J. S. (ed) *The French Right from de Maistre to Maurras*  
London: Cape, 1970
- McCelland, V. A. &  
Hodgetts, Michael (eds)  
*From Without the Flaminian Gate: 150 Years of Roman  
Catholicism in England and Wales 1850-2000*  
London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999
- McLeod, Hugh *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth-Century  
Britain*  
London: Macmillan, 1984
- McManners, John *Church and State in France, 1870-1914*  
London: SPCK, 1972
- Mandler, Peter ' "Race" and "Nation" in Mid-Victorian Thought' in Stefan  
Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young, eds, *History,  
Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950*  
Cambridge: CUP, 2000 pp 224-244.

- Marchione,  
Margherita *Consensus and Controversy: Defending Pope Pius XII*  
New York: Paulist Press, 2002
- Marrino, Andy *A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry*  
New York: St Martin's Press, 1999
- Marrus, Michael *The Holocaust in History*  
Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987
- Martin, R. H. 'United Conversionist Activities among the Jews in Great Britain 1795-1815: Pan-Evangelicalism and the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews'  
*Church History* 46.4 (1977) pp 437-452
- Matheson, Peter (ed) *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*  
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981
- Mathew, David 'Old Catholics and Converts' in George Beck (ed)  
*The English Catholics 1850-1950*  
London: Burns & Oates, 1950 pp 223-24
- Mews, Stuart 'The Sword of the Spirit: A Catholic Cultural Crusade of 1940' in W. J. Sheils, ed, *The Church and War* (Studies in Church History, Vol 20)  
Oxford: Blackwell, for The Ecclesiastical History Society, 1983 pp 409-430
- Modder, Montague *The Jew in the Literature of England*  
Philadelphia: World Publishing/JPS, 1960
- Moloney, Thomas *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican: The Role of Cardinal Hinsley, 1935-1943*  
Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1985
- Moore, Bob *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940-1945*  
London: Arnold/Hodder, 1997
- Morley, John *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust*



*1939-1943*

New York: KTAV, 1980

Neufeld, Michael &

Berenbaum, Michael *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?*

(eds)

New York: St Martin's Press, 2000

Nicholls, William

*Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate*

Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1995

Nichols, Aidan

*Dominican Gallery: Portrait of a Culture*

Leominster: Gracewing, 1997

Noakes, Jeremy

'The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish "Mischlinge" 1933-1945

*Leo Baeck Yearbook* 34 (1989) 292-354

Nordlund, Sven

' "The War is Over – Now You Can Go Home!" Jewish Refugees and the Swedish Labour Market in the Shadow of the Holocaust' in Cesarani and Levine (eds) *'Bystanders' to the Holocaust* pp 171-198

Norman, Edward

*Roman Catholicism in England: From the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council*

Oxford: OUP, 1985

Novick, Peter

*The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience*

London: Bloomsbury, 2000

Owen, Richard

'Pope Pius XII – sinner or (almost) saint?'

*The Times* February 5<sup>th</sup> 2005, p 65

Palmer, Bernard

*Gadfly for God: A History of the Church Times*

London: Hodder, 1991

Parsons, Gerald

'From Dissenters to Free Churchmen: The Transitions of Victorian Nonconformity' in G. Parsons (ed) *Religion in Victorian Britain* Vol 1: *Traditions*

Manchester: Manchester University Press/Open University

- 1988 pp 67-116  
 -----  
 'Victorian Roman Catholicism: Emancipation, Expansion and Achievement' in G. Parsons (ed) *Religion in Victorian Britain* Vol 1: *Traditions*, 1988 pp 146-183
- Passelecq, Georges &  
 Suchecky, Bernard *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI*  
 New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997
- Paucker, Pauline 'The Image of the German Jew in English Fiction' in  
 Werner Mosse *et al.* (eds) *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*  
 Tübingen: Mohr, 1991 pp 315-333
- Payne, Ernest *The Baptist Union: A Short History*  
 London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1959  
 -----  
*The Fellowship of Believers: Baptist Thought and Practice Yesterday and Today*  
 London: Kingsgate Press, 1944
- Pearce, Joseph *Old Thunderer: A Life of Hilaire Belloc*  
 London: HarperCollins, 2002
- Phayer, Michael 'A Plea Unanswered: Jacques Maritain, Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust' *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* XXI  
 New York: OUP for the Avraham Harman Institute, 2005 pp 3-11  
 -----  
*The Catholic Church and the Holocaust 1930-1965*  
 Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000
- Pereiro, James 'Who are the Laity?' in V. A. McClelland and Michael Hodgetts (eds) *From Without the Flaminian Gate: 150 Years of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales 1850-2000*  
 London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999
- Poliakov, Leon *The History of Anti-Semitism* Vol 1: *From Roman Times to the Court Jews*

- London: Routledge, 1974
- Presser, J. *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry*  
London: Souvenir Press, 1965
- Proctor, John 'Racial Hygiene: The Collaboration of Medicine and Nazism' in John Michalczyk (ed) *Medicine, Ethics and the Third Reich* pp 35-41  
Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1994
- Punshon, John *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers*  
London: Quaker Home Service, 1986 (revised edition)
- Randall, Ian *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century*  
Didcot, Oxon: Baptist Historical Society, 2005
- Read, Anthony & Fisher, David *Kristallnacht: The Nazi Night of Terror*  
New York: Random House, 1989
- Reilly, Jo; Cesarani David; Kushner, Tony and Richmond, Colin (eds) *Belsen in History and Memory*  
London: Frank Cass, 1997
- Rhodes, Anthony *The Vatican in the Age of the Dictators (1922-1945)*  
New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1973
- Richmond, Colin *Campaigner against Antisemitism: The Reverend James Parkes 1896-1981*  
London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005
- Robbins, Keith *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness*  
London: Longman, 1998
- *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain*  
London: Hambledon Press, 1993
- 'Church and Politics: Dorothy Buxton and the German Church Struggle' in Derek Baker (ed), *Church, Society and Politics* (Studies in Church History, Vol 12)  
Oxford: Blackwell, for The Ecclesiastical History Society,

- 1975 pp 419-433
- Roberts, Andrew *'The Holy Fox': The Life of Lord Halifax*  
London: Phoenix, 1997
- Roth, Cecil *A History of the Jews in England*  
Oxford: OUP, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn 1964
- Rubinstein, William *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis*  
(London: Routledge, 1997; paperback edition with new introduction, 1999)
- Rubinstein, William &  
Rubinstein, Hilary *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939*  
London: Macmillan, 1999
- Rychlak, Ronald 'A Dangerous Thing to Do' in Joseph Bottum and David Dalin (eds) *The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII*  
Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004 pp 33-40
- *Hitler, the War and the Pope*  
Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000
- Sanchez, Jose *Pius XII and the Holocaust: Understanding the Controversy*  
Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002
- Scharf, Andrew *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*  
London: OUP, 1964
- Schmitt, Hans *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness*  
Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997
- Scholder, Klaus *The Churches and the Third Reich Vol 1: Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions, 1918-1934*  
London: SCM, 1987
- Sewell, Desmond *Catholics: Britain's Largest Minority*  
London: Penguin, 2002
- Shatzkes, Pamela *Holocaust and Rescue: Impotent or Indifferent?*

- Anglo-Jewry 1938-1945*  
Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002
- Shephard, Ben *After Daybreak: The Liberation of Belsen, 1945*  
London: Pimlico, 2006
- Sherman, A. J. *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1949*  
Ilford: Frank Cass, 1994
- Simpson, William. 'Jewish-Christian Relations since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews'  
*Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society* 28  
(1984) pp 89-101
- Smith, Lyn *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*  
London: Ebury Press, 2005
- Steigmann-Gall,  
Richard *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity 1919-1945*  
Cambridge: CUP, 2003
- Stevens, George *Go, Tell My Brethren: A Short Popular History of Church Missions to Jews (1809-1959)*  
London: The Olive Press, 1959
- Stone, Dan (ed) *The Historiography of the Holocaust*  
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004
- 'The Domestication of Violence: Forging a Collective Memory of the Holocaust' *Patterns of Prejudice* 33.2 pp 13-29
- Tal, Uriel *Christians and Jews in Germany*  
Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1975
- Tallett, Frank &  
Atkin, Nicholas (eds) *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789*  
London: Hambledon Press, 1996
- Turner, Barry *...And the Policeman Smiled*  
London: Bloomsbury, 1990
- Urwin, E. C. *Henry Carter, CBE: A Memoir*

- Epworth: London, 1955
- Virgin, Peter *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and the Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840*  
Cambridge: James Clarke, 1980
- Walsh, Michael 'Catholics, Society and Popular Culture' in V. A. McClelland and Michael Hodgetts, eds, *From Without the Flaminian Gate: 150 years of Roman Catholicism in England and Wales 1850-2000*  
London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999 pp 346-370
- *The Tablet 1840-1990: A Commemorative History*  
London: Tablet Publishing, 1990
- Wearmouth, Robert *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England 1800-1850*  
London: Epworth, 1937
- Welsby, Paul *A History of the Church of England 1945-1980*  
Oxford: OUP, 1984
- White, Allan 'A History of *Blackfriars* and *New Blackfriars*'  
*New Blackfriars* 77.6 (1996) pp 320-333
- Wilkinson, Alan *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945*  
London: SCM, 1986
- Williamson, Philip 'Christian Conservatives and the Totalitarian Challenge, 1933-40', *English Historical Review* 115.3, pp 607-642
- 'The Doctrinal Politics of Stanley Baldwin' in Michael Bentley (ed) *Public and Private Doctrine: Essays in British History presented to Maurice Cowling*  
Cambridge: CUP, 1993 pp 181-208
- Wistrich, Robert *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*  
New York: Pantheon, 1991
- Wolffe, John *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in*

- Britain and Ireland 1843-1945*  
London: Routledge, 1994
- Woodham, Thomas *Faithful Fictions: The Catholic Novel in British Literature*  
Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991
- Wyman, David *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*  
New York: The New Press, 1998
- Yahil, Leni *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry*  
New York: OUP, 1990
- Zangwill, Israel *The Voice of Jerusalem*  
New York: Macmillan, 1921
- Zaviz, Ruth 'Officially Approved Emigration from Germany after 1941: A Case Study' *Yad Vashem Studies* Vol 18 (1987) pp 275-291
- Ziegler, Philip *King Edward VIII: A Biography*  
New York: Knopf, 1991
- Zuccotti, Susan *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*  
London: Yale, 2000