

ATTITUDES IN BRITAIN TOWARDS ITS ARMED FORCES AND WAR 1960-2000

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ABSTRACT

From the aftermath of Suez to the Kosovo campaign, Britain lost most of its colonies and ended up taking a moral interventionist stance on the world stage with the US its major ally. Against that contextual background, this thesis considers the attitudes in Britain towards its Armed Forces and war from 1960 to 2000. Using a range of lenses, the paper highlights the complexity of change. Homosexuality was a scandalous issue for society in the 1960s, such that the 1967 Act which decriminalised it was not really widely accepted. For the Armed Forces, searches for homosexuals increased on grounds of security. The Act of Remembrance, as recorded in churches, shows the mixed approach of the clergy to war, particularly dependent on their own experience, and also the change in mood from a religious service to a secular one. In the notable campaigns that did take place over the period, Borneo, the Falklands, Bosnia, Kosovo and the Gulf War, a methodical view is taken of opinion polls, press coverage, and letters pages to establish trends at the political, elite and public levels. The media has been used as a reference throughout the thesis as a measure of opinion, but here is analysed for its own biases and approaches, since it has a clear effect on people's opinions, both from fiction and fact. Overall, the thesis paints a complex web of declining interest in defence issues, greater self-interest amongst many, increasing secularisation, and greater tolerance, yet conversely, points to underlying themes of pride in individual servicemen and the institution of the Armed Forces.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The relationship between the British public and its Armed Forces is complex and has changed over time e.g. the period of National Service in the 1950s probably brought public and Armed Forces closer than at any time since. The Clausewitzian trinity of government, armed forces and people achieves the most success when all three work as one; but as popular attitudes change, so the potential arises for the three elements to be disunited; the purpose of this thesis is to look at the attitudinal changes over this complex period¹. Most researchers focus on the political level or the commanders; few attempt to understand the people's view, yet through their ability to vote and influence political decision-making they actually provide underpinning legitimacy for action and can shape the course of events².

Research Questions and Definitions

The primary research questions addressed in this thesis are: to what extent have cultural changes affected British attitudes to warfare, and how has the way British forces (and their opponents) conducted themselves on a range of operations changed public opinion? Moreover, how has the Church influenced public opinion on warfare, and what has been the impact of the media on public opinion, in relation to warfare?

¹ Clausewitz, K von, *On War*; Michael Howard and Peter Paret (eds/trans) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, revised 1984).

² Personal military service from the Falklands, former Yugoslavia and Iraq has given the author a specialist interest over and above that of an historian.

Before considering the changes in British attitudes to war, it is necessary to define some key terms. The notion of 'Britishness' changed in the forty-year period under discussion, in part because of mass migration to the UK.³ It has been argued that 'the idea of Britain as a nation or Britishness as an identity is a little out of date'⁴. Richard Weight has argued that national identity is rather more than Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities'⁵, but is concerned with how people define themselves in accordance with the nation (be that state or not) to which they feel they belong. His central argument is that Britain, as an amalgam of 'states' has preserved national cultural differences. He characterizes the growth of Britain as being marked by conceit of superiority in Empire, leading to racialism and bigotry, despite a perception of fairness and benevolence in running an Empire covering a quarter of the globe. He suggests that it sought to create wealth, preserve class and promote the Protestant religion, but from 1940 to 2000, the industrial and financial advantages that kept the Scots and the Welsh loyal to the Union started to weaken; secularization weakened religious links; migration and demographics changed the nature of the country; and that class divisions eroded. Above all else, the notion that being English was broadly synonymous with being British increasingly rankled with Scotland and Wales. The advent of the European Union also brought into question what Britishness meant. The end of the century saw the British

³ Emigration exceeded immigration in every year to 1985, and even then immigration was broadly in step with emigration until 1995 when immigration increased dramatically: Schenk, C R; in Carnevali F and Strange J-M, (eds.) *20th Century Britain*; (Harlow: Pearson Educational 2007). This thesis will not, for reasons of space, consider the different attitudes of minorities (e.g. Muslims) towards war and Britain's armed forces. But there is relevance here, to the debate in the Armed Forces over diversity, and the desire to gain increased numbers from ethnic minorities to better 'reflect' British society – a theme explored by Chris Dandeker and David Mason in 'Diversifying the Uniform? The Participation of Minority Ethnic Personnel in the British Armed Services' *Armed Forces and Society* 2003; Vol 29; pp. 481-507

⁴ Cosmo Landesman quoted in Peschiera, R, 'After Hours', *Summer 2007 Institute of Directors*. For a summary of scholarly debates see Weight, Richard, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000* (London: Macmillan 2002) pp. 16-19.

⁵ Anderson, B, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: 1991 Verso) pp. 5-7

redefine themselves as Scots, Welsh, English and Northern Irish, who happened to live in Britain.⁶

Thus 'British attitudes' are not monolithic. Moreover, cultural changes in this period have affected attitudes to warfare. Arguably views on risk-taking changed in the 1980s, as a desire for greater wealth and an apparent greater opportunity for success led people to be more adventurous. In the 1990s, changes in the international, technical and societal environment profoundly changed societies' relationships with their armed forces across Europe in particular⁷. Dandeker described these as the 'New Times', a period of radical change⁸. However, in 2000, one scholar was still asserting that public opinion has acted a constraint on the extent to which Britain has been able to intervene in what he describes as 'civil wars'⁹.

The two definitions of 'attitudes' of most use are 'the stance that individuals take on a subject that predisposes them to act and react in certain ways'¹⁰ and 'a complex mental state involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways'¹¹. The element most worthy of note is taking of a particular position on a topic. However, many people do not routinely take a stance on defence issues, which thus requires some

⁶ Weight, *Patriots*, pp. 665-680

⁷ Forster A, *Armed Forces and Society in Europe*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2006) pp. 6-7 and Dandeker C, 'On "The Need to be Different": Recent Trends in Military Culture' in Strachan H (ed) *The British Army: Manpower and Society into the Twenty-First Century* (London: Franck Cass 2000) p.173-187

⁸ Dandeker, C 'New Times for the Military: Some Sociological Remarks on the Changing Role and Structure of the Armed Forces of the Advanced Societies' *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol 45 No 4 (December 1994) pp637-654

⁹ Dixon P, 'Britain's 'Vietnam Syndrome'? Public Opinion and British military intervention from Palestine to Yugoslavia' in *Review of International Studies* (2000) Vol 26 p. 99 British International Studies Association.

¹⁰ wps.pearsoned.co.uk/wps/media/objects/1452/1487687/glossary/glossary.html

¹¹ wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

testing (e.g. opinion polling) to determine what that might be. Predisposition reflects a link to culture (and norms and mores), and hence why this requires further explanation. The latter definition reflects the idea of beliefs and feelings – things like patriotism – a hard concept to measure, yet a key feature in British history and psyche.

War can be defined as ‘The most extreme manifestation of armed conflict, characterised by intense, extensive and sustained combat, usually between states’¹². British Defence Doctrine¹³ expands on this definition, making clear that war is the event; warfare its conduct; and acknowledges the cultural, societal and political elements which this thesis attempts to explore. This implies that war and warfare cover the gamut of conflict, and will involve all kinds of people, and not just those in the armed forces. This was recognised by General Rupert Smith: ‘the people in the streets and houses and fields – all the people anywhere – are the battlefield’¹⁴. And although British doctrine¹⁵ suggests that irregular activity might not be described as ‘war’, for the purposes of this thesis it will be included, in line with General Smith’s comment and the perception in people’s minds that these are at least related.

It is necessary to develop the issue of social and cultural change. There are a number of models of society, including the basic three layer convention of upper, middle and lower

¹² JDP 0-01.1 (UK Glossary of Multinational Terms and Definitions) Ministry of Defence. Taking this further, armed conflict is further defined as: ‘*a situation in which violence or military force is threatened or used. Generally it is a contest between two opposing sides, each seeking to impose its will on the other; however, intra-state conflict may involve several factions*’.

¹³ British Defence Doctrine, Ministry of Defence, Draft Version

¹⁴ Smith, General Sir Rupert, ‘*The Utility of Force – The Art of War in the Modern World*’, (London: Penguin 2005) p. 3

¹⁵ BDD 3rd Edn *Op cit* para 236

class; the 1921 Registrar-General's five categories¹⁶ (I-V) based on work types (this has been developed over the years and is still in use, but the changes in groups make comparisons difficult over the 40-year period under discussion); and the division on socio-economic grounds of A-C used in marketing.

Social scientists have regularly debated divisions along class lines for their relevance and usage: 'Even within a society, different people or groups may have very different ideas about what makes one "higher" or "lower" in the social hierarchy'¹⁷. Sociologist Dennis Wrong defines class in two ways - realist and nominalist. The realist definition relies on clear class boundaries to which people adhere in order to create social groupings. They identify themselves with a particular class and interact mainly with people in this class. The nominalist definition of class focuses on the characteristics that people share in a given class - education, occupation, etc¹⁸. Class is therefore determined not by the group in which you place yourself or the people you interact with, but rather by these common characteristics. One's class is thus determined conventionally by: occupation, education and qualifications, income, personal, household and per capita wealth or net worth, including the ownership of land, property, means of production, et cetera, family background and aspirations¹⁹.

¹⁶ See <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU9.html> for more detail - *Social Update* 9 July 1995 accessed 3 March 2010.

¹⁷ Kerbo, Harold R. *Social stratification and inequality: class conflict in historical and comparative perspective*. (New York: McGraw-Hill 1996) p.12

¹⁸ There has been much debate over Marxist views on class – broadly that history is based around class struggles between the owners of wealth and the workers – but this is not the approach being used here. See <http://www.bolenderinitiatives.com/sociology/karl-marx-1818-1883/karl-marx-class-theory> accessed 6 October 2010 and Marwick, A, 'Images of the working class since 1930' in Winter, J, *The working class in Modern British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge Journals 2000) pp. 215-232 for more.

¹⁹ Wrong, D, *The oversocialised conception of man* (New York: Transaction Publishers 1999) p. 3 and *Readings in introductory sociology* (London: Macmillan 1977) p. 1

If one cannot easily use a class-based structure to analyse British society, then the tendency is to lean towards a model of an elite²⁰, comprising opinion-formers within academia, the defence industrial sector, informed non-military individuals and philosophers; a political group, based in UK around Whitehall and including Government and Opposition, with surrounding Government Departments and supporting staff; and the rest of society, broadly termed the ‘masses’²¹. This is one of the conceptual frameworks to be used in this thesis and will be examined further shortly.

If we accept, for the purposes of this work, that we can divide society into political, elite and mass groupings, we can then look at broad outlooks on Britain’s aims in a foreign and defence policy view from 1960. Martin Ceadal’s conceptual model of theoretical attitudes to war and their relationship to Just War theory is helpful²²:

²⁰ Mermin believes that in the US, the group of most attentive and informed members of the population on domestic issues might be around 5%, and that on foreign policy it might much less than 5%. It seems likely that the proportions in UK are not dissimilar. Mermin also notes the revisionist debate, still in progress, that the traditional view that the masses are uninformed is overstated. Mermin, J, *Debating War and Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999) p. 33

²¹ Wright-Mills’ ‘power elite’, from which much of the media studies literature is based, includes corporate rich, political decision-makers, and military leaders; the latter dominant when he wrote his book *The Power Elite* (London: OUP 1956) p. 28 from the Second World War, and especially in the US. See also Appendix 1.

²² Ceadal, M, *Thinking about Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1987) pp. 4-5

Table 1.1 Ceadal's theoretical attitudes to war

Militarist	Militarists are characterized as those who view society as inherently anarchic, that a nation's role is therefore to fight and win, and that that is a perfectly legitimate state of affairs which requires large professional armies and largely martial values. Its (limited number of) proponents would argue it is the only way a society develops.
Crusading	Crusaders share the perception that aggressive war is justifiable, but do not regard that as essential and are mostly inclined to peace. They would argue that an aggressive act might be justifiable to either mend another nation's ways or to impose a set of values upon them.
Defencist	Defencists differ from militarists in recognizing a form of peaceful society, but fear others might not share their views and might lean to war – hence if you want peace, prepare for war. They therefore acknowledge the need for standing armies,

	but do not believe in aggressive acts of force.
Pacifist	Pacifists believe that society is inherently bound to peace; that resolution can be found through a variety of means, but accept that armed force may be required to defend the political gains. They therefore reject aggressive wars and most defensive ones
Pacifist	Pacifists totally reject war and support for war as permissible

In that context, it is pertinent to ask to what extent the British have moved from being largely ‘defencist’ (from the times of Cold War threat and superpower tensions of the early 1960s²³) towards the ‘crusader’ model in the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. This question has to be considered at all levels in society, for it is one of perception. Indeed, one may reasonably ask of each level whether people felt it mattered. In a similar vein, it is necessary to ask not only whether people felt it was right to enter into a conflict, whether that is a defencist or moral cause, but whether they were affected, or indeed cared, about the conduct of that conflict. This gets to the heart of the practical application of Just War theory.

²³ In the late 1950s one of the major engagements for British forces was in Cyprus, in which many of the features of modern conflict in a moral context were apparent. This provides a sound lead in to this thesis.

The next question is: by looking at the conflicts Britain in which British forces have been engaged, how has their use and the way that they conducted themselves changed public opinion? Here, public opinion represents a broad feeling expressed on a particular issue, as reflected in the media, political debate and measurable in opinion poll data. In reality, this is a difficult issue to measure, since few issues galvanise overwhelming public reaction. This brings into question the determinants of right and wrong – such as being out of sight and therefore out of mind (as, arguably, in the case of the Northern Ireland conflict); what is regarded as of national importance; and the change in moral values over time and between elements of the population. Why are Special Forces accorded a special place in public affection, and how far can their actions be taken and yet still be supported within the law and within public perception? More broadly, does the conduct of British forces really matter, and if the answer to that is that historically it has varied in acceptability, what are the determinants of acceptability? On specific operations, what made the Falklands War different from Bosnia/Kosovo or the First Gulf War? Included in this series of questions is that of the perceived acceptability of taking casualties, both prior to the operation and the actuality during the conflict itself.

Also of interest is the way homosexuality has been regarded in the Armed Forces. Although homosexuality ceased to be a criminal offence in 1967²⁴ the forces were exempt from this legislation. As public acceptance increased over the subsequent quarter-century, the Forces became more active in investigating and removing homosexuals. What this says about the relationship between the military and the public is

²⁴ This was in the context of social liberalisation in the 1960s. However I have deliberately avoided the use of the term ‘permissive society’ as this appears to be a retrospective term and one which has its own symbolism, rather than a useful term for general trends.

the topic of a case study. By considering the changing nature of the Church's relationship with society, particularly through the lens of Remembrance Sunday, one can discern a change in societal values, and growing secularization in memorialisation. By examining the media and popular culture, one can analyse the changes in type of content and evaluate its effects on attitudes more generally.

In this thesis, it is argued that public opinion at all levels in society made the distinction between the 'total' conflicts such as the world wars; 'limited' wars such as the Falklands that were perceived as winnable; and nuclear war, and rationalised their attitudes to war along those lines. The reality is, of course, that those boundaries were blurred. If, for instance, the public perception of the First World War is of the Western Front, then it would have affected, through the act of Remembrance, views of modern campaigns involving the use of non-regular volunteer forces.

The Measures

If those are the basic research questions, then what are the measures of public opinion? First, there is the media coverage in all its forms, though this has to be qualified by its relationship with public opinion. Next are opinion polls, which are equally limited because they are wholly dependent on the sample size and the way questions are phrased. There are the comments of politicians and members of the elite, either in *Hansard* or in broadsheets, or equally in the more discursive pieces in documentaries. Cultural pieces, from popular TV programmes and films to art, are also of relevance. Particular insights

can be gleaned from looking at the act of Remembrance over the years, both in terms of the numbers of people taking part and the attitude of the Church towards an act traditionally bound in sacrifice for the national, rather than holy, good. There are letters to newspapers from the informed and engaged members of the population²⁵. In sum, this is a mosaic of measures. No single test can be said to be representative and all have their own limitations. Only by aggregating the views can any sort of valid impression be gained of public views.

The Frames of Reference

There are three basic frames of reference in play against which to judge public attitudes. The first is the nature of the belief; the attitude towards Just War theory, and what is acceptable in order to go to war and then the conduct of the war itself; and finally, there is the division of views between the political, the elite and the masses.

Ceadal, himself a pacifist, suggests that the typology has two dimensions: the attitude to force (which allows distinctions between socialists who are crusaders from those who are pacific-ists or pacifists) and that the categories are ‘ideal types’ (which means that they are theoretical positions as opposed to actually encountered ones).

This thinking relies on the precepts of Just War thinking: *jus ad bellum*, which governs the ends of the war; and *jus in bello*, which considers the means by which wars are

²⁵ Mermin suggests that one of the major failings in research is the concentration on opinion poll data, whilst not considering the views of the more attentive and informed members of the population, and hence that letters are worthy of review. Mermin *Op cit* p. 81

conducted. Ceadal suggests that the move from war being the 'norm' to being accepted as 'abnormal', with peace as the normal state, occurred during the First World War, but that international law did not formalize this position until the Charter of the United Nations was agreed in 1945. Perhaps this is the first clue about why Britain is always keen to seek a UN mandate before proceeding in conflict. The 'ends' part of the debate, however, tends to a distinction between realism and idealism as a rationalization of the positions. Yet the reality is that there is blurring between the two, as Ceadal points out that a militarist can view his position as entirely realistic, whilst crusaders are generally viewed as idealists, and then pessimistic pacifists are viewed as realists²⁶.

The problem with Ceadal's analysis is that a nation such as Britain does not have unified views throughout all its component parts, and does not act as a unified whole.

Politicians, the Armed Forces, the Church, and the general public are all actors on this stage and each may adopt different roles as a conflict develops. For example, it would be possible to portray Britain's involvement in the Falklands campaign as defencist, if one believed in the sovereignty argument, which is precisely the same argument which would be put forward by the Argentineans for their invasion. Such an argument would be rejected by pacifists, who would question the colonial link (as did many in UK), but others would present the same campaign as an example of crusading, potentially by both sides.

The concept of the political, elite and masses lies in the model of society which says that each level interacts, and has the fourth dimension of the media as part-glue and part-

²⁶ Ceadal *Op cit*

counterpoint. The model, largely unwritten but usually assumed in most texts, suggests that the political level both drives policy and is responsive to the other levels in forming it, since the other levels broadly form the electorate. The elite represent the opinion-formers, part-academic, part-influential business people and part-followers of the ‘broadsheets’. It is impossible to judge with precision the size of the elite; Sabin has suggested that this might be a couple of hundred people, others think a few thousand²⁷. The masses represent the greater part of society, sometimes associated with the ‘tabloid’ media, likely to have opinions but unlikely to lead on debates. The model suggests that the media will not raise issues if all three groups are perceived to be in concert on an issue, but are likely to exploit any schisms between groups, particularly between politicians and the elite, and just as much so within each group. The topic of whether the media reflect public opinion, or lead it, or act in spite of opinion is an area to be explored later, together with the differences between media.

The nature of the sources

As a work of contemporary history, and as a consequence of the 30 Year Rule, this study is only partly based on archival sources. Instead, a more rounded approach has been used to derive material from other sources. Opinion polls have been widely used, with their drawbacks heeded²⁸. A range of newspapers have been used to derive editorial comment, letters from the public and to measure the extent of coverage (or lack of it). Other media sources, such as television programmes, films, theatre, and cartoons have been used to

²⁷ Interview Badsey 31 Mar 2009, Philo 14 February 2008, Sabin 26 July 2007

²⁸ Opinion polls must be treated with caution because, for example, the way questions are asked and the nature of the sponsoring organisation may influence the results.

provide evidence of public tastes and changes in attitudes. The aim has been to use a range of sources to triangulate changes in public opinion over the period.

Literature Review

Included in the range of sources above has been a review of current literature. The nature of the period means that there are relatively few defining texts to use; much of the work to date has been to fix the historiography rather than to analyse changes in trends or make wider comparisons. Nevertheless, authors such as Ceadal²⁹ have attempted to establish models for considering attitudes to peace and war. Kerbo³⁰ and Wrong³¹, amongst others, have analysed society to propose models of class systems. Sandbrook³² has emerged as one of the key reviewers of the 1960s to 1980s, together with work by Hennessy³³ and Morgan³⁴, whilst Rupert Smith³⁵ has proposed a model of the ‘new’ way of war since the 1990s.

On homosexuality, the key texts are Gorer³⁶, Seabrook³⁷, Westwood³⁸, Weeks³⁹ and Halperin⁴⁰. Much of this work influenced or is influenced by the Wolfenden Report⁴¹.

²⁹ Ceadal, M, *Thinking about Peace and War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1987)

³⁰ Kerbo, Harold R, *Social Stratification and Inequality: Class conflict in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1996)

³¹ Wrong, D, *The oversocialised conception of man* (New York: Transaction Publishers 1999) and *Readings in introductory sociology* (London: Macmillan 1977)

³² Sandbrook, D., *White Heat*. (London, Little Brown 2006)

³³ Hennessy, P, *Having it so Good* (London: Penguin 2007)

³⁴ Morgan, K O, *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace*. (Oxford: OUP 1990 this edn 2001)

³⁵ Smith, General, Sir Rupert, *The Utility of Force – The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin 2005)

³⁶ Gorer, G, *Sex and Marriage in England Today* (London: Nelson 1971)

³⁷ Seabrook, J, *A Lasting Relationship*. (London: Penguin 1976)

³⁸ Westwood, G, *A Minority* (London: Longmans 1960)

³⁹ Weeks, J, *Sex, Politics and Society* (Essex: Longman 1989 orig 1981)

At the extreme end of the spectrum is Tatchell's work as an activist⁴². The feminist view comes from Enloe⁴³ and others. More of a debate is to be found over the decline of religion in the UK and its causes, led by Bruce⁴⁴ and Brown⁴⁵ predominantly but with much emerging work by Davie⁴⁶. On Remembrance and memorialisation, conventional thinking has been shaped by Todman⁴⁷, Connelly⁴⁸ and Gregory⁴⁹. The Church has undoubtedly been affected by John Robinson's challenge in *Honest to God* and also *The Church and the Bomb*⁵⁰.

McKittrick⁵¹ and Miller⁵² articulate much of the historiography of the Northern Ireland campaign, and in particular the views from the Irish press. Ingham⁵³ offers a view from the political level, and Urban⁵⁴ shows the role of special forces. Bullock offers a key insight on Borneo as a former commander⁵⁵. Freedman's history of the Falklands

⁴⁰ Halperin, D, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (New York: Routledge 1990)

⁴¹ Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution, *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office 1957

⁴² Tatchell, P, *We Don't Want to March Straight*. (London: Cassell 1995)

⁴³ Enloe, C, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993) and *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2000)

⁴⁴ Bruce, S, *God is Dead: Secularisation in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell 2002)

⁴⁵ Brown, C G, *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*. (Harlow: Pearson Educational 2006) and *The Death of Christian Britain*. (Abingdon: Routledge 2001)

⁴⁶ Davie, G, *Religion in Britain since 1945*. (Oxford: Blackwell 1994)

⁴⁷ Todman, D, *The Great War – Myth and Memory* (Cambridge: CUP 2005)

⁴⁸ Connelly, M, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual* (Boydell Press 2002)

⁴⁹ Gregory, A, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford: Berg 1994) and *The Last Great War* (Cambridge: CUP 2008)

⁵⁰ Robinson, J Bishop. *Honest to God*. (1963) and the Church of England Committee Report: *The Church and the Bomb*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1982)

⁵¹ McKittrick, D, and McVea, D, *Making Sense of the Troubles* (London: Penguin 2001)

⁵² Miller, D, *Don't mention the war* (London: Pluto Press 1994)

⁵³ Ingham, B, *Kill The Messenger...Again* (London: Methuen 2003 (orig 1991)) and *The Wages of Spin* (London: John Murray 2003)

⁵⁴ Urban, M, *Big Boys' Rules: The SAS and the secret struggle against the IRA* (London: Faber and Faber 2001)

⁵⁵ Bullock, C, *Journeys Hazardous* (London: Square One 1994)

Campaign⁵⁶ has a counterpoint in Barnett's anti-war commentary⁵⁷. Cordingley⁵⁸ and Schwarzkopf⁵⁹ provide their personal commander's view of the Gulf War, along with Pimlott⁶⁰ and others.

On the media, Knightley⁶¹ provides a good challenge on the topic of truth and its portrayal. More in depth analyses are provided by Greg Philo and the Glasgow Media Group⁶². Wright Mills⁶³ established a view of the 'power elite' in his 1950s work on the media; Chomsky⁶⁴ and others take this forward in a conspiracy theory over media dominance⁶⁵.

⁵⁶ Freedman, L, *Official History of the Falklands Campaign Vols 1 and 2* (Government Official History Series 2005 (Vol 2 hardback) and 2007 (Vol 1 paperback))

⁵⁷ Barnett, A, *Iron Britannia*. (London: Allison and Busby 1982)

⁵⁸ Cordingley, Major-General P, *In the eye of the storm: commanding the Desert Rats in the Gulf War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1996)

⁵⁹ Schwarzkopf, General H Norman, *It doesn't take a hero* (London: BCA 1992)

⁶⁰ Pimlott, J, and Badsey, S, (ed) *The Gulf War Assessed* (London: Arms and Armour 1992)

⁶¹ Knightley, P, *The First Casualty*. (London: John Hopkins University Press 2002 (original edn 1975))

⁶² Philo, G, and Eldridge, J, (ed) *Getting the Message* (London: Routledge 1993) and *Seeing is Believing: The Influence of Television* (London: Routledge 1990) and *Bad News From Israel* (London: Pluto Press 2004) and *Message Received* (Harlow: Longman 1999)

⁶³ Wright-Mills, C, *The Power Elite* (Oxford: Oxford Press 1956)

⁶⁴ Chomsky, N, *Media Control*. (New York: Seven Stories 2002 2nd Edn)

⁶⁵ Interviews were conducted with key appointment holders from the period where available, political, military and civil servants. In addition, interviews were also conducted with key academics who had researched in each area. A full list is at p. 361.

CHAPTER 2. FROM 'NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD' TO 'THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER'

Views on warfare from 1960-2000 must be seen in the cultural context in which they were formed. This chapter looks at three cross-cutting themes: societal and cultural changes; the status of the military in society; and homosexuality, as a measure of the changes in societal attitudes. It begins with an assessment of the military context¹.

Roles and Missions

Following the 1957 Defence White Paper, the Armed Forces were reshaped in the early 1960s. The effects included the abolition of National Service, resulting in professional force backed by reserves, designed for non-nuclear combat, matched by a nuclear deterrent force. By 1965 the force size was reduced from 700,000 to around 400,000 personnel and Defence spending was down to 7% of GNP².

Dean Acheson's comment on 5 December 1962 made every newspaper in Britain and probably encapsulated the external view of British decline: 'Great Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role.'³ Such strong words irritated Macmillan and affected

¹ Note that Peter Feaver opines that public attitudes were much refined in 2003 compared with twenty or thirty years before, but this is unsubstantiated by evidence. *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol 26 No 2 (June 2003) pp. 1-5

² Statement on the Defence Estimates 1965 (Cmnd 2592) (London: HMSO February 1965)

³ *The Times* 6 December 1962 p. 12

British opinion⁴, which was being nurtured by Macmillan to believe that Britain was re-establishing its global credentials post-Suez, exercising a role at the intersection of three circles: Europe, the United States and the Commonwealth. Arguably, since 1962 Britain has fulfilled Acheson's prediction.

The perception, illusory or not, of Britain as a great power was maintained. In 1964 Prime Minister Harold Wilson said 'Our frontier is on the Himalayas'⁵. For the people, raised in that colonial image, the concept of European engagement was alien, apparently aligning Britain to former enemies and defeated nations. A 1961 opinion poll showed 48% thought the Commonwealth was most important to Britain, as opposed to 19% who opted for the US and 18% for Europe⁶. But the withdrawal from Empire was rapid, as a series of colonies achieved independence. By and large Britain extricated itself from Empire without bloodshed and pain. Sandbrook⁷ argues that the British public saw this as a logical evolution continuing from the granting of Dominion status to the likes of Australia and Canada. Whether the ordinary British people saw it in such a way is hard to say – there is no evidence to support it and no investigations seem to have explored this point.

⁴ Though in fairness, the *Daily Telegraph* letters column of 10 December 1962 only contains 3 letters on the Acheson speech, two of which consider him to have been correct in large part. *Daily Telegraph* 10 December 1962 p. 12

⁵ Ziegler P (biographer of Harold Wilson) lecture Gresham College 21 February 2006

⁶ Quoted in Sandbrook, *Op cit* p. 223

⁷ Sandbrook, *Never Had it so Good Op cit* pp. 277-289

In the period from 1958 to 1962, Britain became home to tens of thousands of immigrants from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent⁸. Though the actual figures are relatively small in comparison to the overall population, and the likely reason that historians make so much of it is the colour of the immigrants' skin, it does mark the beginning of a much more cosmopolitan society, with changing values and slightly different views on Britain and its place in the world, that has followed through over the next 40 years.

In the 1960s war was a real issue. Many had lived through the Second World War and understood total war at first hand. Arguably, the later 1960s and 70s were not periods where the public took a great deal of interest in the military, other than the lingering fears of nuclear Armageddon, although even that was a minor issue until the 1980s⁹. It is easy to overestimate the change culture of the 1960s. There was much continuity in common values. The community was predominantly white Anglo-Saxon and substantially Protestant. But attitudes were changing. In art, design, fashion and music challenges were beginning to set in, partly as a result of the greater economic freedom at the individual level, and partly in reaction to post-war austerity. Yet Britain did not see the extremes of elsewhere. The student riots of 1968 in Europe and especially France were not replicated here in the same scale¹⁰. And the effects of the Vietnam War, with all the implications of perceived failure for American forces, high casualty rates, mental issues

⁸ David A. Coleman, "UK Statistics on Immigration: Development and Limitations", *International Migration Review*, Vol. xxi, No. 4, Winter 1987, pp. 1138-1169

⁹ This of course followed the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the emergence of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

¹⁰ Though see the section on homosexuality in this chapter to see the links between Gay Liberation and the anti-war, anti-military and Troops Out (of Northern Ireland) marches of 1968 and 1971. Also note that there were minor demonstrations at the LSE and elsewhere (which originated over the appointment of a new Director with Rhodesian connections believed to be associated with the apartheid regime – Bond, B, *Op cit* p. 53).

and drug abuse were seen but not replicated on the UK. If the 1970s challenged the post-war nirvana of a State-funded welfare state, so the Thatcherite 1980s placed more emphasis on the individual and personal wealth and choice. If the Gulf War exorcised the ghosts of Vietnam for the US, then surely the Falklands (Chapter 6) did the same for the British and memories of Suez. A stream of national self-confidence seemed to emerge, reinforced by the Gulf experience, which paved the way for the more moral, interventionist and reflective period under Blair.

Economics

Let's be frank about it, most of our people have never had it so good. Go around the country, go to the industrial towns, go to the farms, and you will see a state of prosperity as we have never had in my lifetime – not indeed ever in the history of this country. What is beginning to worry some of us is, 'Is it too good to be true?' or perhaps I should say, "Is it too good to last?"¹¹

Macmillan's often misquoted words hide the uncomfortable truth that the economic success of the country was built on borrowing; that the relative post-war improvement in Britain was far outstripped by its European neighbours. But with rationing only having ended in 1954, most people were aware of economic improvements, and also the safety net of the post-1945 welfare state. One telling fact is that there was an increase in consumption of green vegetables from 1950-1960, but equally a massive increase in sugar consumption and in the intake of fats, particularly highly-saturated fats.¹² This was not merely about greater availability of foodstuffs; it was a reaction against austerity,

¹¹ Macmillan, H, Speech at Bedford Football Ground 20 July 1957 - http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/20/newsid_3728000/3728225.stm accessed 18 August 2010.

¹² Driver, C, *Britain at Table, 1940-1980* (London: Chatto and Windus 1983) pp. 14, 68

mainly amongst the women, which had helped the Conservatives to victory in the 1951 and 1955 elections. With increases in real disposable income, this was the start of a more materialist society.

There was a price to pay. The economics of the situation simply did not stack up. The early post-war years had Britain still in control of massive lands across the world, and the pound as the second world reserve currency. Superficially, Britain should have been well ahead economically. But the costs of the war on the nation, and the population in particular, had been great, taking nearly a third of total wealth¹³. And the pressures on Defence spending in the early 1950s created by the Korean War had diverted a sizeable proportion of GDP (7.6%) which could otherwise have been used for investment. The quiet acquisition of a nuclear capability by the Attlee government without reference to Parliament simply exacerbated the problem. There was a price involved in maintaining a world power status in the 1950s through military capability. Underpinning all this was a poor Balance of Payments situation, experienced since the temporary improvement after the 1949 devaluation, which persisted right through Macmillan's notorious speech in Bedford.

The average annual percentage growth rate per-capita GDP from 1950-1960 and 1960-1970 were identical at 2.3%. All the main European nations showed substantially higher increases than the UK for the same period¹⁴. Yet Britain still took a substantial portion of GDP to fund public spending – the figure for 1948 was 35.2%, and by 1988 was 36.7%

¹³ Hennessy *Op cit* p. 27

¹⁴ Hennessy, *Op cit* p. 42

with minor variation in between¹⁵. The conclusion here is that, at least economically, there was no great change in trend from the 1950s through the period. Defence spending to the mid-1960s was 7-10% of GNP, higher than anywhere except the US and USSR. Defence spending was £30 per head of population, and the nation was spending three times as much on defence as education¹⁶.

Nuclear Weapons

In 1952, 60% of the British public supported atomic bomb development and 58% for the H-bomb development in 1955. This was viewed as the price for a seat at the top table.¹⁷ ‘Bang goes ours!’ was the *Daily Express* headline the morning after the first Christmas Island test.¹⁸ After a succession of embarrassing failures in weapons acquisition, Britain allowed the US to use Holy Loch for its Polaris submarines and agreed to acquire Polaris from the US in 1962. But this time, media coverage focused on the lack of independence from the US – ‘Britain has had very much the worst of the bargain at Nassau’ (*Daily Telegraph*),¹⁹ ‘The Sell-Out’ (*Daily Express*)²⁰, ‘Macmillan’s nuclear folly’ (*Daily Herald*).²¹ This in itself is interesting, as both left- and right-wing newspapers were

¹⁵ Hennessy, *Op cit* p. 55

¹⁶ Morgan, *Op cit* p. 218

¹⁷ Sandbrook, *Op cit* p. 239

¹⁸ *Daily Express* 16 May 1957 p. 1. Erroneously mentioned in Sandbrook *Op cit* p. 242.

¹⁹ *Daily Telegraph* 22 December 1962 p. 6

²⁰ *Daily Express* 22 December 1962 p. 1. It went on to say that this was a ‘5-way loser’, and that ‘The offer is unacceptable. Britain must insist on a nuclear deterrent of its’ own made with her own resources and dedicated to her own purposes. The public will accept nothing less.’ *Daily Express* 22 December 1962 p. 4.

²¹ *Daily Herald* 22 December 1962 p. 1. The following day’s front page went on to describe the deal as ‘Macmillan’s Munich’ *Daily Herald* 23 December 1962 p. 1.

critical on this issue, suggesting an unusual confluence of opinion, perhaps linked to a view that Macmillan's government had run its course.

The rise of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) can be tracked to J. B. Priestley's article in the *New Statesman* entitled 'Britain and the Nuclear Bomb' in November 1957. In his appeal to fight back against the 'nuclear madness' overtaking the world, he struck a chord with many, which led to a substantial debate. A gathering of luminaries such as Michael Foot and the Bishop of Chichester gathered in early 1958 to set up CND.²² Over the next year, 270 branches were established and marches organised, often exceeding expectations in their size. The highlights were the annual Easter Aldermaston marches. Attendance at the finale, which became a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, rose from 20 000 in 1959 to 75 000 in 1960 to 100 000 in 1961.²³ The social make-up of the CND leadership was predominantly middle-class pseudo-intellectuals, but as skiffle gave way to the folk music often associated with beatniks, CND supporters became identifiable as a distinct group, outside mainstream public opinion²⁴. The re-emergence of CND in the 1980s as a reaction to the deployment of Cruise missiles at Greenham Common, also saw a European dimension in the Appeal for

²² Morgan K O *Britain since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford: OUP, 2001[1990]) p.181

²³ Sandbrook, *Op cit* p. 264. Some minor marches were reported in *The Times*, but very little on the CND Easter March itself. The only letter correspondence refers to the right to report the march (after a member of the House of Lords said he felt it was not worthwhile).

²⁴ MoD took the CND challenge very seriously by constructing a new section of the Defence Secretariat (DS19) to counter it. Quinlan also felt that the anti-nuclear debate really died between 1963 and the advent of the 'neutron bomb' in 1978 and then the Trident debate. Quinlan interview *Op cit*. This is supported by Kenneth Morgan's analysis in his book *Britain since 1945* p. 454. He goes on to argue that British support for the US attacks on Libya, which again inflamed elements of public opinion, also served to preserve the UK's Trident capability (p. 486)

European Nuclear Disarmament²⁵, drafted by E P Thompson and revised by Ken Coates²⁶, Mary Kaldor, Robin Cook and others.

Military Culture

Simpson²⁷ believes that the small size of the professional Army has contributed to its lack of public popularity of the three Services. He suggests that the Royal Navy has always been very popular indeed, ‘not least because you didn’t see it’, and the RAF grew in popularity because of the Battle of Britain. He also suggests that the Army’s lack of popularity historically may have been based on a perception that it was the most class-based of the Services until the First World War²⁸.

All that said, there were strong links between the county-based Regiments, local Territorial units (and equivalents in the other Services), and the populace, reinforced by large numbers of ex-Servicemen post-Second World War and post-National Service in the community²⁹. The link extended to Parliament and all walks of life; many men at the start of the period of this thesis had had direct experience of the military from two world wars and National Service. In addition, the aftermath of the First World War not only

²⁵ <http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cats/1/9560.htm> accessed 24 December 2009. 89 boxes of END material are held in the British Library of Political and Economic Science.

²⁶ Of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

²⁷ Interview with Keith Simpson MP 24 July 2007. Simpson is an historian, as well as the then Shadow Foreign Minister and former Special Advisor in the MOD during the first Gulf War. In contrast, Strachan states that the British Army was held in high regard on the eve of the Boer War as much as in 2000, despite equivalent difficulties in recruiting. Strachan, H, (ed) *The British Army – Manpower and Society into the Twenty First Century* (Abingdon: Frank Cass 2000) p. xiv

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ It is worth noting in passing that the amalgamation of Scottish regiments brought about the album, *Farewell to the Greys*, from which the version of ‘Amazing Grace’ topped the charts for five weeks in 1972 – Turner, A W, *Crisis, what crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (London: Aurum 2008 and 2009) p. 17.

saw the start of the British Legion, but also other Service charities. In a very tangible way, the populace was linked to the military through charities that still exist today.

In 1947 Second World War conscription was replaced by peace-time National Service. Many of the conscripts were unenthusiastic recruits who viewed their compulsory time in the Forces as a sheer waste of time, resenting the interruption in their civilian studies or careers³⁰. Finlay Clark recalls that ‘the various arms of His Majesty’s Services were therefore augmented, in the early fifties particularly, by thousands of callow, brash, anxious or rebellious young men with little or no money, and a simmering resentment, in many cases, that they had to be there at all.’³¹ Conscription was phased out from 1960 and, by the time the last National Serviceman was demobilised in 1963, 2 301 000 civilians had been called up, and saw active service in each of those eighteen years³².

When British forces were deployed to Malaya, Cyprus and Kenya, including substantial numbers of National Servicemen, there was little public dissent.³³ There is certainly little in the newspapers to reflect a public concern. This suggests that the public were either tolerant of colonial operations, or were not interested. The lack of press coverage suggests they may not have been that aware. Indeed, as demonstrated in the 1962-1966 Borneo campaign (Chapter 6), there was little coverage at all in either local or national

³⁰ Hew Strachan notes that conscription was against the norm for the UK compared with European powers who historically has fought more often, and thus the army had been less important in British political development than elsewhere. ‘The British Way in Warfare Revisited’ *The Historical Journal* Vol 26, No 2 (1983) p. 458

³¹ Finlay Clark *Op cit* p21

³² Hennessy, *Op cit* p. 80

³³ Sandbrook, *Op cit* p. 287; Darwin J *The End of the British Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell 1991) pp. 18, 211 Dixon P *Op cit* pp. 105-106. However, many National Servicemen were unhappy with their role in Malaya, and there were confused public views over Kenya, with collections for Mau Mau widows being taken in London and Liverpool: See Hickman, Tom, *The Call Up* (London: Headline 2004) pp. 117, 125.

press, tending to confirm Sandbrook's view. However, recollections of National Servicemen, such as John Peel³⁴ and others, suggest there was disquiet at being used in colonial campaigns.

The cultural implications of National Service cannot be underestimated. Finlay Clark's prologue highlights the fact that despite many years since National Service, and many jobs and educational achievements, his two years of service still remains significant and different from any other period of his life, and in this he was probably not atypical³⁵.

Whatever the man's social origins, they went through a common equaliser of 12 weeks of basic recruit training, forming bonds rarely forgotten. Officers were selected by the War Office Selection Board, using a range of techniques including self-nomination. Although public and grammar schoolboys formed an obvious source, many declined to put themselves forward on principle. The result was a continuation of social levelling in the Armed Forces³⁶, despite some memories of a separate officer class defined by 'double-barrelled names'³⁷. Interestingly, Thorne, who became a National Service officer, remembered his service number as a soldier, but not as an officer, showing the power of his initial training.³⁸ Memories of National Service leaned towards satire – *The Army Game*³⁹ was a late 1950s TV sitcom lampooning life as a National Serviceman, and

³⁴ Peel, John (former DJ – and ex-radar technician) in his foreword to Royle, T, *National Service: The Best Years of their Lives* (London: Andre Deutsch 2002) p. 7

³⁵ Clark *Op cit* p. 13

³⁶ Interview Hennessy, P, 31 October 2007. Hennessy talks of the effects of 90 days of social inclusion before the officers were 'spun out' – a great social leveler.

³⁷ Thorne *Op cit* p. 121. Indeed, Finlay Clark also makes much of the 'officer and a gentleman', whether National Service officer or regular, as being distinct from the other ranks. Finlay Clark *Op cit* p. 19

³⁸ Finlay Clark *Op cit* p. 143

³⁹ <http://www.itv.com/ClassicTVshows/comedy/thearmygame/default.html> accessed 29 December 2009

similarly *Get Some In*⁴⁰ was a similar theme for the RAF in the 1970s. Experiences and recollections certainly varied, but for all, the experience coloured future judgments on the military and meant that they had experience on which to draw. The post-war Army was highly respected in society as a place to carve out a career, with wartime leaders like Montgomery revered as folk heroes in the 1950s and 1960s, while the 1970s brought about a decline in public affection⁴¹. National Service produced both an anti-authority feeling and a shared sense of humour that led to the satire of the 1960s⁴². Charlie Chester had to amend his act at the London Palladium as military banter was replaced by more family-oriented jokes as time passed⁴³.

It is impossible to link crime rates to National Service with any certainty. Yet it is a fact that crime rates per million increased by 69.8% in 1960 compared with five years previously, and remained fairly constant at that higher growth rate through to 1985⁴⁴. Relevant to later consideration of the Church and society, Gorer's review in 1971 showed a larger proportion of the young stating that they had 'no religion'. He ascribed that to the end of National Service in 1963, during which time a lot of men had filled in forms marking their religion as Church of England (CofE) as they were expected to put something down⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ <http://www.televisionheaven.co.uk/getsomein.htm> accessed 29 December 2009

⁴¹ Finlay Clark *Op cit* pp. 153-4

⁴² Hennessy interview *Op cit*

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ Morris, T, *Crime and Criminal Justice since 1945* (London: Blackwell 1989) p.57

⁴⁵ Gorer, G, *Sex and Marriage in England today* (London: Nelson 1971) p. 10

The post-National Service forces did not want to be seen as linked to a moral rearmament, or part of penal reform, or part of the welfare state. In doing so, the Services removed themselves from wider involvement with communities and the identification of the public with the Forces took a different, and perhaps more traditional turn. The recruiting slogan of 1976 was ‘Join the Professionals’⁴⁶ – making more of the distinctive professional volunteer ethos in a similar way to the pre-First World War Army.

National Service influenced a generation of political leaders and the elite who took part in it. It coloured the views of conscripts not only on matters such as authority and self-reliance, but also on the type of conflicts in which they were employed. The influence of National Service is hard to measure but easy to underestimate⁴⁷. As we shall see later, many of the war cabinet of the Falklands had wartime or National Service experience that made it easier to understand and converse with soldiers of the day. Thorne remarked on the ‘freemasonry’ that exists between those who served as National Servicemen – not literally perhaps, but noting the strong bond of service⁴⁸. Though some still believe National Service would be a sound option to resolve some of societies’ ills⁴⁹, Woodrup⁵⁰ reminds us that ‘The majority of National Servicemen were not delinquents and they were serving King and country and later Queen and country, and many of them died defending the peace. They served their country, not a custodial sentence.’⁵¹

⁴⁶ National Army museum posters.

⁴⁷ A 1955 War Office survey showing that 80% of National Servicemen said they enjoyed it, and a *Brassey’s Annual* of the same year which quoted an Army survey, saying that 15% liked the life, 10% hated it and 75% do their best but long for the day when it will be over. Hickman *Op cit* p. 275

⁴⁸ Thorne *Op cit* p. 245

⁴⁹ An opinion poll in 1970 suggested three in five adults would support the reintroduction of national service, including 52% of young men in the age group affected. Hickman *Op cit* p. 299

⁵⁰ Len Woodrup was a former RAF National Serviceman.

⁵¹ Woodrup, L, *Training for War Games* (Sussex: The Book Guild 1993) p. 9

Ministry of Defence

One of the key events of the early-1960s was the formation of a unified Ministry of Defence from the previous separate Service Ministries. The Defence (Transfer of Functions) Bill received its Second Reading in the House of Lords on 4 February 1964⁵², led, albeit reluctantly, by the final First Lord of the Admiralty, Earl Jellicoe. Key roles were given to a new Secretary of State for Defence, a single Permanent Under-Secretary, and a Chief of Defence Staff, given precedence over the single-Service chiefs. Overall coordination and control was vested in the new Defence Council. The debate is worthy of note for the strong feelings expressed by ex-Servicemen and Parliamentarians. Most of the criticisms were levelled at the powers of the new Secretary of State, the reduced powers of the single-Service Ministers, and the ability of the Chief of Defence Staff to cover all the interests. Others questioned the accountability to Parliament and the role of the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee. Despite the parliamentary interest, there seems to have been little media interest from the broadsheets or tabloids that week⁵³.

In a similar way, Michael Heseltine's⁵⁴ announcement on centralizing the staff functions in the Ministry of Defence⁵⁵ in July 1984, which produced the Vice Chief of Defence Staff and a Major-General for Reserve Forces and Cadets, as well as introducing Executive Responsibility Budgets, created considerable political comment from such

⁵² HL Deb 04 4 February 1964 vol 255 cc 9-69

⁵³ No comment in the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, or the *Daily Mail* for that week.

⁵⁴ Then Secretary of State for Defence.

⁵⁵ Cmnd No 9315 and HC Deb 18 July 1984 vol 64 cc 321-30

worthies as Denzil Davies, Julian Amery and Dr David Owen, but made little apparent public impact in the press⁵⁶. Both announcements, in spite of their significance, did not seem to excite much attention, illustrating the limited nature of public engagement with at least this type of defence issue.

Women and the Military

Space does not permit a full review of female attitudes to the military⁵⁷, but the depth of social change during the period, whether it be in the increasing importance of women with careers in their own right, or in becoming senior figures in combat arms in the military in their own right⁵⁸, is worthy of comment⁵⁹.

A feminist view of the military can be seen from work such as Enloe's⁶⁰. An analysis of her book by Michael Lind⁶¹ distinguishes between feminist empiricism (unconscious masculine bias in academic disciplines can be corrected by female scholars); female standpoint theorists (theories need to be rethought from the perspective of women); and

⁵⁶ No comment in the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, or the *Daily Mail* for that week

⁵⁷ This is discussed by Caroline Kennedy-Pipe and Stephen Welch in 'Women in the Military: Future Prospects and Ways Ahead' in Alexandrou, A, Bartle, R, and Holmes, R, *New People Strategies for the British Armed Forces* (Abingdon: Frank Cass 2004) pp. 49-67. The first footnote provides a useful summary of the strands of the feminist debate, from those who seek equality of the sexes in the military, to those who opine that feminism naturally inclines to pacifism and is therefore anti-militarist in nature.

⁵⁸ A question which Chris Dandeker considered (along with much work on homosexuality in the Armed Forces) in his article in the RUSI journal: Dandeker, C (2001) 'On the need to be different: Military Uniqueness and civil-military relations in modern society', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol 146: No 3, pp. 4-9

⁵⁹ See Natyio G, 'Infantrywomen – An Ethical Dilemma' in McConville T and Holmes R (ed) *Defence Management in Uncertain Times* (Abingdon: Frank Cass 2003) pp. 188-213 for further debate

⁶⁰ Enloe C *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993)

⁶¹ <http://feminism.eserver.org/of-arms-and-the-woman.txt> accessed 24 December 2009. Editor of *The National Interest*

female post-modernists (argue that there is no single standpoint of women, and where one is put forward, it generally represents that of affluent white women). He stresses the feminist perspectives of nurturing and cooperation, as opposed to artificial concepts of sovereignty, patriarchy and militarism, and the feminist alternative to military security being natural justice. Enloe's previous work⁶² touched on the 'Mrs Thatcher' factor – Lind argues that Enloe was implying⁶³ that Mrs Thatcher was a pawn of the patriarchal-militarist structure. Enloe moved on in her work to consider homosexuality and the exploitation of prostitutes by US forces overseas.

Lucinda Peach took a feminist approach to Just War theory in her analysis after the first Gulf War⁶⁴. She noted the traditional concept of associating women with peace and pacifism, and the actual practice of more women than men being involved in peace movements. She also cites work by Gallagher, and Branscombe and Owen⁶⁵, which showed an average 15-20% gender gap between women and man on the issue of military involvement and use of force. But she also recognises that many women, including political scientists and pacifists, may acknowledge the need for force in certain circumstances, and uses this idea to develop the thought of a feminist approach to Just War theory.

For those serving in the military, this period was a time of change, particularly for combining male and female training, and to expand the roles available to females. In July

⁶² Enloe, Cynthia *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. (Berkeley: University of California Press 2000)

⁶³ If not actually stated

⁶⁴ Peach Lucinda J, 'An alternative to pacifism? Feminism and Just War Theory' *Hypatia* Vol 9 1994

⁶⁵ *Ibid* p153

1960, WRAF recruit training moved to Spitalgate in Lincolnshire where, for the first time, females lived in barrack blocks painted in lilac and pink with flowered curtains. This developed still further when the females moved to Hereford in 1974, where the barrack blocks had televisions and washing machines. Combined training at Swinderby started in 1982, reflecting a major change in Service attitudes towards bringing the sexes together. Officers of both sexes had been trained together since 1961 at the Officer and Cadet Training Unit at Jurby, presumably reflecting the idea that officers were in some way more responsible than airmen and airwomen, and possibly a concept around class as well. It took the British Army some 25 years longer to bring WRAC and male officer training together. In terms of available opportunities for females, in 1946, airwomen were only allowed to be in 31 of the 79 trades; by 1984, 75 of the 100 trades were open to females. In 1963, the first WRAF air traffic controllers went into training. In 1973, the first female airloadmistress was commissioned. In the 1990s, the first female combat pilots joined the front-line⁶⁶.

From a different perspective again, Laura Connelly returned to the UK from Australia, where the War Widow's pension is tax-free, refused to pay tax in UK and found herself in dispute with the Inland Revenue. The fourteen women who supported her stand formed the War Widows' Association⁶⁷ in 1971. The original aim was to remove the burden of tax, which was partially achieved in 1976⁶⁸ and the remainder removed in

⁶⁶ Escott, Squadron Leader Beryl E, *Women in Air Force Blue* (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens 1989) pp. 243-255

⁶⁷ <http://www.warwidows.org.uk/index.php?page=our-history> accessed 24 December 2009

⁶⁸ The result of parliamentary interest, not least by Earl Cathcart (Scottish Council of the Royal British Legion) and Lord Clifford of Chudleigh (President, Devon Branch of the Royal British Legion) HL Deb 13 May 1975 vol 360 cc 603-6

1979. The Association became a registered charity in 1991, and the website quotes membership in 2009 of 4000. Interestingly, noting the discussion elsewhere of white poppies as tributes, the founders decided to have their own floral tribute made of white chrysanthemums with a sprig of rosemary in the shape of a cross.

In summary, the female view takes two sides. In the first, there is a desire for equality of opportunity, for women to take on all military roles. In the second, the feminist view is that women are inherently more inclined to pacifism and thus would be against war in any way.

CHAPTER 3. HOMOSEXUALITY

As a case study in societal and attitudinal change, homosexuality in the British Armed Forces is useful. It demonstrates liberalization within British society at the political level (within some groups at least), whilst the populace was perhaps more wary of acceptance, and the Armed Forces retained their opposition to recruiting and retaining homosexuals until the end of the period on the supposed grounds of operational effectiveness. In the 1970s, Seabrook argued the stereotype of the homosexual was usually ‘effeminate, mannered, emotionally volatile, unstable, predatory and promiscuous’, but that stereotype was largely irrelevant and what was viewed as ‘undesirable aberrancy’ was a reflection of ‘straight’ society.¹ The author’s experience of Service life since 1979 suggests that many in the military used the term ‘homosexual’ to mean something weak or inferior.

Homosexuality is a condition, it was argued in 1965, which, of itself, has little effect on the development of the individual; the attitude of others towards that condition that creates stress.² As far back as 1960 it was argued that there was a difference between official morality, generally theoretical and usually conservative, and the morality of the private individual, where people are more tolerant and make individual judgments on cases.³ In the 1950s, post-war rationing, lack of consumer choice in the early part of the decade, and a model in society of success through citizen producers being heterosexual contributed to a puritanical approach at political and elite levels, not really replaced until the consumerism of the 1960s⁴. But as society became arguably more permissive in the

¹ Seabrook, J, *A lasting relationship* (London: Penguin 1976) p. 9

² Schofield, M, *Sociological Aspects of Homosexuality* (London: Longmans 1965) p. 203

³ Westwood, G, *A minority* (London: Longmans 1960) p. 195

⁴ Higgins, P, *Heterosexual Dictatorship* (London: Fourth Estate 1996) p. 30

1970s and 1980s, the Armed Forces became more active in tracking down and removing known and suspected homosexuals, using the claim that such people were more likely to be susceptible to blackmail and therefore a threat to security or to military ethos and cohesion. One of the difficulties throughout the history of homosexual studies has been agreed definitions. Historian David Halperin used homosexual, queer and gay interchangeably, but this lacks rigour; other authors have described some 41 categories of homosexual⁵. So for this work, each term will be qualified as necessary.

Homosexuality is a debate with three underpinning concepts: sex (male or female), gender (masculine or feminine) and sexuality (heterosexual or homosexual). As sexuality increasingly defined gender during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so gay men were forced out of the masculine camp as viewed by ‘straight’ men. The significance of this lies in the perception of the military as being strongly masculine, such that the extreme nature of combat is assessed to require the peak of masculinity to achieve success. This was the ideology underpinning the national objection to homosexuals serving in the military in western countries, and expressed itself in military law and in the recruitment process and then throughout Service life. Homosexuality was viewed as demeaning, something to be used to belittle others – and the image of an officer on the USS *Enterprise* next to a bomb destined for the Taliban with the inscription ‘High Jack this Fags’ in 2001 suggests this thinking is still present.⁶ As discussed later, many authors over the period noted considerable repugnance and revulsion by non-homosexuals at homosexual activities. Potential rational explanations underpinning this

⁵ Halperin D, *One hundred years of homosexuality* (New York: Routledge 1990)

⁶ Jackson, P, *One of the boys: Homosexuality in the military during World War II* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2004) p. 11

view include a high incidence of VD amongst homosexuals (and latterly AIDS), and a perception of high promiscuity, which can be supported by evidence of a large number of active partners in some cases, particularly those convicted on homosexual grounds prior to 1967.

It is important to differentiate between homosexuality as a preference and sexual acts⁷ – sodomy having been made illegal for men in UK by an Act in 1533⁸; the death penalty only having been removed in 1861 in England and Ireland⁹. In the 1800s, the law was applied particularly firmly in the Armed Forces: in 1816, four members of the crew of the *Africaine* were hanged for buggery¹⁰. Though the distinction became a point of debate during the Clinton trend towards ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ in the 1990s¹¹, it is useful to separate the two, as the law on sodomy was equally applicable to heterosexuals as well as homosexuals, and military law specifically targeted sexual acts as grounds for court martial and imprisonment. Few records exist of legal action against servicewomen in the period, possibly because, if pursued and found at all, they were dealt with by administrative discharge rather than a legal process. Some regard homosexuality as an illness, while others view it as a rational choice¹².

⁷ As acknowledged by the Wolfenden Committee – Higgins *Op cit* p. 21

⁸ Incest only became criminalized in England in 1908 with the Punishment of Incest Act.

⁹ House of Commons Research Paper 98/68 19 June 1998 ‘Age of Consent’ for Male Homosexual Acts. Homosexual acts were made punishable with up to two years hard labour under the 1885 Labouchere Amendment - the so-called Blackmailer’s Charter. www.gayhistory.com/rev2/events/1885.htm accessed 9 April 2009

¹⁰ Weeks, J, *Sex, Politics and Society* (Essex: Longman 1989 orig 1981) p. 100

¹¹ The Clinton administration tried to argue that as long as people did not demonstrate homosexual activity overtly, then this would be acceptable, as a form of compromise to satisfy conservative elements in the Senate and the US Armed Forces. See <http://www.sldn.org/pages/about-dadt> accessed 15 August 201

¹² See Weeks *Op cit* p. 105

There is no doubt that homosexuality was present, and tolerated, throughout the Armed Forces of the Second World War despite legal obstructions¹³. Indeed the 1957 Wolfenden Committee¹⁴ considered that one of the origins of homosexuality had been American servicemen and British servicemen serving overseas; Lord Hailsham opining that British servicemen had brought it back from the Middle East¹⁵. Jackson's review¹⁶ of the Canadian forces demonstrates that there was a blind eye turned to recruiting avowed homosexuals when the need was critical for numbers to fight, and also that homosexuals fought with honour and distinction in all Services. There is evidence to demonstrate that many Canadian and allied serving officers and men were more than aware of the homosexual nature of some of their comrades and were much more tolerant, to the point of being defensive, of them¹⁷. Schofield found considerable evidence of convicted homosexuals in the 1960s having had homosexual experiences in schools (mainly boarding schools) and so it is likely that servicemen with that background would also be aware too¹⁸. Westwood, similarly, found 73% of the group he looked at reported occasional to very frequent homosexual acts in schools¹⁹. There is every reason to suppose that the same atmosphere pervaded in British armed forces; indeed Jackson points both to liaisons between Canadian and US and British servicemen but also extensive liaison with British civilians while Canadian servicemen were based in the UK.

¹³ See Gardiner, J, *Wartime: Britain 1939-1945* (Headline 2005) and Howard, M, *Captain Professor: the memoirs of Sir Michael Howard* (London: Continuum UK 2006)

¹⁴ The Home Office established a committee to look at prostitution and homosexuality in Britain – the Wolfenden Committee – which reported in 1957.

¹⁵ Higgins P *Heterosexual Dictatorship* (London: Fourth Estate 1996) p. 25

¹⁶ Jackson *Op cit*

¹⁷ Jackson *Op cit* pp. 221-264

¹⁸ Schofield *Op cit* p. 29

¹⁹ Westwood *Op cit* p. 7

‘It was definitely joining the Army that woke me up....I liked to watch them.’²⁰ Bill Wexford’s testimony to Jeremy Seabrook is one of many accounts of homosexuality in British forces in the war. 28% of Westwood’s subjects reported that their first adult homosexual partner had been in the Armed Forces²¹. A 32 year-old Army officer without any heterosexual experience also commented on his sympathy for homosexuals, although he had ‘ignored it’ in himself²². Indeed, Hirshfeld suggested that a category of pseudo-homosexuals would include those working in abnormal circumstances, such as the Armed Forces, implying a greater likelihood of homosexuality in that group²³. A number of studies mention the number of soldiers and sailors involved in male prostitution, not necessarily as homosexuals, but simply avoiding the costs of a room and alcohol in London for the night²⁴.

PC Butcher’s evidence to the Wolfenden Committee noted the number of servicemen present in the Fitzroy public house off Tottenham Court Road, known ‘worldwide’ as a place for homosexuals²⁵. The end of the Second World War brought ‘a time of increased conservatism on many fronts, although there is no consensus about why this was so’²⁶. One facet of the change was the increases in prosecutions for homosexuality, amongst other forms of deviance in part due to a particularly strong Director of Public Prosecutions²⁷ who pursued homosexuals more vigorously²⁸. The homosexual sub-

²⁰ Wexford B in Seabrook *Op cit* p. 13

²¹ Westwood *Op cit* p. 31

²² *Ibid* p. 197

²³ Quoted in Westwood *Op cit* p. 109

²⁴ Westwood *Op cit* p. 153 and several others.

²⁵ Higgins *Op cit* p. 47

²⁶ Hamer, E, *Britannia’s Glory – A history of twentieth century lesbians*, (London: Cassell, 1996) p. 144. Emily Hamer is an historian of lesbianism.

²⁷ DPP - Sir Theobald Mathew

culture where freedoms were available was a feature of the upper, richer classes, but for the majority of homosexuals, the atmosphere was one of repression reinforced by the law²⁹. The 1957 Wolfenden report (commissioned in 1954) had recommended decriminalization of homosexual acts in private³⁰, but it was to take another ten years before this was enacted. It is worth noting that the origins of Wolfenden's commission lay in a 1953 desire to reduce female prostitution on the streets of London; homosexuality was not the initiator³¹. The Home Secretary proposed a Royal Commission, but had to settle for a Home Office report because Cabinet members were concerned that this was an issue where relaxation of the laws might not bring credit (votes) on the Government³², reflecting the political disinclination, in an almost puritan way³³, to tackle the issues that had been fairly constant since the Second World War.

Evidence from the Services was key in two respects: a link to national security and the debate on the age of consent. On the former, the RAF³⁴ said: 'the removal of homosexuals is of vital importance in an armed force. The homosexual cannot exist in isolation; he must have an accomplice, usually several, and in seeking to extend his corrupting influence he is no respecter of rank or person. Homosexual practices bring together men [note that women not mentioned] of widely different ranks and position to the prejudice of discipline. There is also a security risk since the man compromised by

²⁸ See Weeks *Op cit* p. 240

²⁹ Seabrook *Op cit* p. 65

³⁰ House of Commons paper 98/68 *Op cit*

³¹ Higgins P *Heterosexual Dictatorship*(London: Fourth Estate 1996) p. 4

³² *Ibid* p. 5

³³ *Ibid* p. 30

³⁴ Air Commodore Pride, Provost-Marshal

homosexual conduct may yield to pressure for the disclosure of secret information³⁵. On the age of consent, the Committee was most concerned about evidence of homosexuality amongst young servicemen, particularly National Servicemen (although Hickman says that this was actually quite rare, mostly exhibited by the regulars, and tolerated where found by most)³⁶. The DPP talked of the ‘susceptible ages’ between 19 and 22 or 23, and his concern over young guardsmen, and the Chief Constable of Liverpool gave his views on the ‘corruption’ of young men created by conscription³⁷. Higgins suggests that one of the worst aspects of National Service was low pay, which meant that troops stayed together rather more and were more inclined to look for ways of increasing their income, including homosexual acts³⁸. Higgins says that the protection of National Servicemen was the critical factor in Wolfenden’s decision (against the majority on his committee) to press for a minimum legal age of 21 rather than 18³⁹, coupled with strong advice from Lord Chief Justice Goddard.⁴⁰

Media reaction to the report was strong but mixed. The Beaverbrook papers, the *Daily Telegraph*⁴¹, and the *Daily Mail*⁴², together with most of the provincial press were hostile,

³⁵ Higgins *Op cit* p. 27

³⁶ Hickman *Op cit* p209 although evidence for his assertion seems to be limited. Wolfenden had previously looked at National Service in the Army on behalf of the Army Council in 1956 and concluded that it was wasting men’s time. See Hickman *Op cit* pp. 220-221

³⁷ Higgins *Op cit* p. 61

³⁸ *Ibid* p. 62

³⁹ *Ibid* p. 63 (Key here was evidence from three cases: The Curzon Street case involving 31 guardsmen, the Cooke-Croft case involving naval cooks, and the drummer boys at Windsor involving young drummer boys from the Coldstream Guards. As it was, a further incident occurred in Curzon St with guardsmen in 1968, and another incident in 1975 exposed by the *Daily Mirror* of guardsmen posing for photographs in gay magazines.) Finlay Clark *Op cit* p. 17 believes the concentration on sex amongst National Servicemen by academics and journalists to have been overstated.

⁴⁰ Findlay Clark *Op cit* p. 73

⁴¹ *Daily Telegraph* 5 September 1957 p. 13. Though Higgins rightly says that the coverage was basically against the Report, the coverage does include positive comments from the Catholic Marriage Guidance

while other London papers were in favour of the recommendations on homosexuality⁴³. There was general consensus on measures on prostitution – which gave the Government the freedom to put that element into law, whilst delaying decisions on decriminalising homosexual acts. One of the consequences was the formation of the Homosexual Law Reform Society⁴⁴, with many of the same membership as other liberalising organisations such as anti-nuclear weapons and cessation of hanging – which inevitably brought the groups together to campaign on a liberal agenda.

Analysis by sociologists such as Schofield⁴⁵ looked at groups of homosexuals in prison, paedophiles, and homosexuals receiving treatment against control groups outside. Whilst this replicated much of the earlier work such as Kinsey (1948) and others, it carried a subliminal message of a linkage between homosexuality and illegal acts (not all related to homosexuality), and between homosexuality and paedophilia. Indeed, Higgins notes that the business of the Wolfenden Committee was conducted on the basis that no-one had ever met a homosexual other than in a court of law, a police station, a prison, a hospital or a clinic⁴⁶. In fact, Schofield was able to demonstrate that homosexuals are very different from paedophiles, and that although many imprisoned homosexuals guilty of other

Council and from Donald Soper, previously President of the Methodist Council. No letters were published for or against in the next two days.

⁴² *Daily Mail* 5 September 1957 p. 1 'Vice Storm Breaking'. The lead article said that the 'proposal to legalise homosexuality...was unlikely to be carried out in the lifetime of the present Parliament [because] opposition amongst Conservative back bench MPs would be too fierce'. The edition had double page coverage on pp. 6-7. The comment column on the front page of the following day's edition talked of the 'pendulum swings [swung] too far'.

⁴³ Higgins *Op cit* p. 117. *Daily Mirror* 5 September 1957 thought it a 'sensible and responsible report' p1, although most of their comments (pp. 12-13, 24) concentrated on prostitution. Sir Bob Boothby said he agreed 'one hundred per cent with the report' p. 24. *The Times* 5 September 1957 pp. 7 and 10 covered the facts of the recommendations, but made no comment for or against.

⁴⁴ Higgins *Op cit* p. 125

⁴⁵ Schofield *Op cit* pp. 4-5

⁴⁶ Higgins *Op cit* p. 18

offences had a stereotypical lack of a father-figure in the family, and a strong attachment to the mother, broken homes were closely linked to all crime, and not purely homosexuality. Schofield found that prison staff were more inclined to regard homosexuals as 'degraded, corrupt or degenerate' rather than the homosexuals' own views as unnatural or perverted⁴⁷. Westwood looked at 127 homosexuals across the range of professional levels⁴⁸, though most were relatively uneducated⁴⁹. His research suggested that, although some homosexual acts and attitudes were 'undesirable', social and legal methods of dealing with the condition were 'irrational' and tended to cause more problems than they solved⁵⁰. He also found less of a link between homosexuality and crime than others were saying publicly at the time⁵¹.

The most dramatic liberal agenda pursued by a Home Secretary was that of Roy Jenkins in the 1960s. More than 1000 people attended the 1960 inaugural meeting of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, but a Private Member's Bill to reform the law on homosexuality that year was defeated 2:1. An influential film, *Victim*, was screened the following year, showing Dirk Bogarde as a gay barrister, blackmailed over his sexuality. The following year, the Secret Intelligence Service used a 'gay honey trap' to catch John Vassall attempting to sell state secrets to the Russians⁵². In 1963, the *Sunday Mirror*

⁴⁷ Schofield *Op cit* p. 9

⁴⁸ The Hall Jones Scale

⁴⁹ Westwood *Op cit* pp. 3-4

⁵⁰ Westwood *Op cit* p. 196

⁵¹ *Ibid* p. 136

⁵² In the ensuing media coverage, attempts were made to link Vassall, Thomas Galbraith at the Admiralty and Lord Carrington in a homosexual scandal – entirely without foundation. Greenslade R *Press Gang* (London: Pan 2004) p. 175

carried an article headed ‘How to Spot a Homo’⁵³ – ‘They are everywhere, they can be anybody’ in which they offered eight possible ‘signs’, and made the link to the spy Vassall, who had apparently not shown any outward signs, other than being known as Vera. In 1964, the North West Homosexual Law Reform Committee was established, later to become the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, with a Lesbian group Kenric formed the following year. In 1966, the first gay contact advertisements were published in the *International Times*, for which it was prosecuted. Leo Abse MP⁵⁴ led on the Sexual Offences Bill of 1967 which legalized gay sex in private for consenting adults over the age of 21 (reflecting a general view that the law up till then was unenforceable and in danger of being brought into disrepute)⁵⁵. Even Labour ministers of the day were concerned about the bill:

Frankly it’s an unpleasant bill and I myself don’t like it. It may well be twenty years ahead of public opinion; certainly working class people in the north jeer at their Members at the weekend and ask them why we’re looking after the buggers at Westminster instead of looking after the unemployed at home. It has gone down very badly that the Labour Party should be associated with such a bill⁵⁶.

This Act did not extend to members of the Armed Forces; indeed, Mr Abse indicated explicitly that he had no intention of changing the position obtaining in the Armed Forces

⁵³ *Sunday Mirror* 28 April 1963 p. 7. Sandbrook erroneously attributes this to the *Sunday Pictorial*, which had been merged with the *Sunday Mirror* by this time. This followed on from an article in the *Mirror*’s predecessor, the *Sunday Pictorial* of 1952 entitled ‘Evil Men’ which suggested that homosexuality had ‘produced the horrors of Hitlerite corruption’, made the link between homosexuality and paedophiles, and said that homosexuals were found in all the top professions, including the military, stating that a famous (unnamed) general in World War I had been a pervert.

⁵⁴ Leo Abse had served in the RAF during the Second World War and had been a member of the Forces Parliament, which debated issues of the day. He was MP for Pontypool and was keen to promote social causes as a backbench MP, being known for quoting Freudian psychoanalysis in his speeches. He persuaded Roy Jenkins to support the Sexual Offences Bill in 1967.

⁵⁵ House of Commons paper *Op cit.* Scotland only joined in 1980 and Northern Ireland in 1982.

⁵⁶ Crossman, R from his diaries, quoted in Higgins, P, *Heterosexual Dictatorship*(London: Fourth Estate 1996) p. 2 (although Crossman voted for it).

in this respect⁵⁷. ‘The security implications of the Sexual Offences Act were considered by the inter-departmental Official Committee on Security in March 1968. The Committee considered that despite changes in the law which made homosexual acts between consenting adults in private no longer a criminal offence, the risk of blackmail or pressure in homosexual cases would remain substantial. They decided that there should be no change in the general policy but that Departments should be advised that, because of the lessened threat of exposure to the police in the United Kingdom, they might find it possible to come down in favour of the individual when previously they would not have done so’.⁵⁸ Schofield’s view in 1965 was that a change in the law would remove the possibility of blackmail; all that would be required for the Armed Forces was to ensure some protection for junior servicemen from senior ranks imposing on them for homosexual relationships, but that that protection was already available under existing Service discipline acts under ‘Conduct unbecoming to good order and discipline’⁵⁹. Actual evidence to prove a link between homosexuality and effective blackmail is hard to come by, as Higgins recognises⁶⁰. Finally, that decade brought the formation of Stonewall in 1969, following the New York riots of the same name when, on 27 June 1969, the New York Police Department raided the Stonewall Inn gay bar – not in itself an unusual act, but on this occasion the drag queens, butch lesbians and queers of all varieties fought back in a riot which lasted all that weekend.⁶¹

⁵⁷ ADM 330/32 National Archives

⁵⁸ Draft report to the Secretary of State for Defence on the inter-Service rules on homosexuality 11 September 1969 in DEFE 47/36 National Archives

⁵⁹ Schofield *Op cit* p. 197

⁶⁰ Higgins *Op cit* p. 95

⁶¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/documentaries/features/gay-decade.shtml> accessed 13 October 2008.

The reality of the 1960s is, though, that although some notorious homosexuals made the headlines, such as controversial playwright Joe Orton (killed in 1967 by his jealous male lover Kenneth Halliwell), and Andy Warhol, whose attempted shooting by Valerie Solanas, playwright and author of the SCUM Manifesto (Society for Cutting Up Men) in 1963 was captured in the film *I Shot Andy Warhol*, for most homosexuals, the Sixties were a period of isolation, fear and repression. Many met in ‘gay bars’ or clubs, particularly in London, Brighton and Blackpool⁶². 81% of homosexual activities took place in private⁶³, despite the media attraction to more public activities. The most widespread outlet for queers was the so-called ‘pulp fiction’ which allowed allusion and suggestion to let a variety of expression through, despite legal constraints. Patricia Juliana Smith makes much of ‘false gods’⁶⁴ to describe the idolatry present in society when homosexuality was repressed; examples might be Dusty Springfield in the 1960s – described as “”becoming” a gay man in drag”⁶⁵ for her fans, before ‘coming out’ in 1970 – and John Lennon, whose much-discussed relationship with the openly gay Brian Epstein, the Beatles’ manager, provided much of the queer ‘encoding’ in their films and songs. Schofield notes the high level of repugnance over homosexuality amongst a control group of non-homosexuals, some to the point of potentially resorting to physical violence. Some 20% of the control group in 1965 were opposed to relaxing laws on homosexuality, but 70% thought it should be decriminalised⁶⁶. That same repugnance was found by Westwood in his research which led to a number of sponsoring

⁶² Westwood *Op cit* p. 72

⁶³ *Ibid* p. 79

⁶⁴ Smith, Patricia Juliana (ed), *The Queer Sixties*, (London: Routledge , 1999) p. xv

⁶⁵ *Ibid* p. xviii

⁶⁶ Schofield *Op cit* pp. 139-40

organisations to withdraw their support⁶⁷. Even in 1971, Gorer found that 23% of men and 25% of women felt revulsion for same sex love⁶⁸, but a further 5% of men and 4% of women felt it morally wrong; indeed only a third of the sample were tolerant of homosexuality with the rest hostile or neutral⁶⁹. Tolerance seemed to increase with youth and class. ‘Camp’ figures such as Julian and Sandy in *Round the Horne* (1964-69) were figures of fun in society and only contested by activist groups⁷⁰. Weeks notes the lack of ‘adequate’ sex education found by Schofield in his 1973 work on young adults: 1 in 10 boys in his sample and 1 in 5 of girls were found to have had ‘adequate’ sex education⁷¹, which reflects the general lack of informed views of the period⁷².

Case Study 1. Homosexuality in the Royal Navy in the 1960s

Despite the growing pressure on legalization up to 1967, the Armed Forces went in the opposite direction. In 1968, forty Royal Navy men were discharged for homosexuality, many linked to events on HMS *Eagle* on its return from the Far East⁷³. This reflected an increase in the number of security cases which averaged one per month in 1967 to

⁶⁷ Westwood *Op cit* p. ix

⁶⁸ Gorer *Op cit* p. 190

⁶⁹ Gorer *Op cit* p. 191

⁷⁰ Baker, P, and Stanley, J, *Hello Sailor! The Hidden History of Gay Life at Sea* (London: Pearson Educational 2003) p. 34. Also goes on to a tradition marked by Mr Humphries in *Are you being served?* (1972-84), Larry Grayson in a series of shows from his arrival on television in 1972 (see Turner *Op cit* p243) and Dick Emery as Honky Tonk in his show which ran from 1963-81.

⁷¹ Weeks *Op cit* p. 256

⁷² Gorer points out that, even by 1971, 46% of men and 88% of women reached betrothal as virgins, 27% of men and 49% of women considered men should be inexperienced before marriage, and 43% of men and 68% of women considered women should be inexperienced before marriage, suggesting that despite the portrayal of a ‘permissive society’, actually England (and by extension, the rest of the UK as well) was a very chaste society. His research showed that most of that inexperience lay in the working classes (the DE group under the Registrar General’s bands).

⁷³ There were no reports on the arrests in the *Daily Mirror*, *The Times* or the *Daily Telegraph* for 3-5 October 1968. HMS *Eagle* returned to Plymouth on 3 October 1968.

thirteen per month by 1969⁷⁴. The Second Sea Lord maintained a list of ‘suspected persons’ which, in 1963 stood at 281 ratings and 13 officers, but by May 1968, had reached 375 ratings and 9 officers⁷⁵. The extent to which this reflected better detection or an increase in homosexual activity is unclear. The Navy Board instigated work to review policy: ‘The Board is concerned at the amount of homosexuality becoming apparent, as the result of chain reactions to investigations into individual events’⁷⁶. In Bermuda, a local man was found to be running a brothel frequented by sailors where they took part in ‘grossly indecent acts and [posed] for sexually perverted photographs’⁷⁷. In the ensuing investigation⁷⁸ by retired Captain (RN) Donald MacIntyre⁷⁹, a potential health disaster was found in Singapore, where sailors who had caught diseases from local prostitutes ‘were afraid to reveal the sources of their infections’⁸⁰. Admiral Sir John Fitzroy

Duyland Bush, commanding Western Fleet wrote:

There is, regrettably, ample evidence that homosexual practices are rife in the Fleet; for a variety of reasons, disciplinary action can only be taken in a small minority of the known cases. It can be assumed that the cases that come to official notice are but a small proportion of those who indulge in these practices. I have a strong feeling that many of the men are not perverts but basically normal men whose attitudes to this sort of activity is indifferent and whose standards of behaviour are thoroughly lax⁸¹.

⁷⁴ N/NL 124/70 M1 dated 7 January 1970 in ADM 330/32 National Archives

⁷⁵ ADM 330/32 National Archives

⁷⁶ CNP & 2SL 270/3 dated 12 June 1968 Sec 2SL to DGNPS in ADM 105/104 National Archives

⁷⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2378811.stm> accessed 13 October 2008

⁷⁸ MacIntyre Report 22 October 1968 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

⁷⁹ A noted naval historian. See http://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/world/united_kingdom/uknews69.htm accessed 1 June 2009

⁸⁰ BBC News 2378811 *Op cit*

⁸¹ WF700/30.P 24 November 1969 Commander in Chief Western Fleet in ADM 330/32 National Archives

Admiral Sir Frank Roddam Twiss, Second Sea Lord, warned commanders to be on the lookout for ‘unnatural vice’ attributable to changing moral attitudes in civilian life: ‘The time has come to take a less permissive attitude in the Fleet’⁸².

Medical and legal advice was less inclined towards drastic action, and provides the only evidence of comparisons with life outside the Armed Forces. On the Singapore male prostitutes, the Medical Director-General minuted: ‘Some of these “girls” are very beautiful. They dress well and smell delicious. They perfect the female walk, stance and mannerisms and some even undergo surgery to complete the illusion’⁸³. After debate with colleagues, he went on to say that

The panel are generally agreed that the vast majority of these chaps are not homosexuals and it is doubtful whether they should be dealt with strictly according to the DCI referred to⁸⁴.

He had already opined in January 1969 that ‘It is considered impossible to detect “genuine” homosexuals at entry’⁸⁵.’ The Head of Naval Law Division had said

If the number of men with some homosexual experience is as great as we think, we cannot afford to throw them all out as the Navy would not then be adequately manned. On the other hand, “homosexuality” is declared a “character defect” by HMG and it undoubtedly does give rise to the possibility of blackmail. It is also a threat to discipline⁸⁶.

⁸² BBC News 2378811 *Op cit*

⁸³ M8 from MDG(N) dated 28 April 1969 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

⁸⁴ MDG(N) to Head of Naval Law Division 1 May 1969 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

⁸⁵ MDG(N) to DG NPS 7 January 1969 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

⁸⁶ Head of Naval Law Division NL1363/68 dated 12 November 1968 E18 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

This is consistent with his line in May, where he had responded to the Second Sea Lord that:

I do feel we should take into account the possibility that the current astonishingly rapid changes in the sexual morality of the whole western world may lead to a situation, well within our life time, when this [the ban] will be seriously questioned. Indeed, I find my own civilian acquaintance – not, I hasten to add, unusually vicious – already asking why homosexuality is punishable in the Armed Forces when it is pretty well free in civilian life⁸⁷.

In actual fact, the Commander-in-Chief Western Fleet did not feel that blackmail was the problem:

My own view is that the degree to which ratings get involved in these activities only exceptionally renders them liable to blackmail in this permissive society, and that the principal risk is not so much to security as society⁸⁸.

The quotation suggests that the Commander-in-Chief was more concerned about standards in wider society than the security threat from blackmail.

A Royal Navy Defence Council Instruction was issued in May 1969 on homosexuality, and is strident in its denunciation, making no allowance for the views of the Medical Director-General or the Head of Naval Law:

Their [i.e. homosexual] acts, often committed with little or no sense of guilt, flourish with a permissiveness which is much too widespread. The haunts of civilian homosexuals ashore are well-known and too large a proportion of ratings

⁸⁷ Head of Naval Law Division to 2SL 22 May 1968 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

⁸⁸ WF700/30 a.P 24 November 1969 Commander in Chief to DUS(N) in ADM 330/32 National Archives

regard the seeking of their company as quite normal, when they are short of money, for the free drinks they provide⁸⁹.

An education programme was put in place by 1969 to warn of the ‘evils’ of homosexuality, particularly offering opportunities for blackmail. The lecture notes were aimed at Divisional Petty Officers and Leading Hands of the Mess – felt most able to ‘help in exposing and stamping out homosexuality in ships’⁹⁰. This may explain why the senior ratings mess room was subsequently in 2000 the most resistant in any Service at any level to change. The notes were unambiguous:

Homosexuality, in the security sense, includes any disgusting, infamous or immoral act between two persons of the same sex ranging, in men, from mutual masturbation to sodomy. In other words, it is any such act about which one or both participants are ashamed, and wants to keep hidden from either a person near or dear to him, or his employer, colleagues (superiors, equals or juniors) etc, i.e. an act about which he could be blackmailed⁹¹.

To prove that nothing is new, the collected papers from 1968 also include the Admiralty guidance from 1913, which said:

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty are still much concerned at the large number of cases of immorality which come to their notice, and which do not appear to be confined to those who might have been led astray by youth or ignorance or to those of notoriously bad character⁹².

In this case, the Admiralty required medical checks on all those indulging, to check for things such as ‘general paralysis of the insane’, which reflected the high levels of syphilis

⁸⁹ DCI(RN) IC2 16 May 1969 Discipline – Unnatural Acts

⁹⁰ DG Personal Services and Training 8 January 1970 Homosexual Practices - Educational Aspects in DEFE 69/308 National Archives

⁹¹ *Ibid*

⁹² NL5773 Admiralty 18 December 1913 in ADM 105/104 National Archives

and venereal disease present at the time (equally a major issue for the heterosexual population).

From this case study several things can be inferred, partly by their omission. First, the reaction to the 1967 Sexual Offences Act was not merely to conserve the military position, but to increase the pressure on removal of homosexuals, which from the numbers of suspected persons and discharge rates had been an issue for several years before. Though it is unclear from the archives, it may be that this was a reaction to the clear Parliamentary signal that the Armed Forces were different from the rest of society in this respect, and that this difference needed to be enforced. Second, despite the legal and medical reservations on implementation of anti-homosexual policies and the wider view, the narrower perspective of the Naval executive branch prevailed. This may have been due to the restricted background from which many of the Naval executive had been drawn. Third, the imputation of the education programme is that homosexual acts would disgust servicemen, despite being legalized in society at large. The level of repugnance found in society, as described elsewhere in this chapter, suggests this might just as well have been found in the wider public community. Fourth, despite the Commander-in-Chief's view, the primary reason for security concerns appears to be potential for blackmail. Fifth, there is no significant mention of women and lesbians at all; passing reference can be found in the archives but only to say that the regulations apply equally to women. Finally, none of the papers, even Ministerial submissions or the record of inter-Departmental discussions show any consideration of public opinion or still less media handling. It appears that this was viewed as a very particular military issue where outside

opinion was not wanted. There is no evidence of any leaks to the press or any discussion in newspapers of the issues.

The Homosexual Movement

The homosexual movement changed dramatically between the days of Stonewall and the 1990s. In Britain, the 1993 Lesbian and Gay Pride March in London included uniformed veterans, including Americans who had served in Vietnam as well as British ex-Servicemen who had served in Northern Ireland. Newspaper comment at the time is broadly factual without comment. It is worth noting that the press coverage of the Royal Navy's formal participation in the 'Gay Pride' march of 2006 is far more positive, even celebratory, in tone⁹³.

Peter Tatchell⁹⁴ is amongst those who are critical of what he perceives as a short-term approach for gays to appear as good as heterosexuals. He quotes from the Gay Liberation Front Manifesto of 1971:

In our mistaken, placating efforts to be accepted and tolerated, we've often submitted to the pressures to conform to the strait-jacket of society's rules...It's especially important for gay people to stop copying straights⁹⁵.

⁹³ *Guardian* 'Hello sailor: Royal Navy finally takes part in gay pride' 1 July 2006

⁹⁴ Australian-born British human rights activist, well-known for his attempt to arrest Robert Mugabe in 1999 and 2001 for torture. Failed Labour candidate for Bermondsey in 1981. Leading Gay Liberation activist and author, who co-founded Outrage!

⁹⁵ Tatchell, *Op cit* p. 4

He views the quest for gay liberation as part of a wider campaign for human freedom, with values of egalitarianism, solidarity, democracy, individuality and liberation being coincident with anti-militarist views, which allowed the Gay Liberation Front to shout in their 1971 march not only for police to stay out of gay bars, but also for British troops to pull out of Northern Ireland⁹⁶. There is some consistency here with the evidence from Gorer's research of greater tolerance in 1971 by the younger element of the population, particularly those viewing heterosexual sex as fun, rather than a sacred duty, who might also take liberal views on other issues⁹⁷. Tatchell states that the Armed Forces 'manipulate, intensify and marshal the brutishness of heterosexual masculinity to create an institution dedicated to cold-blooded and systematic killing⁹⁸', whereas he believes that most queer men are: 'unaggressive, tender and empathetic⁹⁹'.

He also suggests that the military training system's tendency to 'break' people to form them into a cohesive body with shared ethos is totally dissimilar to the individuality of the homosexual¹⁰⁰. He goes on to say that the main reason homosexuals should refuse to serve is the Armed Forces' 'obsessive' homophobia.

Tatchell highlights the US experience of those Arab linguists actively removed from service in the 1980s for being gay, being brought back to service for the Gulf War in

⁹⁶ The strong linkage between the Gay Liberation Front and other organisations shows in their participation along with Women's Liberation in the march from Hyde Park Corner to the Albert Hall in support of the TUC march against the Industrial Relations Bill on 12 January 1971. *The Times* 13 January 1971 p. 2.

⁹⁷ Gorer *Op cit* p. 204

⁹⁸ Tatchell p. 9

⁹⁹ *Ibid* p. 15. There is no evidence readily available to support this. Indeed, the evidence from Jackson on homosexuals who served with distinction in the Second World War suggests this not to be the case.

¹⁰⁰ There is no easy evidence to support or deny this assertion, but the sense of the individual stories in Smith, Seabrook and Westwood tends to add credence to the point.

1991 because of a lack of expertise¹⁰¹. He also mentions the case of Julian Corlett, a medical reservist called up for duty in the Gulf War despite his role as the Chair of the Scunthorpe Gay Men and Women's Group, although he acknowledges that in the end, an illness prevented him from being used on active service¹⁰². The clear suggestion is that the military can be exploitative if the situation requires expediency.

In 1992, Rank Outsiders¹⁰³ was formed by Robert Ely¹⁰⁴ as a support group for lesbians and gay men in the Armed Forces and those who were sacked for their orientation¹⁰⁵. The organisation worked with Stonewall to provide evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on the Armed Forces, which led the Conservative Government to promise to stop the criminal prosecution of gay servicemen and women.

In the UK in 1994, section 146 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act repealed those sections of the 1967 Act which related to members of the Armed Forces and the Merchant Navy. Whilst this meant that homosexual acts were not offences under the Act, they could still be grounds for dismissal and could still be offences under the single Service Discipline Acts. Service personnel who committed an act or expressed a homosexual orientation were administratively discharged from the Services. Challenges to the military ban persisted, but the judiciary were reluctant to challenge the primacy of

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* p40

¹⁰² *Ibid* p41

¹⁰³ Now known as Armed Forces Lesbian and Gay Association.

¹⁰⁴ Ely was a Warrant Officer 1 Bandmaster in The Parachute Regiment, who was released on 2 June 1986 as a homosexual (dismissed from the Army after seventeen years service after discovery of a letter disclosed his orientation). 'Cleaning Out the Camp' 21 and 28 June 2007 BBC Radio 4 Loftus Productions Producer Jo Coombs

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.legion-magazine.co.uk/features/events/serving-with-pride/military-pride-time> accessed 18 November 2008

parliament who set the Services Discipline Acts. In 1995, the Labour Party said that, when in power, they would establish a commission to examine the question of homosexuality in the Armed Forces; in power they generally opposed homosexuals in the Armed Forces, but George Robertson, Defence Secretary, agreed to review it during the Strategic Defence Review on 1997/8¹⁰⁶, consistent with New Labour's agenda of inclusiveness.

Writing in 1976, Seabrook suggested that public attitudes had moved from horror and revulsion, through acceptance, to a view of homosexuality by the young as an exciting proposition, much as Satanism or necromancy¹⁰⁷. But this is not supported by later evidence from the polls. Public attitudes towards homosexuality were measured in the British Social Attitudes surveys from 1983 to 1993. The percentage agreeing with the statement 'sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are always wrong' started and ended at 50%, but peaked at 64% in 1987, possibly because of the start of the AIDS epidemic¹⁰⁸. Stephen Pattison notes that in 1987, some churchmen publicly stated that AIDS was a direct punishment for homosexual behaviour¹⁰⁹. This suggests that the Jenkins reform of 1967 was ahead of public opinion, and perhaps demonstrates why the Armed Forces were more in line with public opinion in pursuing homosexuals in the 1980s and 1990s. Wing Commander Phil Sagar, commanding the MOD Equality and Diversity Unit in 2007, recalled being required to be present in a search by four senior non-commissioned officers from the RAF's Provost Branch of a young airman's room,

¹⁰⁶ House of Commons paper 98/68 *Op cit*

¹⁰⁷ Seabrook *Op cit* p201

¹⁰⁸ House of Commons paper *Op cit*

¹⁰⁹ Pattison S, *The Challenge of Practical Theology* (London: Jessica King Publishers 2007) p. 122

including forcing open a padlocked cupboard and searching all his personal items, which Sagar regarded at the time to be quite normal and acceptable¹¹⁰, merely on suspicion of being a homosexual. A female former Army unit commander recalled how lesbianism could ‘insidiously destroy the atmosphere of the accommodation block’, and of her concerns for the welfare of young servicewomen, made harder and more lonely for her as a commander if she felt her boss was also gay¹¹¹. A BBC Radio 4 programme estimated that 100-200 personnel were removed each year from the Armed Forces for homosexuality and lesbianism¹¹². A MORI poll in 1995¹¹³ showed that 40% of respondents thought homosexual sex was wrong, suggesting the downward trend was continuing. In July 1997, NOP¹¹⁴ carried out a survey on homosexuality, which showed that 71% believed attitudes were more tolerant than five years previously, and 19% the same. When asked about their personal tolerance to homosexuality, 65% felt they were the same as five years before, and 23% more tolerant. Those most tolerant were under the age of 34. It was still not evident that the populace was tolerant of homosexuality in 1994 during the days of ‘sleaze’ amongst the Major government. The press revealed details of a Tory MP who had shared a bed with another man on a trip to France and a second MP was ‘outed’ by the *News of the World* writing of his ‘three-in-a-bed romp’ with two other men, suggesting that the public did not find this acceptable¹¹⁵. Even in 1998, when four Cabinet Ministers were found to be homosexuals, the *Sun* ran a headline of ‘Tell us the truth Tony: Are we being run a gay mafia?’¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁰ BBC Radio 4 ‘Cleaning out the camp’ *Op cit*

¹¹¹ Email Lamonte/Hine 10 May 2009 1251.

¹¹² BBC Radio 4 ‘Cleaning out the camp’ *Op cit*

¹¹³ British Public Opinion January-February 1996, MORI

¹¹⁴ Quoted in House of Commons paper 98/68 *Op cit*

¹¹⁵ Greenslade *Press Gang* *Op cit* p618

¹¹⁶ *Sun* 9 November 1998

Case Study 2. The reaction to the Lustig-Prean case.

The most prominent case to change the law on homosexuals in the Armed Forces was that of Lieutenant-Commander Duncan Lustig-Prean¹¹⁷. Few primary sources exist on this period as official records have yet to be released into the public domain. He was born in 1959 and was discharged from the Royal Navy in 1994 on the grounds of his homosexuality, after he reported a blackmail attempt over his orientation¹¹⁸.

Admitting I was gay was not enough for them. I had committed no offences and had never been involved with a serviceman but they asked the most intimate questions. They didn't just want to ask if I had oral sex, but to describe exactly what I did. They [Royal Navy Special Investigations Branch] left me feeling I had been raped by the MOD¹¹⁹.

His Commanding Officer had described him, at the end of 1993, as:

A most able, conscientious and industrious officer. His engaging and warm personality allows him to communicate effectively at all levels. This is the cornerstone of his success; he is dynamic and extrovert, yet his magnanimous and conciliatory nature fosters genuine trust and support. Resourceful, versatile and perceptive, he is a most effective manager and organizer. He is a balanced enlightened and knowledgeable man who enjoys my complete trust in all matters. Lustig-Prean has great all-round potential. He is an outstanding prospect for early promotion to Commander¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ Lustig-Prean was born in 1959 and joined the Royal Navy as a radio operator in 1982. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander and was clearly doing well in his career as a warfare officer from the reports of his commanding officer.

¹¹⁸ *Guardian* 'Hello sailor: Royal Navy finally takes part in gay pride' 1 July 2006

¹¹⁹ *Independent* 11 March 1995

¹²⁰ *Hansard* 13 December 1995 Column 1052

Jeanette Smith, one of his later co-appellants, had her case considered by the Queen's Bench Division on 7 June 1995, where Mr Pannick, counsel for the applicant, said:

I regard the progressive development and refinement of public and professional opinion at home and abroad, here very briefly described, as an important feature of this case. A belief which represented unquestioned orthodoxy in year X may have become questionable in year Y and unsustainable by year Z¹²¹.

Lustig-Prean and three others went on to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 1995 to overturn the decision, but were refused. However, in the summing up of the case, which set the course for an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, Lord Justice Brown said:

...the tide of history is against the Defence Ministry. Prejudices are breaking down; old barriers are being removed. It seems to me improbable, whatever this court may say, that the existing policy can survive much longer¹²².

The issue was brought to the House of Commons by Harry Cohen, MP for Leyton, but does not seem to have been taken up more widely¹²³. The *Daily Mirror* gave it a very small report¹²⁴, but the *Daily Mail* gave it two pages¹²⁵, with an editorial¹²⁶ which made it clear this was not an issue for the European Courts, but a national issue. The *Daily Mail* did not print any letters on the topic in the following two days. The *Daily Telegraph* covered the case extensively¹²⁷, considering the position in each Service and in other

¹²¹ Regina v Ministry of Defence ex parte Smith and others. 7 June 1995

¹²² *Daily Mail* 8 June 1995 pp. 6-7

¹²³ *Hansard Op cit*

¹²⁴ *Daily Mirror* 8 June 1995 p. 9

¹²⁵ *Daily Mail* 8 June 1995 pp. 6-7

¹²⁶ *Ibid* p. 8

¹²⁷ *Daily Telegraph* 8 June 1995 p. 1, 4

countries under a by-line of ‘MOD has won a battle but is resigned to losing the war’¹²⁸. John Keegan’s article argued that ‘homosexuality can undermine the vital authority that the Armed Forces must demand in war’¹²⁹.

The following day, the newspaper published five letters on the subject (dominating the letters column), four of which were from ex-servicemen, including Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage¹³⁰, all of which were in opposition to homosexuals in the Armed Forces on grounds of ‘the moral decay of the nation’, ‘homosexuals create covens of corruption’, ‘unwanted attentions of homosexuals [towards a tank crew in the desert]’ and a ship’s captain having to assemble his crew to berate them over some of the behaviour on board, which led to one person being swiftly removed¹³¹. The only letter in favour of removing the ban came from a civilian (no title provided) who noted American research by Shilts that homosexuals had proved just as effective in combat as heterosexuals.

The whole issue of homosexuals serving in the Armed Forces was considered in a *Timewatch* programme in 1998¹³², which noted that homosexuals were still banned in UK forces, reflecting Homosexuals Assessment Study conducted in 1996 which had suggested that over 90% of servicemen would prefer not to serve with homosexuals¹³³. Though there is no research to substantiate a difference between the results of a poll and the reality of those actually serving with homosexuals, personal experience of a

¹²⁸ *Ibid* p. 4

¹²⁹ *Ibid* p. 17

¹³⁰ Former Chief of Defence Intelligence.

¹³¹ *Daily Telegraph* 9 June 1995 Letters

¹³² *Timewatch*, *Sex and War*, screened on BBC2 on 29 September 1998

¹³³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/347163.stm> accessed 18 November 2008

homosexual 'outing' himself in the 1980s at RAF Lyneham led, after initial 'titillation' at a 'scandal', to him being ostracized in the Officers' Mess and a generally uncomfortable feeling amongst Mess members¹³⁴. The programme recorded the discrimination of the 1970s against homosexuals and lesbians on the grounds of unit cohesion and morale. Lieutenant-Commander Duncan Lustig-Prean was interviewed and said that he was not asked his orientation on joining. Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage, during his interview as a senior representative commander, said that including homosexuals would destroy unit cohesion and morale in a fighting force. To the BBC, he added that: 'The fact is that homosexuality is inconsistent with the special nature of service life¹³⁵.'

The television programme attracted no comment in the *Daily Telegraph*¹³⁶ or the *Daily Mirror*¹³⁷, and no letters to either paper. The *Daily Mail* selected the programme as their Pick of the Day¹³⁸ and *The Times* as their Choice¹³⁹, but neither received letters in subsequent days. In *The Times* television review by Joe Joseph¹⁴⁰, he highlighted the irony (as did the programme) between the desire of homosexuals to serve in the British Armed Forces during the Second World War to defend against Nazi condemnation of people for who they were rather than what they had done, and the strident tones of Armitage's objections to homosexuals in the modern Armed Forces. Ahead of the European Court of Human Rights hearing, an MOD spokesman defended the ban, saying:

¹³⁴ Personal experience serving at RAF Lyneham 1983-1986.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*

¹³⁶ *Daily Telegraph* 29-30 September 1998

¹³⁷ *Daily Mirror* 29-30 September 1998

¹³⁸ *Daily Mail* 29 September 1998 p. 46

¹³⁹ *The Times* 29 September 1998 p. 55

¹⁴⁰ *The Times* 30 September 1998 p. 47

‘It is based on a practical assessment of the impact of homosexuals on military life¹⁴¹.’

The evidence offered to the court by the MOD said that military service is special because units have to withstand ‘close physical and shared living conditions together with external pressures such as grave danger and war¹⁴².’

On 27 September 1999, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the UK government in the cases of Lustig-Prean and Beckett (ex-naval lieutenant-commander and rating respectively), and Smith and Grady (ex-RAF administrator and nurse respectively) as being illegal under Article 8 of the Convention. The Court found that the interviews of Lustig-Prean and the other applicants had been ‘exceptionally intrusive’ and ‘constituted exceptionally grave interferences with their private lives.’ It dismissed the Government’s evidence of the Report of the Homosexual Policy Assessment Team published in February 1996 as being based largely on the negative attitudes of heterosexual personnel towards those of homosexual orientation. It also:

noted that the Ministry of Defence policy was not based on a particular moral standpoint and the physical capability, courage, dependability and skills of homosexual personnel were not in question¹⁴³.

Accordingly, the court found that the interferences were no more justifiable than any other negative attitudes based on race, origin or colour. The court also said that the Government’s evidence on the anticipated damage to morale and operational

¹⁴¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/347156.stm> accessed 18 November 2008

¹⁴² <http://www.proud2serve.net/lifestyle/theroadtoequality.htm> accessed 18 November 2008

¹⁴³ Judgements in the cases of Lustig-Prean and Beckett v The United Kingdom and Smith and Grady v The United Kingdom <http://www.echr.coe.int/eng/Press/1999/Lustig-Prean%20epresse.htm> accessed 18 November 2008

effectiveness was not concrete, and noted changes in other European states, which needs to be seen in the context of more liberal attitudes (e.g. drugs and prostitution in Holland) in Europe than the UK. Seventy cases of homosexuality being investigated in the MOD were stopped¹⁴⁴.

The *Daily Mirror*'s coverage¹⁴⁵ warned of the potential for compensation claims by gays dismissed from the forces, and carried the views of ex-Flight Lieutenant John Nichol (pro) and ex-Colonel Bob Stewart (anti), and two letters from the public¹⁴⁶, one for and one against. The *Daily Mail* gave a much larger coverage to the outcome, including a very strong editorial against the decision¹⁴⁷, largely on the grounds that it was decided in Europe (reflecting the paper's anti-Europe bias), and containing a similar warning over potential compensation. Major-General Julian Thompson's article on the topic¹⁴⁸ was against removing the ban, despite having served with two gay officers in the Falklands whose attitudes were well known. A further two pages were devoted to the case itself¹⁴⁹, but none of this resulted in any letters to the newspaper (at least, none were published) in subsequent days, suggesting this was not an issue that people felt strongly about. The *Daily Telegraph* provided coverage¹⁵⁰ on the first two pages of the newspaper, with further detail on page 14, an article by John Keegan on page 22, and a letter on page 23. The difference in line to the previous coverage in 1995 is considerable. John Keegan's line has changed to view this judgment as 'probably sensible', and the only letter, again

¹⁴⁴ BBC Radio 4 'Cleaning out the camp' *Op cit*

¹⁴⁵ *Daily Mirror* 28 September 1999 p. 9

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid* p. 40

¹⁴⁷ *Daily Mail* 28 September 1999 p. 12

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid* p. 12

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid* pp. 20-21

¹⁵⁰ *Daily Telegraph* 28 September 1999 pp. 1-2, 14, 22, 23

from Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Armitage, which claimed that 95% of servicemen were opposed to changes in the policy on homosexuals (though there is no evidence to support this figure) looks quite remote in its extreme tone. *The Times* provided both factual coverage of the decision¹⁵¹, and an article in favour of the judgment written by a representative of *Liberty*, albeit this was written ahead of the judgment being delivered¹⁵². Again, no letters resulted from the coverage.

Whilst Menzies Campbell, then Liberal Defence spokesman described the decision as a triumph for civil liberty, General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley¹⁵³ described the decision as ridiculous, saying ‘it is striking at the root of discipline and morale to have a policy whereby you knowingly enlist people who are homosexual’¹⁵⁴. He also said that: ‘Wellington’s remarks about some of his soldiers may have a new application: “I don’t know whether they will scare the enemy, but they certainly frighten me”¹⁵⁵.’

As a result of the decision, the MOD’s ban on homosexuality was removed and replaced with a code of conduct, launched by Secretary of State Geoff Hoon in January 2000. Angela Mason, executive director of Stonewall, said ‘It is a good day for us and a good day for society’¹⁵⁶ and quoted an NOP poll saying that 68% of the population thought the ban should be lifted¹⁵⁷. The decision was also welcomed by the Gay and Lesbian

¹⁵¹ *The Times* 28 September 1999 p. 8

¹⁵² *Ibid* p. 10-11

¹⁵³ Farrar-Hockley is a good example of the traditional British officer, with wartime experience including as a prisoner of war, who represented a different age in terms of values and opinions.

¹⁵⁴ Oakes, Mark, *House of Commons Research Paper 01/03* dated 8 January 2001, House of Commons library – also *Daily Telegraph* 28 September 1999 pp. 1-2

¹⁵⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/458752.stm> accessed 18 November 2008

¹⁵⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/599810.stm accessed 18 November 2008

¹⁵⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/458752.stm> accessed 18 November 2008

Humanist Association¹⁵⁸. Conservatives claimed the lifting of the ban could undermine the effectiveness of the military and suggested that it would be opposed by many in the Services, Ian Duncan-Smith¹⁵⁹ saying that ‘we should follow the advice of the armed forces which has always been that lifting the ban would adversely affect operational effectiveness¹⁶⁰.’ Lustig-Prean’s reaction was ‘There are people in the Armed Forces who will be able to sleep a little bit better tonight knowing that there won’t be a knock on the door. This is a new beginning¹⁶¹.’

Press coverage was generally factual, without comment, although some, as the *Observer* noted¹⁶², remarked on the unique nature of European legislation dictating changes in national policies. This change became enshrined in law under the Armed Forces Bill of 2001.

Even after the ban had been lifted, some did not accept the decision. The Christian Institute¹⁶³ makes the case that the European Court did not actually require the ban to be lifted completely, but argues that under the grounds of privacy and decency for the extreme conditions under which troops operate, the need to avoid homosexual temptation, and the risk of undermining cohesion and unity, homosexuals should not be in the Armed Forces¹⁶⁴. This must be viewed as a minority opinion; as the *Observer* reported:

¹⁵⁸ http://www.galha.org/press/1999/09_27.html accessed 18 November 2008

¹⁵⁹ Note that Duncan-Smith had served in the Scots Guards, and so his opinion was predictable.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² *Observer* 14 November 1999

¹⁶³ A small Christian right wing advocacy group with very traditional values, believing in the absolute truth of the Bible. <http://www.christian.org.uk/whoweare/index.htm> accessed 1 June 2009

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.christian.org.uk/briefingpapers/homosexualsinthearmedforces.htm> ‘Homosexuals in the Armed Forces’ accessed 13 October 2008

the revised policy on homosexuality had no discernable impact, either positive or negative on recruitment. There is widespread acceptance of the new policy. It has not been an issue of great debate. In fact, there has been a marked lack of reaction¹⁶⁵.

Following up on the review after the first six months of the new code of conduct in operation which gave rise to the comment in the *Observer* above, a further study was conducted by the Directorate of Service Personnel Policy, MOD in 2002 and published under Freedom of Information rules in 2007¹⁶⁶. It showed that the overall reaction of the Services was muted, that few homosexuals chose to 'come out', and equally most agreed it was a 'non-issue'¹⁶⁷. In general, young officers and young servicemen and women were the most accepting, particularly those who had been to university and those with homosexual friends. Senior non-commissioned officers were the most dubious (reflecting their age and traditional value set), but even there, most were accepting. The only issue of concern was for accommodation, particularly in the Army, where people did not want to share facilities with homosexuals, but this was a relatively minor issue. Following removal of the ban, few homosexuals had sought re-enlistment, but some had enquired about loss of earnings claims (the *Daily Telegraph* suggested seven hundred people could re-apply or receive millions of pounds in compensation¹⁶⁸). The overwhelming view seems to be that this was a complete non-event for the Armed Forces, perhaps demonstrated by the fact that of the 2952 enquiries dealt with by the

¹⁶⁵ *Observer* 19 November 2000

¹⁶⁶ SPB 12/02 Tri Service Review of the Armed Forces Policy on Homosexuality and Code of Social Conduct; a paper by D SP Pol SC. Released under cover of FOI Request 20-03-2007-073852-002 dated 18 May 2007.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid* para 5a

¹⁶⁸ *Daily Telegraph* 13 January 2000

Naval Support Line (a confidential telephone service for the Royal Navy) since its inception in May 1999, only 14 related to gender issues¹⁶⁹.

The 'Military Pride' exhibition at the Imperial War Museum North looked at the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in military service, and recorded testimony from ex-servicemen. Alan Edwards served in the Royal Navy from 1948 until 1964, and then as a Reservist until 1972, and had represented the Navy in sport. He noted that he had never had cause to complain of anyone being homophobic towards him during his service, but had seen it more recently in ex-Servicemen's clubs¹⁷⁰. Keith Best was in the Royal Navy from 1967 to 1982, reaching the rank of Petty Officer. He said 'You still felt like people were looking at you as if there were something different, there was something strange about you. But there wasn't'¹⁷¹.

Stewart Taylor was in the Army from 1975 to 1988, leaving as a corporal. He said:

I knew I was gay before I joined the Army. But I thought, I'll just put it to the back of my head, just get on with it. And that's what I did throughout my whole career¹⁷².

Ben Amponsah served between 1992 and 1998, and was the first black officer in the Royal Armoured Corps. He said 'I didn't feel I could raise my head above the parapet, because people would ask 'Why are you defending gay people?'¹⁷³.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid* para 44a

¹⁷⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/content/articles/2008/07/10/120708_military_pride_features.stm
accessed 18 November 2008

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*

¹⁷² *Ibid*

It is quite evident from these and other accounts that, despite the more public debate created by Lustig-Prean and others, many homosexuals were serving through the period in the Services, and from their ranks, this was no bar to promotion or operational service. It is equally clear that many of those lived in fear of being ‘outed’ and preferred to conceal their orientation.

Conclusion

There was a marked shift in attitudes between the homosexuals of the 1960s struggling for acceptance within society, with gay liberation activists (if not the rest of the homosexual and lesbian population) joining a liberal movement against nuclear weapons and war in general, and the 1980s and 1990s homosexuals struggling for acceptance within the military and desperately keen and proud to serve. In both instances, the military reaction was to oppose any change and to be fearful of the consequences for unit cohesion and morale – often throwing in several other specious arguments. The political level was mostly opposed to change in both main parties, with particular individuals standing out in favour of reform. Arguably, the Jenkins-inspired Act of 1967 was ahead of its time in terms of acceptance in wider society, and the military were closer to societal views. Little can really be said on public views on homosexuality and the Armed Forces. The lack of letters does not help in confirming any deep view, and so one has to rely on opinion polls. There does not appear to have been a majority in favour of homosexual practices in the 1980s, but by the time the European Court forced change on the UK, two

¹⁷³ *Ibid*

thirds of people seemed to have favoured a change¹⁷⁴. The fact is there was an absolute lack of any obvious impact on the UK forces after the change, and it went peacefully across political, military, press and other circles.

¹⁷⁴ It is worth noting in passing that, even in 2007, Pattison suggests that twenty years of activity by the Gay and Lesbian Christian Association had not convinced British Christians that same sex sexual relationships were acceptable, though he produces no facts to support this assertion. Pattison *Op cit* p. 156

CHAPTER 4. THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

This chapter addresses the relationship between the Church¹ and society, with reference to the military. This is addressed in three ways: first, a look at Church membership and attendance tends to suggest an increasing secularization of British society²; second, the nature of the act of Remembrance is considered as it has changed over the years; and finally, three case studies are used to demonstrate the real changes in Remembrance.

Membership of the Church.

In the 2001 Census, 72% of the population said they were Christian³. The underlying evidence shows a rather different story. A 2006 review⁴ showed that 66% of people in UK have no connection with any religion or church⁵. In a MORI poll⁶, 18% of the British public said they were a practicing member of an organised religion and 25% that they were members of a world religion. Taking these together with the results of a survey of British Social Attitudes by the National Centre for Social Research, which showed:

¹ Broadly defined as the established churches.

² Diffusive Christianity (as an alternative to secularization) is a term often used to describe religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which suggests, in a non-doctrinal way that God exists; Christ was a good man and set an example for others to follow; people who live on good terms with their neighbours will go to Heaven when they die. See Wolffe J, *God and greater Britain: religion and national life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (London: Routledge 1994) p. 92

³ Crabtree, V, *Religion in the United Kingdom Diversity, Trends and Decline* from <http://www.vexen.co.uk/UK/religion.html> accessed 13 October 2008 p. 1

⁴ *Ibid* – quotes Tearfund research, *Churchgoing in the UK*, 3 April 2007 p. 3

⁵ The Cremation Society figures for 2000 showed that 71.5% of those dying that year were cremated, which presumably still has, for many, a religious element (the presence of a priest for example). Hence Tearfund's findings must be caveated as referring to regular contact with a religion or church. Davie, too, highlights that few funerals over the period do not involve the presence of some member of the church, to a much greater extent than people having been baptized. See Davie *Op cit* p. 81

⁶ www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/2003/bbc-heavenandearth-top.shtml accessed 19 October 2008

Table.4.1 Religious activity

% who:	1964	1970	1983	1992	2005
Belong to a religion ⁷ and attend services	74	71	55	37	31
Do not belong	3	5	26	31	38

we can see that the numbers of active church-goers have dramatically reduced over 40 years and that the traditional Christian (often referred to as Trinitarian) churches are reducing in comparison to other beliefs. One sociologist finds nothing unusual in this:

Sociologists know that if they count heads and ask about beliefs, more people *say* they belong to a religion, and *say* they have the beliefs of a particular religion, than actually do. People over-state their religiosity; that's why statistics from polls will often give higher percentages of 'believers' than will head-counting and deeper investigations⁸.

The Church of England (CofE) has been viewed as the predominant (and State) church in the UK and represents the main view. This view has been challenged:

In the twenty years between 1980 and 2000 the CofE suffered a 27% decline in church membership. The Roman Catholic Church suffered a similar decline in the same period in mass attendance. The only institutional church which has continued to grow has been the Orthodox church – Greek and Russian – where

⁷ Includes Christians and non-Christians.

⁸ Crabtree *Op cit* p. 3

demand for churches exceeds supply, mainly because of immigration from Orthodox countries⁹.

This challenge is supported by a report from the Office of National Statistics on social trends¹⁰, which shows:

Table 4.2 Active Church Membership 1970-1990

Active membership 000s	1970	1980	1990
Roman Catholic	2746	2455	2198
Anglican	2987	2180	1728
Presbyterian	1751	1437	1214
Other free churches	843	678	776
Methodist	673	540	478
Orthodox	191	203	266
Baptist	272	239	230
All non Trinitarian churches e.g. Jehovah's witnesses	138	154	182
All other religions e.g. Sikh, Muslim	451	740	1073

⁹ Furlong, M, *The CofE: The State It's In* (London: Stoughton, 2000) p. 216

¹⁰ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/xsdataset.asp?More=Y> accessed 13 October 2008

In 1970, 9.3 million people were active members of a Trinitarian church, but this had reduced to 6.6 million by 1990 – a reduction of nearly one-third. It is possible that Eastern European immigration will result in Roman Catholicism overtaking Anglicanism as the dominant denomination¹¹.

The Tearfund research suggested that 10% of the UK adult population go to church at least weekly; 15% attend monthly; 26% attend at least yearly; and 59% never or practically never go to church. Evidence from Tearfund and the English Church Census of 2004¹² suggests that in fact self-disclosure polls of church attendance are generally twice as high as reality, a view shared by Furlong¹³. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the religious adherents as they changed over the period¹⁴:

¹¹ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/article1386939.ece> dated 15 February 2007 accessed 13 October 2008.

¹² Crabtree *Op cit* p. 8

¹³ Furlong *Op cit* p. 216

¹⁴ Crabtree *Op cit* p. 19

Table 4.3 Religious Adherence 1975-1995

Millions	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
Roman Catholic	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.6
Anglican	27.2	27.1	27.0	26.9	26.7
Presbyterian	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5
Other free churches					
Methodist	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3
Orthodox	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Baptist	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total non Trinitarian churches	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.4	3.7

This shows the decline in those claiming to be Anglican, but highlights the dramatic difference between those active in the churches and those claiming membership. Wilson demonstrated that the decline shown here had actually been a continuing trend from a peak in 1930¹⁵. Despite low active membership, the CofE continued to predominate, as shown by the 2001 Census (Appendix 2).

¹⁵ Wilson, B, *Religion in Secular Society*, (London: Penguin:1966) p. 32

The CofE is demonstrably the primary church. This view is supported by the strong linkages between CofE and State: the Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords¹⁶, the role of the monarch as Defender of the Faith and Head of the CofE, and the Prime Minister's role in the appointment of senior clerics. As informed journalist Jeremy Paxman puts it: '[it] is not that it represents some profound spirituality in the people, but that it suits mutually convenient purposes for state and Church¹⁷.' He also highlights the historical link of people to church:

[the English] were not in any meaningful sense religious, the CofE being a political invention which had elevated "being a good chap" to something akin to canonization. On the occasions when bureaucracy demanded they admit an allegiance, they could write "CofE" in the box and know that they wouldn't be bothered by demands that they attend church¹⁸.

This latter view is supported by the experience of many National Servicemen when completing forms as Finlay Clark describes it as 'repetitious thoughtlessness of the uncritical believer¹⁹.'

There is significant debate on the causes of the decline in the church, broadly between those who see it as the culmination of a long period of decline from the Renaissance and Reformation (e.g. Gilbert) (although others like Bruce question whether Britain was ever quite as religious in the past anyway)²⁰ and those who see gender as playing a lead role in

¹⁶ Davie *Op cit* p. 141

¹⁷ Paxman, J, *The English* (London: Penguin 1999 – original edition 1998) p. 6

¹⁸ Paxman *Op cit* p. 6

¹⁹ Finlay Clark *Op cit* p. 36

²⁰ Bruce S *God is Dead: Secularisation in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell 2002) p. 46

more modern secularization (e.g. Brown²¹). The latter looks to a change in the role of women in transmitting religion to the young, and rejecting religion themselves²². Some see a particular high point in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 – a joining of church, state and nation – after which decline can be demonstrated²³. Brown is amongst those seeing a turning point in Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God* which challenged church norms of belief in 1962-3²⁴. The change can be shown by the rise of evangelists like Billy Graham from his work in Los Angeles in 1949²⁵, propelled by television to huge stardom. His later public meetings included him being jeered and heckled in Soho in 1966²⁶. Similarly, McLeod highlights the drop in baptisms and Sunday school attendance from the 1960s onwards²⁷. Nevertheless, there is a view that many who do not take part in church activities still believe in God, as evidenced by opinion polls and census data – the phenomenon of 'believing without belonging' – Grace Davie²⁸, and simply put as a decline of conventional beliefs by others²⁹. This can be shown from the 1988 IBA Research monograph which showed that in the month surveyed, 62% of adults had seen at least one religious programme on the main channels³⁰ at a time when one study estimated that 88% of people claimed to belong to one denomination or another, though

²¹ Brown C G *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Educational 2006) p. 13 and *The Death of Christian Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge 2001). See also McLeod H *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: OUP 2007 and 2008) pp8-9 for example.

²² *Ibid* p. 13

²³ Davie G *Religion in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell 1994) p. 31

²⁴ Brown *Op cit Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* p. 224

²⁵ Davie *Op cit* p. 35

²⁶ Brown *Op cit Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* p. 230

²⁷ Davie *Op cit* pp. 202-203

²⁸ The subtitle of her book, *Religion in Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell 1994). See also Brown *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain Op cit* p. 7

²⁹ Bruce *Op cit* p. 60

³⁰ Gunter B and Viney R *Seeing is Believing: Religion and Television in the 1990s* (London: John Libbey 1994) p. 2. Brown quotes an article by Bruce in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion* which suggested that 40% of people had watched a religious programme in 1968, but only 7% by 1987, showing the dangers in using statistics and the way definitions of religious programmes may vary. Brown *Op cit* p. 281

another a year later showed that only 17% attended church regularly³¹. Gunter and Viney's work in 1993 showed that 56% believed that Britain was not a Christian country³².

Remembrance Sunday

A measure of cultural shift over the period, which also relates to attitudes to war can be shown by the progressive change in support for Remembrance Day³³. Scholars see the forms of Remembrance that emerged at the end of the First World War in terms of a secular religion³⁴. The scale of military losses, 1,104,890 Empire dead, was unprecedented in the British experience. The Prime Minister expressed the views of many when, in announcing the Armistice of 11 November 1918, he hoped 'that thus, this fateful morning, came the end to all wars'³⁵.

The key elements of commemoration were in place by 1920: the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey; the memorial at the Cenotaph (literally, an empty tomb); and the two minutes silence at 11 o'clock on 11 November. Early tendencies to celebrate became less common as it was felt that they 'rob[bed] the day of its true significance'³⁶.

³¹ *Ibid* p. 11

³² Gunter and Viney *Op cit* p. 13

³³ As measured by attendance figures and television viewing figures for the Festival of Remembrance.

³⁴ Gregory, A, *The silence of memory: Armistice Day, 1919-1946*, (Oxford: Berg, 1994) pp. 51-86. See also Winter, J M, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*, (Cambridge: CUP 1995); King, A *Memorials of the Great War in Britain* (Oxford: Berg 1998); Gregory, A *The Last Great War* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008).

³⁵ *Hansard*, 11 November 1918, Column 2463

³⁶ *Stratford Express*, 14 November 1925

By 1923, the numbers attending the Remembrance services were markedly reduced, suggesting that the public grief had formally ended³⁷.

In the 1920s, gestures of reconciliation or regret were unusual, reflecting both sides' views of 'sacrifice' and 'duty' to justify their reasons for fighting the war. That decade saw recollection in private; public discussion was limited as few wanted to question the virtue behind the actions of lost sons to grieving parents. Discussion did not really start until 1929 and, amongst a boom in First World War books, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* became a successful book and subsequent film. But the message that that film sent, of a futile, bloody slaughter whose only heroes were the ordinary soldiers, coloured the judgment of opinion-formers who may not have been old enough to be part of the war itself. In fact, the thinking that emerged at that time, based on a particular interpretation of the conditions of the First World War³⁸, created a view of warfare based on a fear of technology (the effects of aerial warfare) and the concept that sacrifice was only worthwhile if it prevented a repeat of the war. The same thinking was to re-emerge in the 1960s with a fear of technology (thermo-nuclear war) and a similar concern over the effectiveness of civil defence against a possible attack.

Todman³⁹ suggests that the 1930s were marked by a transition to a younger generation who, although still fascinated by the First World War, had little knowledge of the sacrifice and effect on communities. He posits that new themes entered Armistice Day –

³⁷ Todman *Op cit* p.57 although this is not a view shared by Gregory (who Todman quotes elsewhere) see *The silence of memory Op cit* p.188

³⁸ See also Bob Bushaway's 'Name upon Name: The Great War and Remembrance' in Roy Porter (ed), *Myths of the English* (Cambridge: Polity 1992) pp. 136-167.

³⁹ Todman, D, *The Great War – Myth and Memory* (Cambridge: CUP 2005) pp. 58-59.

a sense of disillusionment, mistrust of politicians and fear of another European war. All these were to have their echoes in the attitudes towards Remembrance in the Cold War era of the 1960s.

In the Second World War, Britain suffered fewer losses: 250 000 in the Armed Forces, 30,000 merchant seamen, 60,000 civilians. The war was generally perceived, and still is, as a 'good' 'People's War', which defeated a monstrous evil and from which a better British society emerged⁴⁰. The Second World War had a practical impact on Remembrance in that it was not sensible to have large gatherings, although there were some small ceremonies conducted privately. After the war, it was decided by the Government to merge the act of Remembrance for both wars, which enabled communities to add the names of the fallen in the Second World War to those of the First on memorials and focused efforts for disabled ex-Servicemen⁴¹, and to place Remembrance Day on a Sunday to avoid losing time for work in the week.

Case Study. 'Bomber' Harris

By 1945, the Bomber Command's offensive against German cities, which contributed to some 780,000 German civilian deaths⁴², was deeply controversial in Britain. Despite the heavy aircrew losses no memorial to Bomber Command was erected⁴³. The bombing of

⁴⁰ Calder A, *Disasters and Heroes – on war, memory and representation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2004) p. 61. For the rare view the First World War was also an idealistic, moral war, see John Grigg cited in Bond, *Op cit* pp. 56-57

⁴¹ Gregory A *The Silence of Memory Op cit* pp. 215-6

⁴² <http://www.worldwar2database.com/html/frame5.html> accessed 16 August 2010

⁴³ Harris' statue was covered in graffiti in 1992. See *Socialist Worker* 13 August 2005 pp. 8-9 on Kuhn and Gill's book on statues in London.

Dresden in February 1945 caused concern in particular, with Churchill saying: ‘The destruction of Dresden remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing⁴⁴’.

Harris had to wait until 1953 for a fairly lowly honour, a baronetcy, unlike many fellow senior officers who received their honours at the end of the war. He moved to South Africa in 1948, partly as a result of the criticisms of the British public for the way he had conducted the bombing campaign⁴⁵. Feeling that Harris had not received sufficient public recognition, later the Bomber Command Association raised money to erect a statue to him which they wanted placed close to Dowding’s⁴⁶ in the Strand. The deputy mayor of Dresden opposed this move, claiming it was ‘the wrong signal at the wrong time⁴⁷’.

The Queen Mother unveiled the statue in May 1992, and was evidently startled by the heckling from some protestors⁴⁸. Protestors carried placards saying ‘We’re sorry Cologne’ and the Queen Mother was jeered⁴⁹. An interview on television drew some contemporary parallels:

Where is our moral standing now if today we say Serbia should not bomb maternity hospitals, and force out the maternity hospitals in Dresden and Hamburg and so on⁵⁰?

⁴⁴ Quoted in Kezwer G, in *Peace Magazine*, May-June 1992 p. 15. See also Addison, P, and Crang, J A, (eds) *Firestorm: The bombing of Dresden 1945* (London: Pimlico 2006) for a recent account of the impact of the raid.

⁴⁵ http://ww2db.com/person.bio.php?person_id=408 accessed 28 May 2009. See also Probert, H, *Bomber Harris: His Life and Times* (London: Pen and Sword Books 2003) for a more detailed portrait of the man.

⁴⁶ Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, Commander in Chief Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain

⁴⁷ Kezwer *Op cit*.

⁴⁸ NBC Today programme, 31 May 1992. Clip length 1 min 31 secs.

⁴⁹ <http://www.londonrevolution.net/blog/london-history-information/arthur-bomber-harris-and-bomber-command.html#more-53> accessed 28 May 2009

⁵⁰ *Ibid*

NBC reported the view of a Dresden survivor: 'After so many years, to bring that man in a statue in the front of the man part of London, I think it is absolutely obscene⁵¹.'

Coverage of the incident spread all over the world. The *Washington Post* thought it reflected Europe's bloodstained past colliding with its uncertain future, as ageing RAF veterans gathered to honour a leader 'they revere as a hero but others call a war criminal⁵².' On the night of the unveiling, the statue was covered in red paint, and has been attacked several times since then⁵³.

The controversy continued after 1992. In 1994, the *Independent* carried an article by Geoffrey Wheatcroft which said 'we still can't make up our minds about Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris'.⁵⁴ The article discussed a Canadian drama-documentary, *Death by Moonlight*⁵⁵, regarding the Canadian contribution to Bomber Command (the Canadians lost some 10000 aircrew). The programme had attracted vehement criticism in Canada. The nub of Wheatcroft's argument is that Harris was wrong. The 55,573 losses in Bomber Command were not worth it, still less the mass casualties of German civilians. The proposition was that the bombing was indiscriminate, and therefore illegal and contrary to what the people in Britain had been told about the purposes of the raids.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Washington Post* 1 June 1992.

⁵³ See *Socialist Worker* 13 August 2005 pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ *Independent* 7 August 1994 <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/firestorms-darken-our-past-those-who-defend-bomber-harris-destruction-of-german-cities-are-wrong-geoffrey-wheatcroft-argues-1382000.html> accessed 28 May 2009. Wheatcroft was born in 1945 and married Frank Muir's daughter (Frank was ex-RAF in the Second World War).

⁵⁵ Which was shown on Channel 4 on 7 August 1994

The bombing of Germany is one of a few issues where long-standing views were expressed conveying unease about British conduct in war⁵⁶. Nearly fifty years after the events, the bombing of German cities had the power to influence not only the survivors and the aircrews in different ways, but also younger people like Wheatcroft, who drew their knowledge (as he admitted) from the film *The Dambusters*, not from personal experience. Others, such as the philosopher A.C. Grayling, still say that whether the Allied bombing was wholly or in part morally wrong, it in no way equates in moral atrocity to the Holocaust⁵⁷, going on to say that the bombings enjoyed support of the people in the US and the UK⁵⁸ - the key point being that Grayling's work still caused a reaction 65 years after the event.

The start of Remembrance

The first post-war Remembrance Service, when the new dates had been inscribed on the Cenotaph in 1946, occasioned *The Times* to observe:

some...may have felt the sounds to be wholly irrelevant. So also the new inscription...may have turned some minds to ponder the similarities and differences between the moods of this Remembrance Day and the Armistice Day on which, in his [the King's] father's presence, the Cenotaph was dedicated⁵⁹.

The report went on to say:

⁵⁶ For wartime opposition to bombing, see Grayling A C, *Among the Dead Cities* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006) p. 179.

⁵⁷ *Ibid* p. 5

⁵⁸ *Ibid* p. 8

⁵⁹ *The Times*, 11 November 1946

Looking back to 1919, it was surely still possible then to feel with something like certainty, however mistakenly, that the world must and could determine that the catastrophe should never recur. But today? There seemed plenty of time in the Silence for such not very satisfactory thoughts, mixed with private memories that rustled with the last leaves on the Whitehall plane trees⁶⁰.

But the memories seem to have been blurred over time, and focused on the First World War rather than the Second.

The act of Remembrance was dying in the 1960s, as measured by attendance figures at services, and again in the 1980s and 1990s, but was reinvigorated each time. In the 1960s, a number of events conspired to re-awaken interest in the First World War e.g. war poetry was introduced as a part of the school curriculum. The message of the poems chosen, particularly by Sassoon and Owen, was interpreted as anti-war; arguably, they exerted more influence in the 1960s than ever⁶¹. This ascendancy has not gone unchallenged, with some scholars arguing that Sassoon *et al* were unrepresentative of British soldiers in the First World War⁶².

The rise of CND brought attention not only to the anti-nuclear debate, but also a previously apparently futile war – the themes come together in Joan Littlewood's play *Oh! What a Lovely War*⁶³. The new Remembrance Service launched in 1968 after debate between Church and the British Legion, was described as 'uninspiring and lacking in

⁶⁰ *Ibid*

⁶¹ Bond, B, *Op cit* p. 28

⁶² Teaching WW1 Literature – event at Oxford University Computing Services 12 November 2007. See also Sheffield, G, *Forgotten Victory: The First World War, Myths and Realities* (London: Headline 2001)

⁶³ *Ibid* p. 51 see also Sheffield, G, *Forgotten Victory Op cit*

corporate dignity⁶⁴.’ A senior civil servant said in 1975 that: ‘as wars become increasingly distant, it might now be time to abolish the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Cenotaph⁶⁵.’

Brenda Howarth⁶⁶ recalled that there were many complaints from staff about the choice of set poems. When GCSEs came in, the choice was much freer and left to schools. She describes the poetry as having enough for highly academic classes, but also short poems for lower ability groups, retaining a powerful message. In her view, the best poems ‘tend[ed] to be fiercely and passionately against the war⁶⁷.’ She recalls a poem describing breakfast in the trench, where the soldiers discuss football; one gets so excited he jumps up and gets shot⁶⁸ – ‘it’s easy to imagine’. The view offered to young opinion-formers from poetry had a major impact on their views⁶⁹.

In 1988, the Conservative Government wanted to focus their national curriculum on all that was best in Britain – the First World War formed part of that heritage. But the message that war was ‘futile’ was ingrained in teaching methods⁷⁰. BBC2 released its landmark series *The Great War* in 1964 but this, often unwittingly, reinforced the message of futility and helped establish a particular perception of the war among younger

⁶⁴ *Daily Telegraph* 3 October 1968 p. 26

⁶⁵ Sir Arthur Peterson, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office, quoted in Turner *Op cit* p. 155

⁶⁶ Head of English at Southgate School, London from the 1970s to 2000

⁶⁷ Letter Howarth/Lamonte dated 22 July 2007

⁶⁸ ‘Breakfast’ by Wilfred Wilson Gibson 2 October 1878-26 May 1962.

www.theotherpages.org/poems/gibson02.html accessed 18 May 2009.

⁶⁹ Though some argue that teachers from the 1960s had undergone a broadly left-wing (to the point of being Marxist) post-graduate education, Hennessy believes this to be over-stated, and that the effect of television programmes was far more influential on social trends. Hennessy interview *Op cit*.

⁷⁰ Hatch, R; ‘Teaching the Great War’; *Journal of the Centre for First World War Studies*, Vol 1, No 1 July 2004.

people. This reinforced the anti-war feeling emanating from the anti-war lobby in the US over Vietnam, although it was never as powerful a movement in the UK as the US⁷¹.

The Church, having considered the relevance of the Remembrance Service somewhat out of date since the 1950s, conducted reviews to look at what the best form of service might be. IPC chairman Cecil King responded to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary⁷² that the younger generation considered that previous wars were simply the mistakes of their forebears and that they were more worried about nuclear war⁷³. By contrast, the BBC reported that the coverage of the Remembrance Service in the Albert Hall in 1967 reached 25% of the population, although people under 30 were not in the least interested in the Cenotaph service or commemoration of the war dead of the two wars⁷⁴. *The Times* took on the lead for this, supported by the CofE, looking at attitudes amongst 9-30 year-olds⁷⁵. Fewer than half thought the Remembrance service worthwhile, yet on specifics, many had greater knowledge of people and events in the First World War than the Second. In the event, faced with inertia from the Home Office and Buckingham Palace, only minor changes were made to the Cenotaph Service, with latitude given to local parishes on the conduct of their own services. For the 1960s clergy, war had a particular

⁷¹ Todman *Op cit* p. 143

⁷² It is worth recalling that George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, strongly opposed the bombing campaign over Germany during the Second World War, which probably cost him a chance to replace William Temple as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1944 on the death of the latter. See Grayling pp. 179-82. This controversy will not have been lost on the following generation of clergy, particularly in the Church of England.

⁷³ Todman *Op cit* p. 140

⁷⁴ Todman *Op cit* p. 140

⁷⁵ *The Times* 13 November 1967 p. 8. 250 young people were interviewed from Birmingham and Solihull between 9 and 30. Less than half found the Remembrance service worthwhile. Arnhem meant nothing to 80% of them. 75% had never heard of Mons. By and large, males knew more about events and people than females, particularly on individuals like the Red Baron.

connotation quite different to previous generations, as many had served with the Forces, and their experiences changed their perceptions of the realities of war.

In the 1980s, again attendance was declining, and yet the act of Remembrance was revitalized. Here, one of the key events was the Falklands War, and the media hype around the heroism of individuals such as Colonel ‘H’ Jones VC⁷⁶, and the attention paid to those suffering terrible injury like Simon Weston. The First World War theme returned in *Blackadder Goes Forth* in 1989 as described in Chapter 7.

The scope of the National Ceremony was widened in 1980, reflecting a resolution of the Anglican Church Assembly in 1967 to embrace ‘all who had died in the service of their country’ and in all conflicts since⁷⁷. Representation from all Christian religions was achieved, coupled in 2000 by the inclusion of representatives of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. For Professor Oliver O’Donovan, who preached and lectured in this period:

the topic of war is unpopular because people do not know how to speak with conviction of...the just ends for which wars were entered...’ and ‘they do not know how to speak of these things without offence to their former enemies who tend to be our present allies.

Thus for him, ‘if anything keeps us going it is a sort of respect for the elderly⁷⁸.’

⁷⁶ *Daily Express*, 31 May 1982

⁷⁷ Quinlan *Op cit* p. 35

⁷⁸ Interview Professor Oliver O’Donovan, Professor of Theology, University of Edinburgh, 26 September 2007.

Yet even in the 1980s, the institution of Remembrance brought strong views. When Michael Foot appeared at the National Ceremony in what was unfairly described as a donkey-jacket, the newspapers accused him of disrespect for the Nation's war dead⁷⁹. Despite his claims that this was a perfectly respectable coat, and he was simply keeping himself warm, the press and public continued to pour scorn on him and this may have contributed to his lack of success in the 1983 election. The Ulster Nationalist politician Lord (Gerry) Fitt feared the consequences within his own community of wearing a poppy. His Irish Guardsman brother was killed in the Normandy campaign, and he himself had served as a merchant seaman⁸⁰.

The Church again reviewed the Service of Remembrance in 1984, against the backdrop of *The Church and the Bomb*, a report into the Church's attitudes to thermo-nuclear weapons⁸¹. This made hard reading for clergy and parishioners alike. Many clergy found it hard to engage with a service glorifying those who had died for their sacrifice and dedication to a higher cause, against the backdrop of thermo-nuclear warfare and all that entailed⁸². For many, Remembrance became a difficult area for them and some dissociated themselves from supporting, as they saw it, a pro-war stance.

In the 1990s, once again, support for Remembrance was on the wane. The 1990s were marked by complaints from veterans over the state of war graves in the UK to the

⁷⁹ See for example *Daily Mail* 9 November 1981, which reported that Walter Johnson MP for Derby South has accused Foot of looking like a navvy. The paper noted that it had received 'dozens' of telephone calls from readers, all 'appalled' at Foot's standard of dress. See also Morgan K O, *Michael Foot: A Life* (London: Harper Perennial 2008) p. 390 for more press quotes.

⁸⁰ *Sunday Times*, 10 November 2002

⁸¹ *The Church and the Bomb*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1982)

⁸² Including, anecdotally, my own great-uncle, Peter Munday, vicar of Richmond in the 1970s.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Unequal parallels were drawn with the positive state of war graves maintained by the Commission overseas. By 2001, the Commission estimated that 1000 of the sites it maintained in the UK were of an unacceptable standard⁸³. In 1995, the Royal British Legion fought a major campaign to revitalize Remembrance, aided by the Spice Girls to give it some meaning for the young. With Government support, who at the time wanted to re-establish core moral values, they reinstated the two minute silence on 11 November, rather than just the formal service on the Sunday closest to the 11th. On 11 November 1999, 84% of schools and colleges observed the silence or marked Remembrance in some other meaningful way⁸⁴.

1995 also marked the 50th anniversary of VE Day and VJ day. For whatever reason, the Government chose to celebrate them as one event⁸⁵. Sir Martin Gilbert, biographer of Sir Winston Churchill, remarked that he received considerable adverse mail from veterans, suggesting that this was an inappropriate action and the two should be separated⁸⁶. At the end of the decade, revisionist views extended to establishing pinewood stakes and a commemorative statue in the National Memorial Arboretum in Lichfield to commemorate 307 British soldiers who were shot for military offences⁸⁷. In fact, this was nothing new – Ewan Tavendale was shot for desertion in the First World War, but is recorded on the memorial at Kinraddie⁸⁸ and Bert McCubbin was included in the Book of Remembrance at the Scottish National Memorial at Castle Rock. It is not clear whether

⁸³ Quinlan *Op cit* p. 153

⁸⁴ Royal British Legion information leaflet 2006 - see Royal British Legion website for details.

⁸⁵ Morgan, *Op cit* p. 578 notes that this event was a closing point to 'post war' Britain.

⁸⁶ Conversation with Sir Martin Gilbert, June 2007.

⁸⁷ Kidd, W, and Murdoch, B, *Memory and Memorials* (Ashgate 2004)

⁸⁸ Calder *Op cit* p. 9

this was in the mind of Dr John Reid⁸⁹ in 1998 when he recommended that those executed should be recorded on memorials, though he stopped short of moving for a pardon⁹⁰. Less controversial, but similarly revising the criteria for remembrance by including those who died in accidents as well as those on active service, was the addition to a Scottish war memorial of a soldier who died in a rail accident on his return to his unit in Germany prior to demobilization⁹¹. Similarly, it was not until 1994 that a plaque carrying the name of Ernst Stadler, a German poet, was added to the monument to the war dead at Magdalen College, Oxford⁹².

1996 saw the start of the British Legion's schools programme to educate younger generations about the significance of Remembrance Day. The programme started slowly but built over the next 10 years to distributing 43,000 packs to schools explaining the poppy and the two minute silence. Whilst the work of the war poets was covered, with all the limitations of the images they present, modern day conflicts were also covered for balance. A network of veterans from the Legion also visited schools. The message however, was summarized in the words of Helen Hill, Schools Adviser:

We show them the horrors of war and the sacrifices that were made. And we show them that war is still going on. Hopefully it makes them realize the futility of it all⁹³.

⁸⁹ Minister of State for the Armed Forces

⁹⁰ Some 20 000 soldiers were found guilty of military crimes for which the death penalty could be passed, of which some 3000 were actually sentenced to death. Some 90% of those had their sentences commuted by their Commanders in Chief. Bond notes the comments of Dr Reid in the 1998 Commons debate, that 'In a sense those who were executed were as much victims of the war' and that 'The conditions and nature of the First World War distinguished it from all others'. Bond, B, *Op cit* pp. 82-3

⁹¹ Kidd et al, *Op cit* p. 4

⁹² Kidd et al, *Op cit* p. 5

⁹³ 10th Anniversary described in BBC TV News 12 November 2006
BBC News report *Op cit*

This message of futility, right or wrong, is bound to affect the judgment of future opinion-formers and decision-makers.

A 2002 article summed up the challenge of the previous few years:

To wear the poppy is to make a moral choice, to stand up and be counted, to invite comment or even hostility.....It also requires the humility to acknowledge openly that there are and have been people who were your betters, people who were tested as you have not been and probably never will be, thanks to them.

Remembrance had previously been ‘an inescapable obligation...an imperative, vital to our cultural identity...’⁹⁴,

The curious question, other than the particular perception of the conduct of the First War, is why was there the focus on that war, rather than the more recent Second World War? Sheer ignorance may be part of the answer. A 2001 survey revealed that half of young people questioned did not know that the Battle of Britain took place in the Second World War⁹⁵. The very act of homage, using the words from ‘The Fallen’ by Laurence Binyon, does pose the question – who are we remembering? And what exactly are the images we are reflecting upon? It would be easy to say that the scale of the British deaths – some half as many in the Second World War as the First – was the cause. O’Donovan suggests Remembrance was a ceremony about burying of Empire at the end of the First World

⁹⁴ Nick Thomas, ‘Comment’, *The Times*, 4 November 2002

⁹⁵ Furedi et al, *The corruption of the curriculum*, (London: Civitas 2007) p. 75 Civitas is an independent think-tank.

War – for both German and British Empires⁹⁶. Or that the more even spread in the Second War losses across ages and between civilians and military made it easier to cope with. Or perhaps that the heavy civilian casualties in the Second World War, and the clear fight against Hitler's Nazi regime, made it a much more popular war, indeed a 'people's war'. But there seems to be something about images of war from the First World War that find resonance with generations through the 1960s to 2000, and that subconscious image affects attitudes towards contemporary warfare.

Heenan's letter to *The Times* contained the radical suggestion considers that so many conflicts have occurred since the two World Wars that there might be a case for change. He distinguished between the two World Wars, when many of the dead were civilians participating in total war, with more recent conflicts, with different aims and objectives, fought largely by professional forces. His argument was that Remembrance should be demilitarised and to remember the dead of all wars, and all sides⁹⁷. In a sense, the Church's progressive amendments to the Remembrance Service had tried to achieve that aim, but the popular trend since 1995 towards emphasizing Armistice Day suggests that the public still concentrated on the First World War.

Calder argued that by extension, the British dead in Korea, Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, the Falklands and Bosnia join the dead of the World Wars in Remembrance as young men who sacrificed their lives for their countrymen, in some sense of *pro patria mori*, in defence of the motherland and its overseas territories. But he went on to question

⁹⁶ O'Donovan interview *Op cit*

⁹⁷ Duncan Heenan, letter in *The Times* 12 November 2003 There is no evidence that he had a particular affiliation in this debate.

whether that model continued on operations like the Balkans, where the British were notionally involved in ‘peace-keeping’ and ‘humanitarian’ operations. No longer could it be argued that this was sacrifice in defence of the motherland; deaths to be honoured certainly, but not perhaps to be viewed in the same light⁹⁸.

Memory is a curious thing. A British journalist was shocked when an aid worker in Kosovo remarked that she was reminded of *Schindler's List*; not the Holocaust, or the ethnic cleansing in Europe during the Second World War, but of the Spielberg film⁹⁹. In truth, few remember the Second World War, and still less the First – ‘truth’ for most is what appears in films and news articles¹⁰⁰. So preconception, and what might be called the *Blackadder* effect, colour our judgments of Remembrance and what it means to us. For the longer term, images of the First World War must fade over time, and the act of Remembrance will be questioned. But the resurgences of the service over the period to 2000 demonstrate that the core elements of national solidarity, service to the country and sacrifice in war are all relevant to generations of all ages.

Remembrance Case Studies

Having considered Remembrance at the national level, an evaluation of church attendance at Remembrance services was undertaken at varying levels in the CofE as the dominant Church according to Census data. The CofE has a number of levels; at its

⁹⁸ Calder *Disasters and Heroes – on War, Memory and Representation*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2004) p. 25

⁹⁹ Calder *Op cit* p. 23

¹⁰⁰ Connelly *Op cit* p. 8

lowest level is the parish, here represented by Bathford. Parishes are grouped into deaneries (each deanery administered by a rural dean, who is one of the local vicars), deaneries into archdeaconries (each administered by an archdeacon, representing the Bishop; three archdeaconries in the diocese of Bath and Wells: Bath, Wells and Taunton), archdeaconries into diocese, administered by the diocesan Bishop. Most dioceses have assistant Bishops, known as suffragen Bishops, to assist the diocesan Bishop (one in the Bath and Wells diocese: the Bishop of Taunton). The Cathedral at Wells is administered by the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, not the bishop, although the bishop's palace is next door. Bath Abbey is a parish church, but has civic functions as well. At the Cathedral level, this study has used St Phillip's Cathedral, Birmingham. Service attendance figures were drawn from the service registers for the Remembrance services for each year and, as a control, figures were derived from the week before. Figures were also taken for the electoral roll for the church, to give an indication of how the Remembrance attendees matched those formally enrolled in the CofE. These figures were taken from the annual Diocesan Directories, but were drawn from the annual returns by parishes. Finally, numbers of communicants were recorded where relevant. In some cases this had to act as a proxy for attendance, as figures were unavailable.

Shortcomings in data rapidly became apparent. Service registers were at best incomplete. On many occasions attendance was not noted – particularly for Remembrance Services where large numbers were involved. In the Diocesan Directories, population figures were evidently copied from year to year, and reflected the assiduousness (or not) of churchwardens in collecting data. Often the population figure may have reflected the

geographical boundary, rather than the ecclesiastical parish boundary. And the electoral roll figures may be in doubt as in the early part of the period these figures were linked to pay for clergy, and throughout for contributions to diocesan funds – the ‘parish share’; this may have encouraged parishes to be more conservative in their estimates than might otherwise have been the case.

Case Study 1 – Bathford

Of all the parishes surrounding Bath, Bathford is the third largest with around 1800 acres and a population of some 2000-2200. The village has been predominantly agricultural but stone quarrying has existed in Bathford since Roman times; the quarry tunnels of neighbouring Monkton Farleigh were used for wartime weapons storage with a rail spur from the London to Bristol line at Shockerwick, passing under the hill at Bathford. From this emerged a strong link to the military within the community.

The church of St Swithun’s from which the data is drawn dates back before the Norman Conquest, but was rebuilt in the 1870s. The war memorial outside the church records 23 war dead from the First World War which, although less than 3% of the population of the time, must have represented a major loss of manpower in the community. The Second World War losses were only 7, but reflect a greater balance between the Services; the First World War losses being almost all Army.

What distinguishes Bathford from most of the neighbouring parishes, and one of the reasons for selecting it, is that it has always had a strong Royal British Legion branch which has greatly influenced the relationship between the local community and the church.

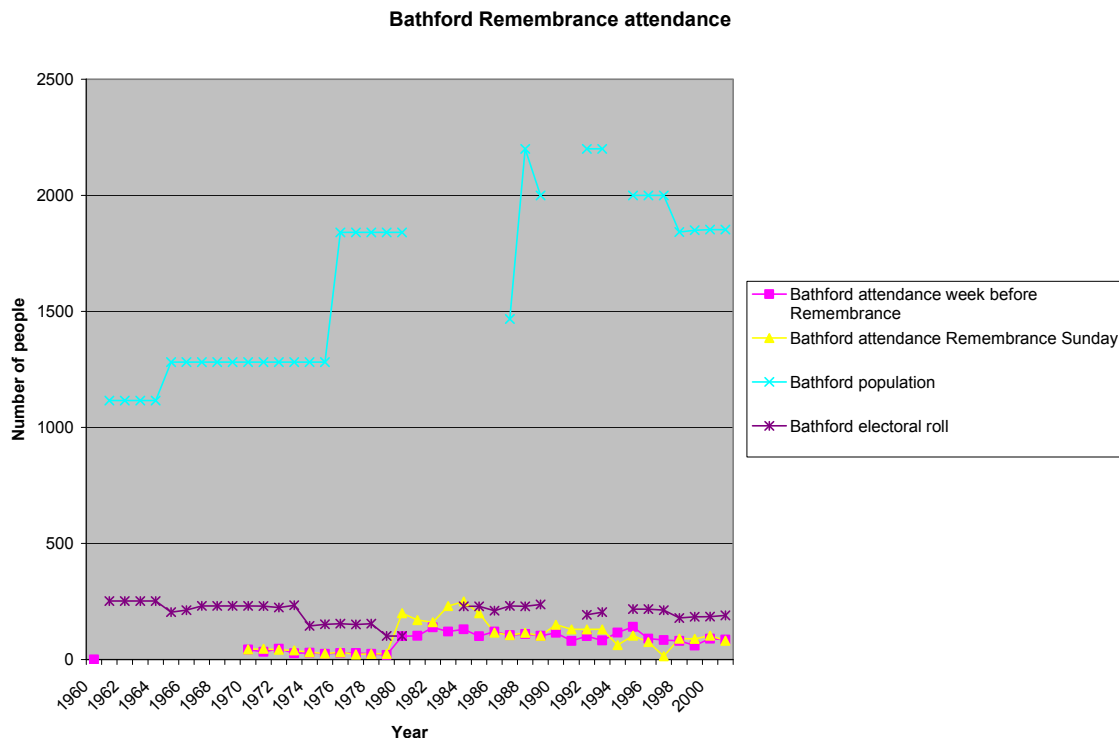
What the figures show is a gentle decline in the electoral roll, despite a fairly substantial increase in the population¹⁰¹. We know that the population figures do not tie in well with the census information, and this is probably due to churchwardens compiling data through best endeavours; certainly the constant population figures in the 1960s look like copying from one year to the next. Fire destroyed service registers held in the vestry before 1969, so we have no records of attendance prior to that year. A significant drop in the electoral roll occurred from 1972 onwards, and seems to be reflected in attendance at Church services, and can be linked to the local vicar¹⁰², a married man, and his relationship with a widow some 13 years junior to him. He was removed from office in 1979, under the 1977 Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure; a case that made some notoriety in the local community and was a reflection of the strong moral code still prevalent in the 1970s¹⁰³. The village split into two, with half wanting to retain someone they felt was a sound parish priest, and the rest who were horrified at his behaviour. This demonstrates the disproportionate effect that one individual can have on things such as church attendance, a factor which will also be seen in successive case studies. Numbers

¹⁰¹ Service Registers 1969-2000

¹⁰² Name omitted for privacy reasons

¹⁰³ Article in *The Church Times*, 27 April 1979. A local resident (name omitted for privacy reasons) recalled that her father, a strong supporter of the Church though not particularly religious, used to entertain the vicar in one room of his house and talk about the other lady, whilst his wife talked to the vicar's wife in another room, usually accompanied by a gin bottle. She also recalled that stone walls were refashioned with stiles to allow the vicar to go quietly to see his mistress. Interview conducted 24 March 2009.

recovered with a new vicar in the 1980s. In general, however, the electoral roll figures do not support the decline in numbers seen at the national level. The figures for 1979 to 1984 are the only ones where we have records of the major evening service held with the British Legion, for which there is a two-fold increase over the numbers normally attending church. Most notable are the increases in 1982 and 1983, which may be related to the Falklands campaign. The remaining figures generally show about the same numbers attending the morning service of Remembrance attendance as the week before, with the exception of the first half of the 1990s, where Remembrance seems to have dropped. Interestingly, this was at the time of the Gulf War and the involvement in Bosnia. It may be that churchgoers went to other churches, or attended the main British Legion service, or it is equally possible that people had lost interest.



Case 2. Bath Abbey.

The next case study considers the Abbey (which has church status) in Bath. It provides a focus for the town of some 80 000 people, and also for the many tourists who visit the town daily. It is particularly worthy of note as the centre for the religious element for Bath's Remembrance commemoration.

Bath Abbey is largely surrounded by shops and offices, so the parish, which is itself very small, is predominantly non-residential. The electoral roll is therefore extremely small despite the large size of the Abbey. The Abbey also conducts five services every Sunday, with a particular focus on the choral matins which is generally the best attended¹⁰⁴. The comparative figures for the week before Remembrance were therefore taken from this service.

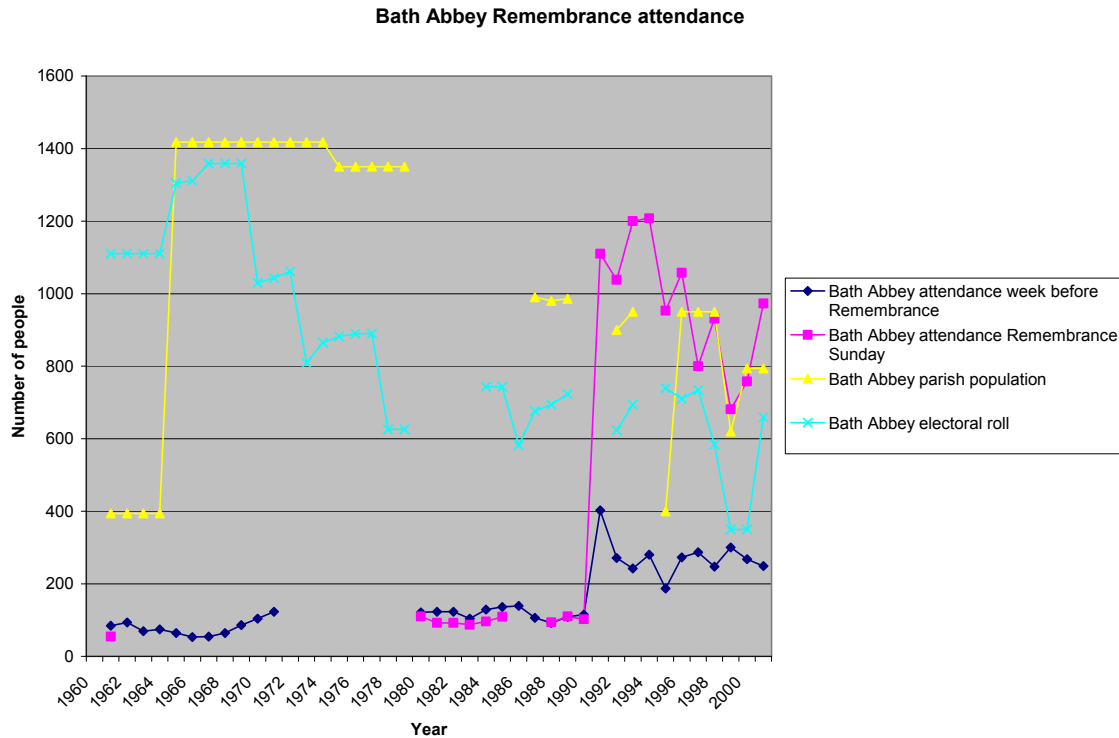
The annual Remembrance service was traditionally conducted in two parts: a two minute silence was observed at the 11am service, which started a few minutes early to ensure that the silence could be observed, and then a larger parade of military, civil and cadet organizations assembled for a Service in the afternoon. The morning service was paralleled by a Service of Remembrance held in Royal Victoria Park at the War Memorial which many of the military and civil organisations attended before going onto the Abbey parade in the afternoon. Where figures were available, it is the latter service that was used. There may well be an element of duplication in numbers between Bathford and Bath Abbey; many people will have attended both services.

¹⁰⁴ Bath Abbey Service Registers 1960-2000 – all years show the same pattern.

What the figures show is a very clear long term reduction in the electoral roll. John Burgess suggested that this merely reflected national trends¹⁰⁵. He was also not aware of any pacifist preacher being appointed in the diocese which might have affected any of the data for Bath Abbey or Bathford. The erratic figures for the quoted parish population reflect the inaccuracies in recording, and persistent copying of previous year's data, which often only changed when they had to be reviewed on a 5-yearly basis. Attendance figures are very sparse; during Rev Geoffrey Lester's tenure¹⁰⁶, no figures were recorded, save for some communicants. It is really only of value to look at the figures post-1990 for a real comparison between the Remembrance Service, held in the afternoon of Remembrance Sunday when all the military and civil dignitaries joined the British Legion from across the area, and a normal Sunday service. Based on that evidence, the increase in attendance over the previous week was a factor of 4 or 5. Nevertheless, after a peak in 1992-3 perhaps linked to the Gulf War of 1990/91, attendance gradually reduced over the following years, whereas the attendance the previous week at Choral Matins seems to have remained broadly constant. Hence despite the national surge led by the British Legion in 1995, attendance in this religious portion of the commemoration in Bath declined.

¹⁰⁵ Telephone call Burgess/Lamonte 9 October 2008. John Burgess was Archdeacon for the diocese 1975-1995.

¹⁰⁶ He was employed as Vicar for 28 years



What Bath Abbey does offer is a complete record of the comments in the Bath Abbey *News and Comment*, published on a monthly basis throughout the period. The advance notices in the November issues and the comments from the December issues are quite instructive. In 1960, the *Abbey News* carried a note on the forthcoming Remembrance Service which mentions the Rev Vaughan-Jones, Assistant Chaplain-General Southern Command as the visiting preacher¹⁰⁷. The next few years regularly mention a military-related presence: either a naval or Army officer to take the parade, or a military chaplain. After 1965 this stopped, and no military person was mentioned¹⁰⁸. In 1968¹⁰⁹, the problems of Vietnam, West Africa and Czechoslovakia were mentioned by Rev Lester with considerable concern, but by 1969, Remembrance Service did not even feature as a

¹⁰⁷ *News and Comment* November 1960

¹⁰⁸ *News and Comment* 1966 onwards

¹⁰⁹ *News and Comment* December 1968

major service¹¹⁰. From 1969, all the references to future Remembrance Services talked of the visiting preachers, and seem to show an inclination towards senior church leaders: the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Dean and Archdeacon appeared. The Bishop of Bath and Wells' fiery sermon of 1977¹¹¹ asked the congregation to 'wage war on the anti-Christ', and sought the end for Idi Amin's regime, as well as Russia, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam – he also saw the anti-Christ in the 'flood of pornography' prevalent in Bath.

1981¹¹² saw Rev John Campbell, Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, ask 'Is it better to be red than dead?' as his sermon discussed a split between pacifists and Christians, which he saw as entirely different, and highlighted the real threat from nuclear weapons.

Although the Remembrance Service for 1982 did not get a mention in the November News¹¹³, Rev Lester's sermon was in the December issue¹¹⁴ where he gave thanks for the Falklands outcome, and went on to controversially discuss pacifism in the church. His own perception was that the extant Articles of Religion included 'It is lawful for Christian men...to wear weapons and to serve in Wars.'

Perhaps his upbringing through the Second World War made Lester more at home with this conservative concept; certainly he seems to have felt that the pacifism of some parts of the CofE was inappropriate. Again, the Remembrance Service did not get a mention in 1983¹¹⁵ or in 1984¹¹⁶, perhaps surprisingly so soon after the Falklands war. The 1983

¹¹⁰ *News and Comment* November 1969

¹¹¹ *News and Comment* December 1977

¹¹² *News and Comment* December 1981

¹¹³ *News and Comment* November 1982

¹¹⁴ *News and Comment* December 1982

¹¹⁵ *News and Comment* November 1983

¹¹⁶ *News and Comment* November 1984

sermon¹¹⁷ did however hark back to Rupert Brooke's sonnets, not least because Brooke's grandfather was Rector of Bath Abbey from 1875-98.

The most controversial part of the Bath Abbey story occurred in 1994/5. The 1994 *News*¹¹⁸ recalled the RAF's raid on Braunschweig at 2 am on 15 October 1944, where, according to the article, in 40 minutes half the city was destroyed and 3000 killed of whom half were foreign workers. Braunschweig and Bath have close modern links as University towns. The relevance came in 1995 when Rev Joachim Hempel, preacher at the Cathedral in Braunschweig was invited to take services to celebrate the anniversary of VE day. Despite intense local discontent (Bath having been heavily attacked in 1942) Hempel's sermons were received well, largely though his contritional style. At his 0915 service, he said: 'guilt of my people is large'; 'war, hate and crime was started by the Germans'; and 'I am saying this with sorrow and being ashamed'. At 1100 he said 'To admit guilt and accept responsibility for it, is also not easy in our personal life!' going on to remind us that 'Victories are celebrated, defeats less'¹¹⁹. Curiously for that year of anniversaries, Remembrance Service was again not mentioned in the November *News*¹²⁰.

A further change in style emerged in the late 1990s, with Rev Askew as the enthusiastic and dynamic parish vicar. His 1998 sermon for Remembrance said it gave 'an awful

¹¹⁷ *News and Comment* December 1983

¹¹⁸ *News and Comment* December 1994

¹¹⁹ *News and Comment* June 1995

¹²⁰ *News and Comment* November 1995

warning of what can happen when great and Christian nations fall prey to a satanic ideology¹²¹.

The following year's November issue¹²² brought an article from foreign correspondent James Pettigrew, who questioned whether the Kosovo campaign had been legitimate and a Just War. This is one of the few tangible pieces of evidence of consideration of Just War theory outside the elite circles of academia and politics. His conclusion was that it was both just and legitimate; indeed, he highlighted that the RAF had only dropped two bombs in the first six days of the campaign, and that the threat of ground troops (presumably cognizant of all that would have entailed) should have been made much earlier. The final article from November 2000¹²³ mentioned Remembrance as a time for looking back and looking forwards. It is, said Askew, about 'the sacrifice of others and not glorying in war, but gratitude for liberty'.

Testing this evidence against that in the *Bath Evening Chronicle*¹²⁴ shows both similarities and unusual contradictions. The consistent message from the newspaper's coverage of the 1960s is one of the Abbey being filled to capacity – around one thousand people. In most years, the newspaper sought comment from the British Legion, which almost every year suggested that the numbers were higher than the previous years – in fact, the evidence (however subjective) from the newspaper reports shows this not to have been the case. For example, five bands played in 1964's parade, but later in 1973

¹²¹ *News and Comment* December 1998

¹²² *News and Comment* November 1999

¹²³ *News and Comment* November 2000

¹²⁴ Which became the *Bath Chronicle* in 1994.

lack of military bands caused the parade to be led by the Salvation Army; and the numbers of onlookers reduced from thousands in 1966 to hundreds by 1973, and ‘large crowds’¹²⁵ in 1985. By 1986, the hundreds of ex-Servicemen at the War memorial had become seventy¹²⁶, and the twenty standards of the 1960s down to fourteen by 1992.¹²⁷

The constant theme seemed to be the threat of nuclear war, as the Rector of Devizes said in 1961:

If the explosion of gigantic nuclear weapons was an example of the type of freedom for which men and women had given their lives in the two Great Wars, we as a nation should be thoroughly ashamed¹²⁸.

Similarly, in 1963:

In the Abbey churchyard at noon, a ceremony of a rather different kind took place without incident. While a packed Abbey congregation sang “Now thank we all our God” a score of young CND members paid respects in their own way to the war dead. They laid a poppy wreath on the new Garden of Remembrance accompanied by anti-war poetry by Stephen Spender and Rupert Brooke read by chest physician Dr Robert Oswald and 26 year-old John Mills. “We didn’t find anyone opposed to what we did” said Barbara Rebbick, “We got our wreath from the British Legion¹²⁹.”

The issue returned in 1983 when the editorial said ‘Britain has to be in NATO and be defended by nuclear weapons. CND....distracts attention from the real issue [of

¹²⁵ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 11 November 1985 p13

¹²⁶ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 10 November 1986 p10

¹²⁷ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 9 November 1992 p12-13

¹²⁸ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 13 November 1961 p6

¹²⁹ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 11 November 1963 p. 5

managing with fewer weapons]¹³⁰. The next year Rt Rev Wilson in his Abbey sermon said ‘In 1918 we spoke of the war to end all wars, and now our nightmare is the thought of a war that would end life¹³¹.’

The newspaper mentioned thoughts of dropping the act of Remembrance in 1968. In an article marking fifty years since the end of the First World War, a comparison was drawn between the sober acts of Remembrance and the party atmosphere in Bath when the Armistice was signed, with flag-waving and cheering¹³². But the Rt Rev Francis West in his Bath Abbey Sermon that year said:

Those whose affections and sentiments are linked with either the First or Second World Wars must not expect others, in particular the younger generation, to regard Remembrance Day with the same attitude,

going on to say that the ‘First World War seemed as remote as Waterloo’ and that ‘today we think less of national sovereignty than we did and much more of world problems¹³³.’

The anti-war elements were limited in sermons, but emerged in the Archdeacon of Wells, Venerable John Lance’s words of 1972 when he talked of ‘the dunghill of war’ and the dangers in letting Remembrance become a sentimental strutting vanity¹³⁴. It re-emerged as an issue in 1986 when the Bishop of Taunton was quoted as saying:

¹³⁰ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 14 November 1983 p. 14

¹³¹ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 12 November 1984 p. 8

¹³² *Bath Evening Chronicle* 11 November 1968 p. 6

¹³³ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 11 November 1968 p8

¹³⁴ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 13 November 1972 p5

There are a number of people today who attack our remembrance service and the obvious military presence it has on the grounds it glorifies war. These are often the same people who sadly seem to have hijacked the word peace...¹³⁵

A particular issue that raised local debate was that of the war memorial, described in 1972 as ‘badly-kept, wrongly-sited and incomplete’¹³⁶ by the Royal British Legion. In 1974 the Dean of Wells talked of the Second World War names not always being placed on war memorials, saying: ‘Does it mean people in the Second World War were more disillusioned, cynical or just realistic?’¹³⁷.

It was not until 1995 that 600 new names were added to the war memorial from the Second World War after a campaign by the Royal British Legion, the *Bath Chronicle* and local people¹³⁸. One particular addition to the Frome memorial in 1983, that of Corporal Keith McCarthy who died in the Falklands Campaign, merited an article in the *Chronicle*¹³⁹.

Perhaps that feeling of change starts to show itself in the coverage of Remembrance Day in the newspaper, because the 1969 coverage was much less than previous years. In 1970, the coverage of Bath services was melded with that in other towns and villages in a single article¹⁴⁰, yet the following year showed that the Abbey remained full. The newspaper gradually placed the articles further back into the paper – typically from pages 5 and 6 to page 13 or 14. The turning point in coverage seemed to be 1987, when the

¹³⁵ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 10 November 1986 p10

¹³⁶ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 13 November 1972 p. 5

¹³⁷ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 12 November 1974 p. 5

¹³⁸ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 13 November 1995 p. 13

¹³⁹ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 14 November 1983 p. 13

¹⁴⁰ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 9 November 1970 p. 5

narrative became very short and the focus more on pictures of individuals. In 1988, the focus was on Jack Hills, a 91 year-old ex-RFC observer. Editorial comment was rare, save for a comment in 1986 to highlight wearing a red poppy with pride, and consideration of the plight of war widows in 1989. In 1991 though, the editor recognized the new poignancy and swelling of numbers from the Gulf War. Yet from that year on, no mention was made of the content of the church sermons, marking a possible secularization of the event. In the coverage of 1993, it explicitly said that the purpose of Remembrance was ‘remembering the dead of two world wars’¹⁴¹, and this reflected the general tenor of the events with only minor exceptions.

The move to revive Armistice Day in 1995 marked another change in newspaper coverage. No mention was made of the Abbey service at all in the 1995 *Bath Chronicle*, or indeed for the following two years. The Abbey service was mentioned again in 1998 and 2000 but there was a distinct shift towards Armistice Day and away from Remembrance Sunday, with the implication that thought was more of the First World War, as demonstrated by Reverend Jonathan Lloyd’s article on Armistice in 2000¹⁴².

The power of individuals stands out in the historiography; the Rev W D C Williams, Rector of Devizes was regularly quoted, notably in 1967 for his assertion that ‘History will also prove America is right now [in Vietnam]’¹⁴³. His background as Assistant Chaplain-General to the Forces gave him more of a fiery and militarist flavour to his sermons. In 1971, he was the only Rector noted in the press to highlight the conflict in

¹⁴¹ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 15 November 1993 p14-15

¹⁴² *Bath Chronicle* 11 November 2000 p14

¹⁴³ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 13 November 1967 p. 2

Ulster, together with the war dead of Korea, Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and Aden¹⁴⁴; most others stick to the two World Wars. Prebendary Geoffrey Lester at Bath Abbey was similarly strong in his views:

The association of Christianity with pacifism is absolute rubbish' he said in 1982; 'Is it peace at any price, would they really rather be red than dead?'¹⁴⁵

which echoed the sentiment of the previous year's sermon as mentioned above in the Abbey notes.

Not everyone was engaged in the services: the two minutes silence at St Saviour's, Larkhall, Bath was interrupted in 1961 by the 'revving of car engines and the noisy footsteps of passers-by'¹⁴⁶. Similarly two men were each fined £30 each after shouting abuse and waving at Servicemen on the 1982 parade having mistaken it for a Falklands victory parade; a conflict with which they disagreed¹⁴⁷.

Despite the coverage of the Remembrance parades and services, little opinion emerges from the letters to the editor. The first reference appeared in 1968 when a letter called for thought on Czechoslovakia during Remembrance that year. Two letters in 1968 and 1969 simply thanked the efforts of poppy sellers. Two other issues raised comment over the years: local correspondent Mark Alexander's article and that of white poppies. Mark

¹⁴⁴ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 15 November 1972 p. 9

¹⁴⁵ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 15 November 1982 p. 3

¹⁴⁶ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 13 November 1961 p. 6

¹⁴⁷ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 9 November 1981 p. 13

Alexander wrote a piece in 1974 looking ahead to the weekend's Remembrance activities:

'I can see nothing festive about remembrance of two of the greatest criminal acts against the dignity of man in the history of the world...the irrelevance and stupidity of it all is inescapable...We should swap all the militaristic nonsense and quietly reflect on what actually happened...All the names on the war memorials were not heroes. They were real people we sent to be killed...¹⁴⁸'.

In response to this strong article, two letters published on 11 November 1974 were equally strong in their condemnation of the text. Although CND brought out the white poppies particularly in 1986 (though not in Bath)¹⁴⁹, which brought one letter of defence for the white poppy, the first recorded wreath of white poppies locally was in Trowbridge in 1981¹⁵⁰. The final letter on remembrance was in 1993 against the white poppies. Perhaps surprisingly, the vandalism of the wreath laid by two representatives of the Bath Campaign for Homosexual Equality at the Bath War Memorial in 1981 received no comment, either for or against. One can only conclude that Remembrance as an issue was not something the local public felt strongly enough to write about.

Although the white poppies issue was a relatively small one at the local level, it was much more significant nationally. The origins date back to the No More War Movement, which suggested in 1926 that the British Legion imprint 'No More War' in the centre of red poppies instead of 'Haig Fund'¹⁵¹. The first white poppies were introduced by the

¹⁴⁸ *Bath Evening Chronicle* Pomp, pageantry, stupidity and shame 9 November 1974 p. 7

¹⁴⁹ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 10 November 1986 p. 4

¹⁵⁰ *Bath Evening Chronicle* 9 November 1981 p. 13

¹⁵¹ <http://www.ppu.org.uk/poppy.index.html> accessed 18 May 2009.

Women's Co-operative Guild¹⁵² (and made by workers from the Co-operative Wholesale Society) in 1933 as a demonstration against war and for non-violence¹⁵³, who were joined by the Peace Pledge Union in 1934 who assisted them in distribution. The Peace Pledge Union took up the white poppy in 1936 as a symbol that war should not be allowed to happen again, and participated in alternative remembrance events in 1938, when 85 000 white poppies were sold, often being worn with red poppies, as Neil Kinnock later did in the 1980s as Labour Leader. In 1980, on the afternoon of Remembrance Sunday, a silent march was made to the Cenotaph, and a wreath of white poppies laid, with the inscription 'For all those who have died or are dying in wars; For all those who will die until we learn to live in peace; When will we ever learn?'¹⁵⁴,

The silent march became an annual event and sales of white poppies grew. When raised in Parliament, the Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher expressed her 'deep distaste'¹⁵⁵ for them, which created a national debate. Only in 2005 was the Royal British Legion, who had been very opposed to the white poppy, to try and reach an accommodation with the Movement for the Abolition of War (who took on the white poppy symbol) by removing 'there will always be wars' from their website, and to introduce the Movement for the Abolition of War in their schools information packs¹⁵⁶.

Case Study 3. Cathedral Church of St Phillip, Birmingham

¹⁵² Originating with a visit by Edith Pavitt to France in 1928 where the townswomen wanted a peace symbol for public occasions. See Gregory A, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946* (Oxford: Berg 1994) p. 153

¹⁵³ http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/early/poppy3_early_years.html accessed 18 May 2009.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1502478/British-Legion-reaches-a-truce-with-the-white-poppy-movement.html> 8 November 2005 accessed 18 May 2009

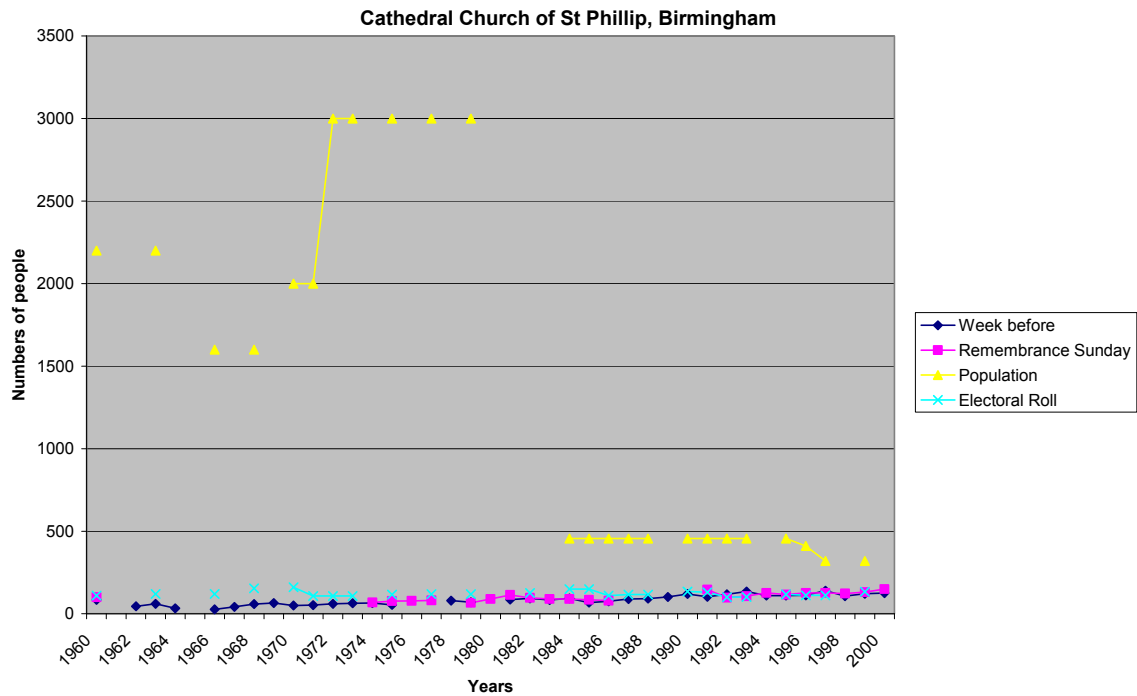
Birmingham Cathedral represents a rather different city community. The community has long been a multi-cultural one, with a high level of immigrants; indeed, the Church records from 1962¹⁵⁷ mentioned services held in Urdu. Losses from both World Wars were higher than in Bath, and the civilian community had felt far greater effects from German bombing. Birmingham traditionally had a large open air service to commemorate Remembrance, either in the Bull Ring or the Hall of Memory. The Cathedral church, chosen for its extensive records held in the Birmingham Central Library, always held a Remembrance service, usually coincident with the service of Matins.

The data, taken from the Service Registers¹⁵⁸ and the Diocesan Directory¹⁵⁹ for Birmingham, are shown below:

¹⁵⁷ Service Register 1962

¹⁵⁸ Service Registers 1960-2000

¹⁵⁹ Diocesan Directory, Birmingham 1960-2000



What the figures demonstrate is the same arbitrary nature of estimating the population for the parish, which can then extend for some years before another individual took a different view. In this case it is feasible that the parish population was much larger before the 1970s, when substantial redevelopment of the city centre took place, but this is not easy to prove definitively. Nevertheless, the core numbers on the electoral roll shows considerable consistency with peaks in 1970 and 1984/5. There is no major fall-away in numbers as the national trend would suggest. With some exceptions, the numbers of communicants at the Remembrance Day service (which has to be used as a proxy for attendance for which no figures are recorded except for 1960) were some 5-10% higher than those of the previous week. From 1991 onwards the numbers generally exceeded the electoral roll – which suggests both that visitor numbers increased for that particular

service, and that the attendance was not affected by the very large open-air Service held close by.

Perhaps more instructive are the comments in the Service Registers. In 1965, the morning service is noted as being for the Christian Nuclear Disarmament group, rather than simply as a Remembrance Service¹⁶⁰. Similarly, the following year's service is noted as being for CND¹⁶¹. There are no records of attendance at either service. An increase in the electoral roll of over 25% by 1968¹⁶² may indicate the effect of a new rector or change in direction in style of service. More significant are the annotations for the services. In both other case studies, and seemingly more widely, the nature of each service was recorded for that Sunday, such as the 5th Sunday before Trinity etc.

Typically, the fact that it is the Remembrance Service is also recorded. But on eight occasions over the forty-year period of this review¹⁶³ (1972, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1983-4, 1999-2000) this was not recorded. One might suspect that one omission might be a clerical error, but the fact that there were so many may indicate the level of importance given to this Service in the Cathedral, particularly from the 1970s onwards. Also of significance is the fact that it was recorded in the year of the Falklands Campaign¹⁶⁴, but not for the following two years¹⁶⁵, and similarly not in the year of the Kosovo campaign¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁰ Service Register November 1965

¹⁶¹ Service Register November 1966

¹⁶² Service Register November 1968

¹⁶³ Service Register November 1972, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1983-4, 1999-2000

¹⁶⁴ Service Register November 1982

¹⁶⁵ Service Register November 1983, 1984

¹⁶⁶ Service Register November 1999

Correlating the Cathedral data with the *Birmingham Post* records shows both differences and similarities. The connection with CND was clear in 1964 when members of Birmingham CND kept a ‘vigil’ at the Town Hall on Remembrance Sunday¹⁶⁷. Britain’s place in the world was brought into question in the 1966 editorial:

Britain wins the war and loses the peace – and it is just as true of Britain as an economic entity as in its military capacity, though we do not recognize it so readily¹⁶⁸.

That same year, people were clearly questioning the Remembrance Service, as the Assistant Bishop of Worcester Cathedral, Rt Rev P Wheeldon suggested in his sermon at Worcester Cathedral:

Thousands of people would be deeply hurt if Remembrance Sunday did not continue in some form...People have asked why should they go on keeping Remembrance Sunday when no-one under 60 can remember the Great War, and when the last war is receding into history¹⁶⁹.

And yet the paper records that more than five thousand people attended the Birmingham Hall of Memory service. The debate over whether to continue with the service continued in 1967; Canon D A Hodges described the suggestion of an end to Remembrance Day as a ‘disaster to the cause of peace’ whilst agreeing that ‘after 50 years of paying tribute to the dead of the First World War’ the emphasis should change to thanksgiving for acts of self-sacrifice in every sphere of life¹⁷⁰. The editorial picked up the theme, noting that the Bishop of Birmingham was amongst those wanting a review of the purposes of

¹⁶⁷ *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1964, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ *Birmingham Post*, 14 November 1966, p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ *Birmingham Post*, County Edition, 14 November 1966, p. 14.

¹⁷⁰ *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 1967, p. 2.

Remembrance Sunday, and noting the pressure from those who thought it ‘seemingly irrelevant to young people’ and a ‘glorification of war’, yet it remained ‘intensely pertinent to the mood and aspirations of a generation of young people that has shown itself passionately interested in peace¹⁷¹.’ From the fact that there are no letters in response to this debate, one can suggest that this was being held at a higher (elite) level, but that the general populace, still turning out for services in and out of churches in large numbers, did not share the concerns.

In Birmingham at least, there seems to be a change starting in 1968. Although the numbers of attendees seemed to be reducing (‘hundreds took part’ at Colmore Circus¹⁷²), the biggest difference in press coverage was the lack of mention of church services, suggesting that the more secular event at the open air ceremony now had greater precedence. Subsequent years show a similar trend, but 1969 showed a slight resurgence to two thousand people at the Town Hall in Birmingham, marking the 25th anniversary of the D-Day landings¹⁷³. The next change was the smaller local disputes that occur which make press coverage: the Shirley ceremony dispute over whether the Sea Cadet Band or the Salvation Army band should lead; the Staffordshire British Legion complaining that three schools (one grammar, one comprehensive and one secondary) had refused to sell poppies¹⁷⁴. Although trivial in nature, these events tend to distract from a much more formal report of what the church leaders said in previous years, and hence shows a cultural shift.

¹⁷¹ *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 1967, p. 6.

¹⁷² *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 1968, p. 1

¹⁷³ *Birmingham Post*, 10 November 1969, p. 8

¹⁷⁴ *Birmingham Post*, 10 November 1969, p. 7-8

CND remains a feature of Birmingham services in 1970; the front page recording that:

Spectators remonstrated with CND supporters during yesterday's Remembrance Day march past along Colmore Row, Birmingham, after young people unveiled a banner which read "In Memory – and against a Third World War"¹⁷⁵.

The students went on to place a wreath at the Hall of Memory, but none of this raised a comment in the editorial or letters to the paper.

By 1971, the decline in the significance of Remembrance Sunday can be seen from the fact that coverage was confined to the back page of the paper, with just a picture of the Birmingham ceremony¹⁷⁶. The following year, coverage focused not on the ceremony, but on two veterans, aged 78 and 66, suggesting both that the really important element was the individual soldier, and that the key wars were the First and Second World Wars where those two had served, rather than any more recent conflicts¹⁷⁷. Similarly, the 1973 coverage¹⁷⁸, whilst on the first page, was of Miss Emily Duckett, who made an annual pilgrimage from Weston-super-Mare to Birmingham where she had served in the Second World War. The decline had gone still further in 1974, where there was no coverage of the Birmingham events at all, and only a picture of one of the Old Contemptibles in Staffordshire. Interestingly, the quote from the British Legion in 1975 to accompany the single picture on the back page, said 'the success of *Dad's Army* on television had

¹⁷⁵ *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1970, p. 1

¹⁷⁶ *Birmingham Post*, 15 November 1971, back page

¹⁷⁷ *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 1972, back page

¹⁷⁸ *Birmingham Post*, 12 November 1973, p. 1

brought in many young sellers and made this year's Poppy Day collections a success¹⁷⁹.

This reinforces the idea that people's ideas on war were drawn from the Second World War, and heavily influenced by fictional, and in this case humorous, accounts, rather than modern-day facts. The ceremony was relegated to a small column in 1976, though numbers are quoted as being 5000 at the Hall of Memory.

In 1977, numbers apparently declined once more ('nearly two thousand turned out in Birmingham'¹⁸⁰) but it is hard to know whether this is more about reporting accuracy than actual numbers – nevertheless, a significant difference to the previous year for no apparent reason. A comment that 'A mixed unit from the Regiment of Signals shows how the women keep in step with the men in yesterday's Birmingham remembrance service'¹⁸¹, says more about the attitude to women at the time than anything else. But this seems to reflect some of the attitudes at the time, for in the following year:

Hundreds of ex-Servicemen, scouts and some councillors boycotted the Remembrance Day ceremony at Wolverhampton yesterday in protest over the participation of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality¹⁸².

In the event, the campaigners laid a wreath, despite there being no standards present or ex-Servicemen. Elsewhere, 'Civic leaders marched to church to tunes such as the Yellow Rose of Texas, Little Drummer Boy and Hawaii Five-O'¹⁸³, because the scout band

¹⁷⁹ *Birmingham Post*, 10 November 1975, back page

¹⁸⁰ *Birmingham Post*, 14 November 1977, p. 5

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*

¹⁸² *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 1978, p. 1

¹⁸³ *Ibid* p. 3

couldn't play marches. Beneath this humorous tale lies a change in society, where the military, previously providing bands and support, were starting to be rather more remote.

By 1979¹⁸⁴, the pictures had returned to the front page, and the complaint, both in the columns and in one letter, was of jet noise during the two minutes silence, the only letter relating to Remembrance for many years. That this event was significant was shown again the following year when two amateur football teams complained to the league that their match (Canley Utd v Coventry Evening Telegraph) was not stopped at 11am to observe the silence¹⁸⁵. That year also saw the effect of a vicar perceived not to provide the sermon required:

A vicar's sermon yesterday halted the Remembrance Day service at a Birmingham church, because the congregation objected to it....The Rev John Duncan (from All Saints, King's Heath) spoke of the peace movement and nuclear armament....When he asked if Russia really was "bent on world conquest" several people rose to argue and at least one person is reported to have walked out¹⁸⁶.

The editorial described this message as 'inappropriate' and that it 'demonstrated an unfortunate lack of sensitivity'¹⁸⁷, yet we also know that anti-nuclear campaigners were among those laying wreaths at services¹⁸⁸, and that that occasioned no comment in the papers at all. Equally strong was the message at Birmingham Cathedral in 1981, which made the front page:

¹⁸⁴ *Birmingham Post*, 12 November 1979, p. 1-3

¹⁸⁵ *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 1980, p. 1

¹⁸⁶ *Birmingham Post*, 10 November 1980, p. 1

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid* p. 6

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid* p. 5

Britain should abandon a nuclear arms race which seems destined to bring about its destruction, the Rector of Birmingham, Canon Peter Hall, said in his Remembrance Day service yesterday¹⁸⁹.

In fact, some of this may be temporal – it is feasible that people could be anti-nuclear weapons, yet see themselves as in favour of Remembrance for the dead of a war before nuclear weapons, and to still see themselves as entirely patriotic. Yet despite the increasing rhetoric over nuclear issues, the paper also reports that there were hundreds at the Hall of Memory – suggesting a further decline in the significance of the service.

Ahead of the 1982 service, which also marked the return of the Falklands veterans, came a surprising letter from a veteran of the Second World War, Don Lawson:

Poppies, which are the emblem of a charity which has always received its fair share of charity, are as out of date as Armistice Day.... I am uncomfortably aware that the subtle influences tending to glorification of war are still with us. Such remarks would have been considered heretical in my father's day – but that was 60 years ago – when "other ranks" knew their place¹⁹⁰.

The response from the British Legion, on 15 November¹⁹¹, said that it was all to do with remembering sacrifice, and nothing to do with glorification. There was now other debate over the issues in the paper, and so it might be an isolated expression of views, but it is consistent with some church views and perhaps presaged the debate over white poppies. Much as the previous year, the ceremony returned to the front page, with pictures of the crew of HMS *Birmingham* who joined the service.¹⁹² In 1983, the debate over

¹⁸⁹ *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1981, p. 1

¹⁹⁰ *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 1982, p. 4

¹⁹¹ *Birmingham Post*, 15 November 1982, p. 4

¹⁹² *Ibid* p. 1

Remembrance continued with an article by columnist Peter Rhodes who said that the ‘Act of Remembrance [was] forgotten in Britain’ as the band of Great War veterans dwindled, and that we should take ‘our Remembrance more seriously¹⁹³.’

Implicit in his comment was an assumption that Remembrance was predominantly about the First World War, with all the imagery that brings. That was reinforced on the following day’s (Saturday) coverage of the letters of Lieutenant Clive Taylor, 17th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, City of London Regiment, who was injured on the Somme on 15 November 1916 and died later in February 1917¹⁹⁴. Coverage of Remembrance Sunday itself that year¹⁹⁵ focused on the Archbishop of Canterbury’s comments on the ‘madness’ of the arms race, in his sermon at Dresden Cathedral, and the peace protestors at the Cenotaph in London who dropped to the floor during the two minutes silence. Actual local coverage was confined to pictures and no mention of church services.

Difficulties with the church were not confined to sermons. Both in 1984 and 1992, vicars objected to the use of the British Legion’s favoured hymn, ‘O valiant hearts’. In 1984, the Webheath British Legion had to use a retired vicar as the local man thought the hymn un-Christian¹⁹⁶, and in 1992, the vicar of Glascote thought it too warlike¹⁹⁷. Despite the proximity to the Falklands War, where coverage of Remembrance appeared on the front page, by 1985, it had been consigned to page 11. 1986 was marked by the arrival in London of white poppies, including a wreath laid by the Peace Pledge Union who said

¹⁹³ *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 1983, p. 4

¹⁹⁴ *Birmingham Post*, 12 November 1983, p. 4

¹⁹⁵ *Birmingham Post*, 14 November 1983, p. 1

¹⁹⁶ *Birmingham Post*, 12 November 1984, p. 4

¹⁹⁷ *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1992, p. 16

that they had sold 22 000 white poppies, twice as many as the previous year¹⁹⁸.

Unusually for the *Birmingham Post*, this issue drew some comment in their editorial under the title 'Poppycock'; 'What annoys most people is the belief of those wearing white poppies that they are somehow more in favour of peace than the rest'¹⁹⁹.

Perhaps this inspired the full-page coverage of Birmingham events, which mentioned the two thousand people in Birmingham, the longer march requested by the British Legion which lasted twice as long as the previous year, and for the first time included reference to the fallen of the Falklands (though curiously not Northern Ireland)²⁰⁰. Viewed against the much larger population nationally wearing red poppies, the white poppy saga seems a minor irrelevance and the *Post*'s editorial to be representative of the mainstream public view.

Another step change occurred in coverage of the 1987 Remembrance Day, which was coloured totally by the bombing of the Enniskillen service by the IRA²⁰¹. The editorial focused on this as a turning point for peace²⁰². By attacking members of the public attending a Remembrance service, the IRA inadvertently brought a much greater focus on the act of Remembrance itself, and all it meant for peace. That year also marked the change in venue from the Hall of Memory to St Phillips Cathedral for the main Birmingham service, and the coverage²⁰³ mentions now four wars: the two World Wars,

¹⁹⁸ *Birmingham Post*, 7 November 1986, p. 8

¹⁹⁹ *Birmingham Post*, 10 November 1986, p. 6

²⁰⁰ *Ibid* p. 9

²⁰¹ *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1987, p. 1

²⁰² *Ibid* p. 6

²⁰³ *Ibid* p. 3

the Falklands and Korea. For the first time a wreath was laid by the Bishop of Birmingham and ambulance workers – reflecting the wider involvement of the community in war. Yet there were no letters on this published at all. The Cathedral was quoted as being packed for subsequent years, with the slightly optimistic message from the Lord Mayor of Birmingham in the 1989 service that ‘Remembrance parades yesterday were ushering in a decade of peace²⁰⁴’, perhaps reflecting, as did the editorial²⁰⁵, on the linkages with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

1990 saw a thousand people on the Cathedral Green, clearly less than previous years. And mindful of events in the Gulf, the Very Rev Kieran Conry, Administrator of St Chad’s Cathedral, warned the congregation ‘The celebration could easily become an outlet of unjustified patriotic pride which could blind us to the sins of our past²⁰⁶.’ This seems to demonstrate once more the tension between church and veterans over Remembrance and a lack of linkage with current operations. This view was reinforced by the lack of any mention of the Gulf War in the 1991 Remembrance services, which saw the ceremony go back from the Cathedral to the Hall of Memory. If that seemed like swift loss of memory, then the coverage in 1992 returns to the back page of the *Birmingham Post*²⁰⁷, though reported numbers of attendees in Birmingham remained estimated at one thousand. The decline continued into 1994, where ‘hundreds’

²⁰⁴ *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 1989, p. 4

²⁰⁵ *Ibid* p. 6

²⁰⁶ *Birmingham Post*, 12 November 1990, p. 4

²⁰⁷ *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1992, p. 16

attended²⁰⁸, and the 'I was there' 1914-18 veterans banquet at the Council House was expected to be the last – suggesting once again a greater focus on the First World War.

The next step change was in 1995, where the British Legion nationally and locally made a big effort to commemorate the 50th anniversaries of VE and VJ days. In response to their efforts to reinstate Armistice Day as a point for two minutes silence at 11am, much of the news coverage was of the major stores in Birmingham agreeing not to open until after the silence, and the 'Last Post' being sounded in Broad Street. The only letters in 1995 drew attention to the VE/VJ day anniversaries, and one which condemned current soldiers 'trying to milk the state' over Gulf War syndrome²⁰⁹. The *Post* covered the resurgence in numbers at the services, given the added publicity, and placed it on the front page²¹⁰, but by the following year, this was confined once again to the back page²¹¹. In every subsequent year, roughly equal coverage was given to Armistice Day and to Remembrance Day (where they differ in date). 1998, as the anniversary of the ending of the First World War, merited considerable attention in the *Post*, from articles on the inclusion of the relatives of those shot for cowardice or desertion, to one on the re-writing of history to discredit Haig (which it opposed) and to the companies supporting Armistice Day. Over the period 7-12 November 1998, several pages were devoted to covering the First World War and the Remembrance acts²¹². The only two relevant letters, however, were published on 12 November; one bemoaned the fact that commemorative stamps

²⁰⁸ *Birmingham Post*, 14 November 1994, p. 3

²⁰⁹ *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 1995, p. 5

²¹⁰ *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 1995, p. 1

²¹¹ *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 1996, p. 12

²¹² *Birmingham Post*, 7 November 1998 p. 7, p. 51; 9 November 1998 p. 1, p. 5; 12 November 1998 p. 1, p. 8, p. 12

were not issued; and the other that Haig's statue²¹³ should be painted red to remember the slaughter that 'he' caused²¹⁴. At a national level, under the headline 'Why do we let this man cast a shadow over our war dead?', the *Express*'s front page²¹⁵ debated whether Haig should symbolize the losses of the First World War, taking Alan Clark's line that Haig had a blinkered view of strategy and tactics, causing the needless deaths of thousands (lions led by donkeys), the then Dr Niall Ferguson's view that the First World War was an avoidable tragedy for the British and that building a statue for Haig was wrong²¹⁶, and Labour MPs David Winnick and Dr Lynne Jones that the statue of Haig was inappropriate and should be moved²¹⁷. The article inside the newspaper²¹⁸ by Patrick O'Flynn and Tom Rawstorne mentioned the book by historian Julian Putkowski, *British Army mutineers 1914-18*, to reference the ceremony at the Cenotaph for those who were executed for military offences.

Both 1999 and 2000 showed considerable coverage of both Remembrance and Armistice Days. In 1999, attendance was quoted as being in the thousands at the Hall of Memory, mentioning the poetry of Wilfred Owen²¹⁹. In 2000²²⁰, a First World War VC recipient's grave was formally marked with a headstone. Two pages were devoted to the career of Jeeves²²¹ a promising local cricketer who died in July 1917. Another three-quarters of a

²¹³ Even the statue by A F Hardman in 1937 was controversial, criticised by cavalrymen at the time as Haig was not wearing a hat and for the inaccurate depiction of the horse's legs. *Express* 6 November 1998 p. 5

²¹⁴ *Birmingham Post* 12 November 1998, p. 12

²¹⁵ *Express* 6 November 1998 p. 1

²¹⁶ Clark and Ferguson's opinions caused a fierce debate amongst military historians; Sheffield, Bond and Holmes in particular taking a different more positive view of Haig.

²¹⁷ See also Bond B for other similar views from Hastings and others *Op cit* p. 85

²¹⁸ <http://www.aftermathww1.com/statue.asp> accessed 18 May 2009.

²¹⁹ *Birmingham Post*, 15 November 1999, pp. 1,5

²²⁰ *Birmingham Post*, 11 November 2000, pp. 1, 4, 34-35, 43-44

²²¹ Percy Jeeves played 50 matches for Warwickshire and died in July 1917.

page was devoted to VC heroes, predominantly First World War. And another full page was given over to a local man who tended a war memorial for 50 years. All this suggests a resurgence of interest and support for the Remembrance event in Birmingham, even if numbers were much lower than in the early part of the period. The focus was quite clearly on the First World War rather than any more recent conflicts. Supporting this assertion was the formation of the WFA²²² in 1980 by military historian John Giles, which had some 6000 members worldwide by 2006, and received strong support from the University of Birmingham; Dr John Bourne, previously Director, Centre for First World War Studies, being one of the Honorary Vice-Presidents²²³. The fact that this was only started some sixty-two years after the end of the War, with hardly any members who served in that War, and its continued success worldwide, suggests an on-going fascination with the First World War on a scale not seen for more recent conflicts²²⁴. Yet the telling piece is in the article in the *Birmingham Post* on 13 November, quoting a survey of children. It said that a quarter of children had no idea what Remembrance is about, and half did not know the relevance of the date of 11 November as being Armistice Day, with growing numbers of the 6648 questioned failing to understand why Remembrance Day was being held so close to 11 November²²⁵.

Drawing the threads of the press coverage together, it is clear that the *Birmingham Post* at least, noted a change in the relationship between church and Remembrance from 1968 onwards. The only exceptions to that were where churchmen have made controversial

²²² <http://westernfrontassociation.com/news/latest/1-welcome-to-wfa.html> 12 October 2006 accessed 18 May 2009

²²³ <http://westernfrontassociation.com/history-wfa.html> 15 May 2008 accessed 18 May 2009

²²⁴ See also Bond, B, *Op cit* p. 90

²²⁵ *Birmingham Post*, 13 November 2000, p. 3

statements or decisions which have either occasioned editorial comment or letters. The reports highlighted the difficulties for many churchmen in rationalizing the Remembrance message with Christian beliefs. But the actual number of letters over the years relating to Remembrance or the Armistice Day was very small, and even less if one discounts the letters from the British Legion. From 1995, the trend was towards a bilateral approach to Armistice and Remembrance, with equal support in Birmingham given to both. But the thread apparent throughout was to hark back almost exclusively to the First and Second World Wars, and predominantly the First. Almost perversely, interest in the First World War was greatest in the last couple of years of the period under review, when virtually all local First World War veterans would have died. The nuclear debate seems to have been important in the 1960s and 1980s, yet was almost an aberration locally, in comparison with local attendance at ceremonies. Secularisation of the event seems an on-going, if unstated, trend. And finally, as for attendance, it is very hard to be sure what precise figures attended the Hall of Memory services, but the overall trend appears, with some fluctuations, to be downwards over the period.

Conclusion

Despite the paucity of data, it is possible to discern some general trends. Church support, as a percentage of the population seems to have been in general decline in Bath, yet not in Birmingham (in Bathford the roll remained constant despite an increase in population; in Bath Abbey the roll decreased at a higher rate than the apparent (if suspect) decline in the parish population). After an increase in attendance in Remembrance after the Falklands

war, at least in Bathford (though Bath Abbey actually declined), and the Gulf War, there was no such increase coinciding with Bosnia or Kosovo (perhaps because of negligible casualties). For Birmingham, there was no obvious link between attendance and conflicts. But what Bath Abbey and Birmingham Cathedral showed clearly was that Remembrance services were attended by those not usually associated with the church. One is struck by the power of individual clergymen to affect opinion – the Flenley incident in Bathford, the vicars with concerns over hymns in Birmingham or Askew's enthusiasm in Bath. The press coverage reveals a much greater concern with nuclear weapons in the 1960s and early 1980s, and the dedication of services in Birmingham towards CND suggests a far more radical urban view than in Bath. The lack of letters in any paper does suggest a lack of interest by the public, but the sheer numbers reported for public open air services and parades, despite a gradual reduction over time, does seem to show a solid groundswell of support for Remembrance as an act of commemoration, but (as indicated by the change in nature of press coverage) a de-linking of Remembrance from the religious service – perhaps a reflection of the wider national trend away from churches yet notionally retaining the title of Christian. The other theme that comes though is the continued reference to the commemoration of the two World Wars; other conflicts were generally mentioned by exception. Thus the contention has to be that the generally silent populace were still conditioned by the thoughts of war from those two conflicts rather than any others, whilst the elite level (represented by the Church and news editors) were keener to debate the need for a Remembrance Service, the nuclear threat and, in the case of the press, to gently drop references to the church.

Despite a general decline in the active membership of the churches in UK, with one or two notable but small exceptions, most people in the UK, even at the end of the period, regarded themselves as Christian. Within that number, the vast majority reported themselves as being CofE, so for the purposes of this work, it is appropriate to consider the CofE as the representative Church in the UK.

Remembrance Day changed perceptibly over the period under review. Gone was the almost party-like atmosphere of the 11 November 1918, and even the subsequent remembrance of the fallen by immediate families in the inter-war years. Since the Second World War the act became rather more sombre and complicated, and perhaps based as much on myth and selective memory rather than on a complete factual account of previous conflicts. There is little doubt that the main focus was on the two World Wars, and perhaps this was inevitable given the scale of the dead from those conflicts. Yet the evidence from admittedly only three locations is that other conflicts got only a passing mention, and they were relatively quickly forgotten as memories return to the World Wars. All this was becoming rather odd as the veterans of both wars died away, and what was replaced was the created image of poetry, television programmes (sometimes factual but often humorous), and individual's memories.

When contemporary themes arose, they caused problems for this almost ritual act. Churchmen with military backgrounds or wartime experience had little difficulty in rationalizing this act of Remembrance, whereas others found some real challenges in meeting the demands of the local populace with their own conscience. The threat of

nuclear war seems to have coloured the judgment of many in the 1960s and 1980s, yet this too seems to have been a passing fear.

What the detailed examples show is that the general flavour of the Remembrance Service was towards a reduction in the size of those attending, and a split between the Church as the important focus and the more secular approach to commemoration (most clearly shown in the press coverage). And since 1995, Armistice Day assumed a much greater importance in people's minds, with almost equal importance to Remembrance Sunday. Quite clearly, this act of Remembrance created an image of war in people's minds and reflected their attitude to conflict. For an event so long ago, with very few living veterans, this was quite a feat, perhaps also part of a more moral agenda in society, coincident with the interventionist stance in Bosnia and Kosovo of the same era – a sense that this was 'the right thing to do'.

CHAPTER 5. NORTHERN IRELAND

Of all the campaigns in which British forces were engaged during the period, Northern Ireland deserves especial mention for several reasons. It is part of the United Kingdom, and therefore saw Servicemen engaged on home soil. Being so close to the mainland, operations were conducted under the glare of the media. It was a unique operation for the British, moving from counter-insurgency to counter-terrorism, and the lines between support to the civil power and support for a partisan position became blurred. Military tactics became controversial, not least the use of Special Forces. The Troubles prompted terrorist attacks against the mainland and British military targets in Europe.

It is fair to say that, for the majority of the mainland British population, Northern Ireland seemed remote, and the causes of conflict less than clear. A journalist wrote:

All of us who went to Northern Ireland for the first time in the early seventies were absolutely shattered by what we saw. We were shocked by the housing, we were shocked by the poverty, and we were shocked that this was part of Britain that appeared to be 50 years behind what we had grown up amongst¹.

McKittrick describes the troubles as being a ‘continuum of division’², reflecting unresolved issues of nationality, religion, power and territorial rivalry. In the 1960s, the Province had its’ own Parliament, own police force in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, backed by an armed paramilitary group of volunteers known as the ‘B’ Specials, and a

¹ Jon Snow, *Pack up the Troubles*, *Critical Eye*, Channel 4, 24 October 1991

² McKittrick D and McVea D *Making Sense of the Troubles* (London: Penguin 2001) p. 1

resident British Army garrison known to its occupants as ‘Sleepy Hollow’ – a place for hunting, shooting and fishing³.

For most, the view of the Troubles can be summarized in the word terrorism. Most writers agree that terrorism involves systematic use of murder or other physical violence for political ends⁴. And there is wide agreement that this is usually indiscriminately applied against a civilian population⁵. But if that were applied to Northern Ireland from 1969-89, 37.4% of IRA victims were civilian, yet 54.4% of security force victims were civilian⁶. But it is convenient for the Government to use the pejorative term terrorism to reinforce its legitimacy – hence the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The significance here lies in the legitimacy of the conflict, and the idea it conveys to the population on the mainland – for few would argue that terrorism should not be stopped. The relevance of this argument becomes clearer when one looks at the 14 deaths in Derry in 1972 on Bloody Sunday, and again the three shootings in Gibraltar in 1998. The issue can be clearly seen in the guidance provided in the BBC:

Members of illegal organizations who bomb and shoot civilians are unquestionably terrorists – they use terror to achieve their objectives. If there are occasions when the term is not appropriate there are always other words available – IRA men, UVF men, killers, murderers, bombers, gunmen⁷.

³ Taylor, P, *Brits: The war against the IRA* (London: Bloomsbury 2001) p. 9

⁴ Alonso, Rogelio, *The IRA and Armed Struggle* (Abingdon: Routledge 2003) p. 1

⁵ See Gearty, C, *Terror* (London: Faber 1991), Thackrah, J R, ‘Terrorism: A definitional problem’ in *Contemporary Research on Terrorism* Wilkinson, R, and Stewart, A M, (eds) (Aberdeen 1987), Wilkinson, P, ‘Terrorism and the Media’ *Journalism Studies Review* June 1978, Wilkinson, Paul ‘Terrorism and Propaganda’ in Y. Alexander R. and Latter (eds) *Terrorism and the Media: Dilemmas for Government, Journalists and the Public*, (Washington: Brassey's 1990), Wright, J, *Terrorist Propaganda: The Red Army and the Provisional IRA, 1968-86* (London: Macmillan 1991), Miller, D, *Don't mention the war* (London: Pluto Press 1994)

⁶ Miller *Op cit* p. 4

⁷ BBC *Style Guide for News and Current Affairs Programmes* London 1993 p 15

The start of mainland public awareness can really be traced to 5 October 1968, when TV coverage of a civil right's march in Derry showed, at least on the surface, police charging demonstrators and using batons indiscriminately. In particular, the image of a senior police officer using a long blackthorn stick, his symbol of authority, to lay into protestors and then to look wild-eyed into the camera, was shown repeatedly worldwide⁸. Comment in the British press was overwhelmingly critical⁹.

For the British Army, the start was August 1969 with the deployment of troops from Belfast to Derry in support of a police force exhausted and unable to cope with the rising protests. When 1 Battalion, Prince of Wales' Own Regiment, marched into Derry, they were greeted with cheers, 'presumably from the Protestants'¹⁰, who thought we [the Army] were going to sort out the Catholics¹¹. A Support Company Lance Corporal wrote

We didn't know what to expect. We were clapped and cheered. We looked down and people were waving at us and being very friendly towards us. They were even wolf-whistling. They were shouting "We're glad to see you. Thanks for coming. Thanks for saving us".....Then they started to shout up the walls, "Are you hungry?" "Yes" So we sent down a rope and they tied baskets onto it and put fish and chips and flasks of coffee in them¹².

Callaghan, as Home Secretary, said:

⁸ McKittrick *Op cit* p41

⁹ McKittrick *Op cit* p42

¹⁰ Though the troops were initially welcomed by the Catholics too.

¹¹ Major David, Company Commander, C Coy, 1 Bn in Taylor *Op cit* p24

¹² Lance Corporal Brian, Support Coy in Taylor *Op cit* p25

I never do believe, frankly, that anybody from this side of the water understands Ireland and I've never flattered myself that I understand the situation fully. I think very few people do. Certainly we didn't have enough understanding of it at the time¹³.

Nevertheless, the British Government agreed to send troops, the first deployment from the mainland. The Army was as unprepared as the politicians, buying maps of Belfast from a filling station on their way from the airport. Major Keith¹⁴ said:

...when you crossed the divide, the Catholics *did* think you'd come to finish them off. It took us a long time to persuade them that we were actually there to stop the fighting. When they realized it was true, they actually got down on their knees and prayed.... They were convinced that if we hadn't gone in that night, a huge number of them would have been burned out and probably killed by the next morning¹⁵.

For many, the welcome continued over the next year, soldiers shopping in corner shops, using local pubs and marrying local Catholic girls¹⁶. Some troops were more welcome than others; the Scottish regiments were seen as particularly inflammatory because of the historic links of the Protestant communities to Scottish forebears¹⁷. The IRA was depicted on walls in Belfast as IRA – I Ran Away. Up until then it had really not existed, after a flurry of activity in the late 1950s to 1962. There was little support for the IRA on any side, even the south¹⁸.

¹³ Quoted in Taylor *Op cit* p 29

¹⁴ A serving British Army officer – regiment unknown.

¹⁵ Taylor, *Op cit*, p. 30

¹⁶ Taylor *Op cit* p. 37

¹⁷ The National Army Museum of Scotland does not have any exhibits on Northern Ireland for religious/political reasons. Conversation with the curator, March 2009.

¹⁸ Coogan, *Op cit* p. 65

Case Study. Bloody Sunday. On Sunday 30 January 1972, in the nationalist Bogside area of Derry, a team from the Parachute Regiment opened fire during a march and killed thirteen unarmed Catholics (and one further person died later) – known thereafter as ‘Bloody Sunday’. On the surface, this was an appalling act, and it brought the name of The Parachute Regiment into disrepute for years afterwards. The stage had been set by a ban on marches since the summer of 1971, yet a simmering campaign against internment had continued. Taylor quotes the memo from Major-General Ford, Commander Land Forces to Lieutenant-General Harry Tuzo of 7 January 1972 in which he said:

I am coming to the conclusion that the minimum force necessary to achieve a restoration of law and order is to shoot selected ring leaders amongst the Derry Young Hooligans, after clear warnings have been issued¹⁹.

Although we know this went to Brigade Commanders, and to 1 PARA, its influence is unclear on subsequent events. What is fact is that 1 PARA were involved in the beach battle of 22 January 1972, in which paratroopers fired rubber bullets into the crowd and wielded batons to prevent protestors getting to the Magellan internment camp. The TV image for the public was self-evident: peaceful protestors were clubbed by brutal paratroopers. Nigel Wade of the *Daily Telegraph* was one of the press contingent, and Coogan says that he was one of the group assuming that ‘our boys would not do something like that’²⁰. Coogan goes on to report that the paratroopers were only brought under control when batons were used on them by their own NCOs²¹. For the march the following week in Derry, 1 PARA had a specific role. The operation Order for Op

¹⁹ Ford’s note, quoted in Taylor *Op cit* p. 88

²⁰ Coogan, Tim Pat, *The Troubles* (London: Arrow 1996) p. 158

²¹ Coogan *Op cit* p. 158

FORECAST, issued by 8 Brigade, tasked 1 PARA to ‘scoop up’ as many hooligans and rioters as possible²². For 1 PARA, drawn from Belfast to meet this problem in Derry, this was a welcome task²³. But these were elite troops ‘trained to...move forward, seek out the enemy and engage them’²⁴. Wade was again watching, and was (Coogan says) appalled as he watched troops open fire. He met Brigadier Thompson, military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, who had missed the event itself, on his way to the City Hotel, who was allegedly grinning, and reportedly said ‘Our boys shot well, didn’t they’²⁵?

Cashinella of *The Times* said that the paratroopers seemed to

relish their work, and their eagerness manifested itself, to me, mainly in their shouting, cursing and ribald language. Most of them seemed to regard the Bogsiders and people who took part in the parade as legitimate targets²⁶.

In a later report on the province, Martin Woollacott of the *Guardian* quoted a paratrooper as saying

Although you moan about Ireland, you know at least you are going to have a chance to shoot some bastard through the head...you are walking around with live rounds, you are there to kill people and see guys get killed, and you are going to get the shit scared out of you.²⁷

²² Taylor *Op cit* p. 92

²³ Field Marshal Lord Bramall’s view was that it was ‘probably unnecessary and those who carried it out weren’t the right people. I mean the first paratrooper attachment didn’t know the area, they shouldn’t have been brought in and three or four individuals went wrong.’ Lord Bramall interview 24 July 2007.

²⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Wilford, CO 1 Para quoted in Taylor *Op cit* p. 93

²⁵ Coogan *Op cit* p. 159

²⁶ *The Times* 1 February 1972

²⁷ *Guardian*, 13 July 1973

Lord Widgery's report, published some three months after the event, was largely seen by nationalists as a whitewash. Although he viewed some soldiers firing 'bordered on the reckless', his overall view was pro-Army:

Civilian, as well as army, evidence made it clear that there was a substantial number of civilians in the area who were armed with firearms. I would not be surprised if in the relevant half hour as many rounds were fired at the troops as were fired by them. The soldiers escaped injury by reason of their fieldcraft and training... in general the accounts given by the soldiers of the circumstances in which they were fired and the reasons they did so were, in my opinion, truthful²⁸.

The *Daily Express* said 'Widgery blames IRA and clears Army'²⁹. The *Daily Mail* summarized the British media reaction in its leader:

Against cynical propaganda the British Government replies with judicial truth. It is like trying to exterminate a nest of vipers with Queensbury rules. Even so, over the past 2 ½ years of mounting terrorism, the record shows – and it is a record which now includes Lord Widgery's report – that our troops are doing an impossible job impossibly well³⁰.

For the public in UK, British soldiers were seen as having acted at best recklessly. For many in the elite, this confirmed many of the fears of using forces in support of the police. The widest effect was in the Province, for it led directly to the establishment of direct rule from Westminster. It led to a massive rise in IRA recruiting, and a revenge attack by the IRA on the Parachute Regiment HQ Mess at Aldershot, killing five kitchen workers, a gardener and a Catholic padre. More significantly, it was the first mainland attack by the IRA since the 1940s. Twenty-eight years later, at the instigation of Tony

²⁸ Taylor *Op cit* p. 103

²⁹ *Daily Express* 19 April 1972

³⁰ *Daily Mail* 20 April 1972

Blair and largely as a result of the evidence of a Private 027, who was identified in the Press after voicing doubts and having kept a contemporaneous record, an inquiry was started under Lord Savile to establish the facts³¹. In reality, the damage had been done. The accountability of soldiers was a real issue – by 1976 no British soldier or member of the RUC had spent one day in jail for killing or ill treating people in Northern Ireland. Prosecutions tended to be for murder rather than manslaughter, allowing acquittals on the grounds of lack of intent. Even the first soldier to be found guilty of murder while on duty in the Province, Private Ian Thain, was released to rejoin his regiment on 23 February 1988, having only served 26 months of a life sentence³².

One slant on this was taken by Peter Taylor and the ITV *This Week* team, who decided to take someone there from the mainland to try and understand the nature of the problem. In a programme entitled '*Busman's Holiday*', they picked Tom, a bus driver, and his wife Doris from Hull. Tom's initial reaction at his Hull home was that the troops should be brought home and to 'let the buggers sort it out'³³. When taken to Belfast, on seeing a soldier, Doris said, amazed, 'Look Tom, there's a soldier – and he's got a gun!³⁴'.

Their amazement went on when they visited the city centre and saw Boots and Marks and Spencer's – this was just like Hull. Except it wasn't, for a small bomb destroyed a shop-front – Tom's reaction was that if it had happened in Hull, the *Hull Daily Mail* would be running the story for weeks. At the end of the visit, Tom's reaction was 'We can't just

³¹ The Saville Report was published on 15 June 2010. See <http://report.bloody-sunday-inquiry.org/> accessed 27 August 2010.

³² Coogan *Op cit* p180

³³ Taylor *Op cit* p11

³⁴ *Ibid*

abandon them; we've got to stick it out'. In this short film, the level of the lack of understanding of the Province on the mainland was amply demonstrated, and a considered view, after some reflection, that there was a duty for the military to support the process of maintaining law and order.

In stark contrast, 1982 saw the bombings of 20 July, which killed 11 soldiers and injured 51 people in two bombs at Knightsbridge Barracks and Regent's Park bandstand. But for the British public, the worst aspect was the death of a number of horses of the Household Cavalry, almost to the extent of overshadowing the human casualties. Sefton, one horse who survived despite serious injuries, became symbolic of the British fight against the IRA and almost a national hero³⁵.

The Savile Report's conclusion, published in 2010, was that 'there was a serious and widespread loss of fire discipline among the soldiers of Support Company.'³⁶ Their conclusion was that the Support Company should not have been deployed into the Bogside, and that their actions had been unjustifiable, increasing hostility towards the Army, strengthening the IRA and prolonging the conflict³⁷.

Case Study. The Brighton Bomb and Mrs Thatcher. The real test for Thatcher personally, and in the view of the public, was the bombing of the Grand Hotel Brighton at the Conservative Party Conference at 2.45am on 16 November 1984. A 20lb bomb placed behind a bath panel in Room 629, and detonated by a sophisticated timing device,

³⁵ McKittrick, *Op cit*, p. 150

³⁶ Savile Report *Op cit*, para 5.4 Vol 1

³⁷ *Ibid* para 5.5 Vol 1

exploded and collapsed four floors of the building, killing five members of the Conservative Party and injuring thirty others, many seriously³⁸. This event set in play a reappraisal of British policy on Northern Ireland, and involved the Prime Minister personally in giving a clear statement on John Hume's New Ireland Forum proposals for a unitary state, a federal/confederal system or joint authority from London and Dublin – her response of 'out, out and out' at a press conference set a clear tone for several years, starting with the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. Although Ian Paisley of the DUP gave vent to his feelings much as expected, telling his church congregation that Thatcher was a 'Jezebel'³⁹, British press reaction was more positive. The *Sunday Telegraph* rejected Unionist claims of betrayal, and the *Mail on Sunday* said that:

Mrs Thatcher was a real champion of the people of Ulster...it would have been easier to let the matter rest and watch the Province slowly bleed to death⁴⁰.

On TV, Mrs Thatcher used the *Weekend World* programme to say that the Agreement

was to mobilize everyone against the men of violence, because violence and democracy could not exist together⁴¹

Global support suggested this was a 'worthwhile gamble for peace'⁴². The effect of the public, the media and the elite in unison had been to alienate the extremists at both ends of the spectrum, illustrating the key relationship between each group. Extremists still expressed their views in ever stronger language, e.g. James Molyneaux's comment that:

³⁸ Taylor *Op cit* p. 265

³⁹ *The Times*, 18 November 1985

⁴⁰ *Mail on Sunday* 17 November 1985

⁴¹ *The Times* 18 November 1985

⁴² *Boston Herald*, 16 November 1985

in 40 years in public life I have never known what I can only describe as a universal cold fury, which some of us have thus far managed to contain...⁴³

and the former Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Lord Moyola:

the people of the Province were facing a desperately serious situation which I believe could produce a holocaust⁴⁴.

But as *The Economist* noted, it united:

not just Mrs Thatcher and her entire Front Bench, but also rallies Mr Heath, Neil Kinnock, David Steel and Dr David Owen in her support⁴⁵.

The degree of consensus can be measured in the ensuing Parliamentary vote: 473 in favour and 47 against – the largest majority on any topic in the Thatcher era. Despite the fury of the extremists, the fact is that terrorist shootings and explosions in 1985 dropped by 30%, with ten fewer deaths than in 1984. But despite the reduction in the violence, attitudes hardened in the Province, more people volunteered to join the UDA and the organization, arguably for the first time, pitched itself against the RUC – the first real split between the Protestant community and the security forces.

The BBC2 programme, *Brass Tacks*, conducted a poll of 1060 people in UK, which showed 42% approval for the Anglo-Irish agreement, with 32% against – significantly the

⁴³ *Hansard* 26 November 1985 Col 767

⁴⁴ *News Letter*, 27 November 1985

⁴⁵ *Economist*, 30 November 1985

remainder was undecided or indifferent⁴⁶. What was more significant was the reaction of UK public when asked on the future for the province: 26% felt it should be part of the UK, 24% part of the Irish Republic and 35% felt it should be independent; in many senses, a view of despair with the province.

The public's lack of interest was reinforced in a poll supporting the 'troops-out' campaign:

Table 5.1 Daily Express/MORI Poll 1987⁴⁷

	%
In favour of troop withdrawal	61
In favour of Northern Ireland remaining in UK	29
In favour of Northern Ireland independence	29
In favour of a united Ireland	21
No preference	15
Those who thought Northern Ireland the most important question facing Britain	<0.5

The *Guardian*'s leader reflected

⁴⁶ Reported in *The Irish Times*, 29 May 1986

⁴⁷ Owen AE, *The Anglo Irish Agreement*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994) p. 123

that this means most of us simply don't care...you have a British electorate which is happy to leave matters to the Northern Ireland people themselves...but it wants rid of the costs and dangers of Northern Ireland⁴⁸.

Case Study. Shoot to Kill. On 24 November 1982, the RUC shot and killed Michael Tighe and wounded his friend Martin McAuley. The RUC story was that police had seen an armed man entering a barn, they had heard a weapon being cocked, and the two victims emerged pointing weapons. In fact, there was no armed man; the barn had been under observation for some time. The weapons were pre-war Mauser rifles, unloaded with no ammunition in the vicinity. These shootings led to the 'shoot-to-kill' inquiry led by John Stalker⁴⁹. It became clear that the barn had been bugged for months, allegedly by the Security Service. Taylor⁵⁰ suggests there were 42 tapes, and that the last might have offered a clue as to whether a warning was given. Despite trying to obtain it, it was never forthcoming. Allegedly a copy was produced by one of the soldiers at the incident, only to be destroyed by the Security Service. A transcript offered to Stalker was inconclusive. The Chief Constable's inaction in sitting on Stalker's recommendations for four months before passing them to the Director of Public Prosecutions only fuelled the public perception of a cover-up, giving the shoot-to-kill policy more credence, made worse by the decision to remove Stalker in May 1986 because of a link to a Manchester businessman, Kevin Taylor, who had been involved in irregular dealings. The public perception was clearly one of conspiracy theory.

⁴⁸ *Guardian*, 11 February 1987

⁴⁹ Manchester Deputy Chief Commissioner

⁵⁰ Taylor *Op cit* p. 251

When the Attorney-General, Sir Patrick Mayhew announced in January 1988⁵¹ that no RUC officers would be prosecuted as a result of the Stalker enquiry (subsequently taken on by Colin Sampson), the media let fly:

Policemen have killed and lied about it. Ministers find it inexpedient to prosecute them⁵²; ‘the Attorney-General’s statement will have done nothing to dispel the stink of corruption which hangs over the affair..’⁵³; ‘there is now an overriding obligation of the British Government to show that even if criminal prosecutions are not to be brought, it will not allow the security forces to take the law into their own hands...there must be expulsions and names must be named.’⁵⁴

The *Independent* considered the matter in a number of articles, looking at a ‘liberal state menaced by an illiberal attacker...how far should it employ illiberal methods such as imprisonment without trial, torture and murder, in its own defence?’⁵⁵ The *Guardian* concluded that:

the cold-blooded killing of a young boy, followed by a conspiracy to conceal the truth, amounted to the action of a Central American assassination force⁵⁶.

And in this latter comment lies a real issue. For does it make a difference how far away from home the action takes place? For the British Army in Kenya treated prisoners appallingly in the Mau Mau rebellion, but distance and lack of media coverage kept this from the public gaze. A soldier from the Gloucesters said of Aden: ‘We weren’t governed by the same rules that we were in Ireland. The lads over there could be a lot

⁵¹ *Hansard* 25 January 1988 Col 21

⁵² *Economist* 6 February 1988

⁵³ *New Statesman*, 29 January 1988

⁵⁴ *The Times*, 4 February 1988

⁵⁵ *Independent*, 6 February 1988

⁵⁶ *Guardian*, 15 February 1988

rougher, a lot harder because we never had the newspapers there and we never had the Press or anyone else who could actually see what we were doing. It made a lot of difference because you were given a freer hand right across the board, from commanding officers right down to corporals in charge of men on the ground. You could just be a lot harder, a lot tougher and a lot more ruthless⁵⁷.’ And it was Denis Healey who recognized years later, that the actions of troops in Borneo in the 1960s could not have been done in a more public view⁵⁸. So this episode tells us that, at least at the elite level, there was a genuine concern about the methods employed by security forces in a conflict against terrorists, and that the conduct of conflict did matter. Stalker was later to recall that

the feeling was OK, dead or alive we’ll be protected to some extent. We’re soldiers really, in police uniforms, and we can probably justify deaths afterwards because we’re in a war⁵⁹.

Case Study. *Death on the Rock*. At 1541hrs on 6 March 1988, Mairead Farrell, Dan McCann and Sean Savage, all IRA members, were shot by security forces on Gibraltar. This single incident, perhaps along with Bloody Sunday, raised fundamental questions about the conduct of British forces on operations. Initial reports were of a massive car bomb attempt being foiled by Gibraltar police who shot dead three IRA terrorists. Later that evening, the MOD acknowledged that military personnel had been involved in the shootings. But the story really took off when the Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe, made a parliamentary statement the following day to say that a ‘dreadful terrorist act has

⁵⁷ ‘George’ in Taylor *Op cit*, p. 32

⁵⁸ Interview Professor Gary Sheffield 23 February 2010

⁵⁹ *Guardian*, 6 February 1988

been prevented' by 'military personnel', but he went on to say that no bomb had been found, and that the terrorists were unarmed:

When challenged they made movements which led the military personnel, operating in support of the Gibraltar police, to conclude that their own lives and the lives of others were under threat. In the light of this response, they were shot. Those killed were subsequently found not to have been carrying arms⁶⁰.

Sixty Labour MPs signed a statement condemning the shootings as 'capital punishment without trial⁶¹.' What was interesting in all this was that, despite the change in official stance, the media did not challenge the Government on what had gone wrong, but stuck with the initial line that there had been a bomb, or at least a plot. The *Independent* claimed that 'bomb disposal experts defused 440lbs of explosives in a Spanish-registered car⁶².' Both the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* referred to a 500lb bomb in the car. Despite the inevitable Dublin *Irish Press* headline of 'Fury as no bomb found', the mainland press focused on the hunt for the alleged fourth member of the IRA team: 'Fourth IRA bomber on the run' (*Guardian*), 'Hunt for Fourth IRA Terrorist' (*The Times*), 'Fourth Terrorist still at Large' (*Daily Telegraph*), 'Search Continues in Gibraltar for Car Bomb and IRA Terrorist' (*Financial Times*), 'Hunt for IRA Evelyn' (*Sun*), and 'Find Evil Evelyn' (*Daily Mirror*). The latter reports reflect the international hunt for Evelyn Glenholmes, named as part of the Gibraltar 'Bomb Plot'⁶³. Even after the event, the tone of *the Sun* was supportive of the shootings:

⁶⁰ *Hansard*, 7 March 1988 Col 21

⁶¹ Coogan *Op cit* p. 235

⁶² *Independent*, 7 March 1988

⁶³ Miller *Op cit* p. 174

The moral for the IRA is a simple one. If they do not want to be killed, they should not try to kill others. Three criminals are dead. Our troops and the forces on the side of law and order are safe. For us that is a happy ending⁶⁴.

It was left to the broadsheets to raise a question mark, notably the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, the *Observer* and the *Daily Telegraph*. From the latter:

Few British people will mourn the death of members of the IRA. But it is an essential aspect of an anti-terrorist policy to maintain the principles of civilized restraint which obtain in a democratic society. A failure to do so argues that terrorism is succeeding in one of its critical aims, the brutalization of the society under attack⁶⁵.

At the funeral for the IRA dead from Gibraltar in the cemetery at Milltown, Michael Stone, a loyalist paramilitary launched a gun and grenade attack on the mourners, killing three dead and wounding a further fifty people. Following that, at the funeral of one of the Milltown dead, a car drove at speed towards the cortege. The car was surrounded by the crowd; the occupants were dragged out, beaten, taken away and executed by the IRA. The occupants were British Army soldiers, both armed and one actually fired a shot; no-one really knows why they were in that vicinity. But the effect on the British public on seeing papers filled with pictures of stripped, battered and bruised bodies was one of revulsion. What followed was a request from the RUC Chief Constable, for release of untransmitted film of the attack. The BBC, ITV and RTE refused without a court order. On 22 March 1988, the Prime Minister set the position out quite clearly:

I believe that everyone, the media included, has a bounden duty to do everything that the can to see that those who perpetrated the terrible crimes, which we saw on

⁶⁴ *Sun* 8 March 1988

⁶⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 8 March 1988

television, which disgusted the whole world, are brought to justice. Either one is on the side of justice in these matters, or one is on the side of terrorism⁶⁶.

Though broadcasters reflected the cry of staff safety to avoid release of the material, the strength of public and newspaper opinion, demanding to know why the TV stations were not assisting the police, led to the final agreement to hand material over to the RUC on the following day. The *Sunday Times* commented 'it was the television coverage of the attack that fuelled much of the outrage at the killings⁶⁷.'

The press reflected public revulsion: 'the daylight nightmare of the lynch mob set new levels even for two decades of criminal violence and terrorism in Northern Ireland⁶⁸, while the Sun called them 'Scum of the Earth⁶⁹', and the *Daily Mirror* called for British troops to be brought home.

Death on the Rock was a very controversial episode of Thames Television's current affairs programme *This Week*. It was screened on ITV on 28 April 1988⁷⁰, and subsequently went on to win a British Academy of Film and Television Award. The documentary investigated Operation FLAVIUS, the SAS mission in Gibraltar in response to intelligence of an IRA unit being on the peninsula. The SAS claimed authorisation to use deadly force

⁶⁶ BBC2 *Newsnight* 22 March 1988

⁶⁷ *Sunday Times*, 20 March 1988

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 22 March 1988

⁶⁹ *Sun*, 22 March 1988

⁷⁰ <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/deathonthe/deathonthe.htm> accessed 24 June 2008

if those using them had reasonable grounds for believing an attack was being committed, or about to be committed, which would endanger life or lives and if there was no other way of preventing that, other than the use of firearms⁷¹.

The programme considered the extent to which this had been an 'execution' with no intent to arrest the IRA members. The SAS said that McCann had made an 'aggressive move' towards a bag he was carrying, which the SAS believed indicated intent to detonate a car bomb using a remote control device. When Farrell went for the bag after McCann was shot, she was killed on the same grounds. Both died. Savage allegedly moved his hand to his pocket, and was shot on the basis he could have been moving for a weapon. He died. McCann was shot five times, Farrell eight times and Savage between sixteen and eighteen times. No weapons were found on the bodies afterwards, but ingredients for a bomb were later found in a car in Spain.

The programme produced witnesses to discredit suggestions that a warning had been given, and to question the ability of the IRA to use a remote control detonator (including from an Army Bomb Disposal expert⁷²). In particular, Carmen Proetta, a local witness, was quoted as saying:

They [the security forces] didn't do anything...they just went and shot these people. That's all. They didn't say anything, they didn't scream, they didn't shout, they didn't do anything. These people were turning their heads back to see what was happening and when they saw these men had guns in their hands they put their hands up. It looked like the man was protecting the girl because he stood in front of her, but there was no chance. I mean, they went to the floor immediately, they dropped⁷³.

⁷¹ *Death on the Rock* Thames TV 28 April 1988

⁷² <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/deathonthe/deathonthe.htm> accessed 24 June 2008.

⁷³ Murray R, *State Violence 1969-1997* (Dublin: Mercier Press 1998) p. 193

In subsequent days, her testimony was posited as suspect because she was alleged to be a prostitute, though this was later found to be false.

Lord Bramall took the view that:

it was just a question of whether they should have been apprehended rather than shot and I think the argument then was that they might have had a device in their hand, and electronic device or a mobile telephone on which they could have dialled a number and an explosion would have gone off. So they weren't taking any risks.⁷⁴

The Foreign Secretary, Geoffrey Howe, attempted to block transmission of the programme by writing to the Independent Broadcasting Authority Chairman, Lord Thomson⁷⁵, on the grounds that it would prejudice the official inquiry into the event. But the Independent Broadcasting Authority refused on grounds of free speech in a democracy⁷⁶ – much to the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's irritation⁷⁷. In the ensuing reaction to the programme, Andrew Neill, editor of the *Sunday Times*, ensured the paper attacked Thames Television for their coverage. This was presumably because Rupert Murdoch, the owner, and very much a favourite of the Conservative administration, wanted to support the Government's line. The *Sun* was also critical – its headline was 'Storm at SAS TV Trial'. Both newspapers attacked the programmes procedures of enquiry and challenged the character of the witnesses – particularly and

⁷⁴ Bramall interview *Op cit*. Former Chief of the General Staff during the Troubles.

⁷⁵ <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/457866/> accessed 24 June 2008

⁷⁶ Lord Thomson's words were: 'the issues as we see them relate to free speech and free enquiry which underpin individual liberty in a democracy.'

⁷⁷ Not the only cause; Margaret Thatcher was also infuriated by other programmes, such as *Real Lives*, about the everyday lives of extremists, and *A question of Ulster*. Curran, J, & Seaton, J, *Power without Responsibility* (Abingdon: Routledge 2003 6th Edn) p. 211

quite erroneously, Carmen Proetta⁷⁸. Murdoch would have presumably viewed Thames as a competitor to his own satellite television company. Neill was given a vote of no confidence by the Wapping Branch of the National Union of Journalists⁷⁹; he was subsequently given Sky TV to launch by Murdoch⁸⁰. In fairness, both the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Star* were equally critical, with headlines of ‘Fury over SAS Trial by TV’ and ‘TV Slur on the SAS’ respectively⁸¹. The Prime Minister seemed to be in tune with the popular view when she said

the place to have trials is in a court of law. Trial by television, or guilt by association, is the day that freedom dies⁸².

Although the enquiry led by Lord Windlesham and Richard Rampton QC⁸³ into the programme did find errors, it largely cleared it of any impropriety. It went deeply into programme construction, the processes for research including finding witnesses, and the means of presentation between interviews, presenter commentary and use of location material. For politicians (and particularly Conservative Government members), the report raised the issue of the point at which it is appropriate for investigative journalism to go, and where limits should be placed in the so-called national interest. From the public’s perspective, the bombing attacks by the IRA not only in Northern Ireland but also on the UK mainland gave the Gibraltar incident the feel of an appropriate and

⁷⁸ <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/deathonthe/deathonthe.htm> accessed 24 June 2008

⁷⁹ Eldridge J, Kitzinger J, and Williams K, *The Mass Media & Power in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997) p. 39

⁸⁰ In 1995, it was estimated that Murdoch owned 36% of the newspaper market, and had a 40% share in BSkyB. *Ibid*

⁸¹ <http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/deathonthe/deathonthe.htm> accessed 24 June 2008

⁸² *The Times*, 29 April 1988

⁸³ Windlesham P and Rampton R *The Windlesham/Rampton Report on Death on the Rock* (London: Faber 1989). Windlesham was a former television executive and Government Minister; Rampton was a barrister specialising in defamation and media law.

unquestioned response, as might have been felt in wartime (e.g. bombing of German cities – see Chapter 4).

Case Study. Special Forces. The role of Special Forces seems to be part of national pride, a sense of tradition in elite forces, perhaps dating from the 1979 Iran Embassy siege. Badsey highlights the debate over whether it was the Iran Embassy siege, the Falklands War, or the efforts of the SAS over a number of events that made the British public ‘proud of their Armed Forces’⁸⁴. In reality, there is little evidence to show that the public ever thought ill of individual soldiers, but it is certainly true that a lot of books have been sold on the SAS (fictional and factual), and that a ‘feel-good’ factor emerged after the Falklands War, reflected in opinion poll evidence of support for the Prime Minister. But the extended use of soldiers in undercover operations did raise questions at the elite level.

The SAS shot dead three IRA men on the Omagh–Carrickmore road in September 1988. The papers reflected the continuing support for the SAS, and a feeling that the IRA got what they deserved: ‘SAS rub out IRA rats’ (*Star*); ‘Serves them right’ (*Evening Standard*); and ‘Justice has been done for our boys’ (*Daily Mail*)⁸⁵, which showed the affection of the public for ‘heroic’ special forces.

However, the role of Special Forces and undercover operatives was brought into question in a number of TV documentaries. One such was Channel 4’s *Diverse Reports*

⁸⁴ Badsey interview *Op cit*

⁸⁵ Owen *Op cit* p. 227

programme⁸⁶ of 2 May 1984 looking at the work of Captain Frank Holroyd, an Intelligence captain working for the RUC Special Branch in Portadown in 1974/5. He allegedly worked for MI6 through their enclave at HQ Lisburn⁸⁷. His allegations were:

that Loyalist killers were deliberately allowed to go unpunished; that British forces carried out kidnappings, snatching wanted men from the Republic; that sometimes the security forces deliberately allowed operations which they had foreknowledge of to go ahead to discredit the IRA, thereby putting civilian lives at risk; that similarly, instead of capturing weaponry and explosives found in IRA dumps, they would sabotage the material so that it would booby trap its owners; that the security forces carried out acts of intimidation, such as sending threatening letters containing bullets to civil rights activists; and that they carried out bank raids and conducted illegal break-ins⁸⁸.

All this raised doubts on the ethics of the Armed Forces in prosecuting operations in Northern Ireland.

Case Study. Bombing on the Mainland. The day after John Major's surprise re-election in 1992, the IRA launched an attack on the Baltic Exchange. Three people were killed in the blast, including fifteen year-old Danielle Carter. The bomb caused £800million of damage; more than the entire cost of the damage in the Province since 1969 to that point and more damage than the entire 10 000 bombs detonated in the Province⁸⁹. The message was driven home very clearly to the Major government that the IRA were a force to be reckoned with, that the intelligence services were not as taut in London as in

⁸⁶ *Diverse Reports* Channel 4 2 May 1984

⁸⁷ He was removed on psychiatric grounds and went to work for the Rhodesian Army. In 1993, Coogan found him working as a security guard.

⁸⁸ Coogan *Op cit* p. 301

⁸⁹ McKittrick *Op cit* p181 (though estimates vary on the total value from seven to eight hundred million pounds)

the Province, and for the IRA, that massive effect could be had on the city in a financially-disproportionate way⁹⁰.

If the large-scale bombings in London had little effect on people, albeit at great financial cost in infrastructure damage, then the emotional effects were felt profoundly by the British people at events like the Warrington bombing of March 1993, where two bombs were placed in litter bins, killing three year-old Jonathan Ball, out to buy a Mother's Day present, and twelve year-old Tim Parry, who had been running away from one bomb only to get caught in the other. The emotion can be seen in the opening lines of *The Times* report of 21 March:

He was a little boy with blond hair. "He looked angelic," said an eyewitness who saw him lying on the ground afterwards next to an empty flowerbed. "But he was obviously dead."⁹¹ "It's just senseless, what the bombers have done. These people were out shopping for Mother's Day presents. I counted at least 10 lying about, one definitely dead, his face blown off completely."⁹² "Mike Rondo, who was walking towards the shops when the first bomb went off said, "the earth moved literally beneath my feet. Hundreds of people came running towards me. Everyone was shouting and screaming and calling the IRA bastards. The people who have done this are sub-human. They are worse than animals. They can have no humanity to plant a bomb in a shopping centre that is packed with women and children like this."⁹³ "Thousands of letters from the public were sent to console the parents. A peace vigil, organized by a group of mothers, was attended by 2000 people a week after the event⁹⁴. The Church joined the outcry against the bombers "Dr George Carey...said people should "rise up in horror" against the bombers...." "I do not have enough words to summon up my disgust at the evil perpetrated on these innocent people."⁹⁵ "The Rt Rev Michael Henshall, the Bishop of Warrington, last night called on the world to witness "the barbarity" of the IRA bombers. He said" The world needs to know we are dealing with people

⁹⁰ Alonso *Op cit* p. 187

⁹¹ *The Times* 21 March 1993

⁹² *Ibid*

⁹³ *Ibid*

⁹⁴ *The Times* 28 March 1993

⁹⁵ *The Times* 22 March 1993

who have lost any sense of civilization. It is barbaric, it is callous, it is cruel and it is inhuman”⁹⁶.

A Timothy Parry Trust Fund was set up to establish greater understanding between Great Britain and the two halves of Ireland.

There was a strong sense in the media of a traditional bulldog spirit, and an indomitable response from those bombed on the mainland:

Only one comment is worth making on the London station bombs yesterday. It came from a commuter: “This is never going to put people like me off travelling”...Two responses to this are appropriate. First, by no extent of tolerable administration can such outrages be avoided or even marginalized. But speed of police reaction and swiftness in the subsequent return to normality are vital...The second response...is not to allow the perpetrators of terror to dictate the political agenda....To go normally about one’s business is the only victory every citizen can score against terrorism⁹⁷.

In that same paper, Brian Hilliard, editor of *Police Review*, highlighted the need for the public to take a role:

The message, after yesterday’s bombs in Victoria and Paddington stations, is that the public must look after itself⁹⁸.

Calling for a public reaction in the same way as in the Second World war was consistent with what the IRA leaders described as ‘creating a war situation in Britain’⁹⁹, in this case by ‘disrupting the journeys of 500 000 commuters in London’¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*

⁹⁷ *The Times* 19 February 1991

⁹⁸ *Ibid*

⁹⁹ Gorman article in *The Times*, 19 February 1991

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

Simon Jenkins, writing in *The Times*, took stock after the Bishopsgate bombing of April 1993. He referred to the effectiveness of terrorism lying in the reaction, not in the act, quoting, not for the first time in *The Times*, Conrad's secret agent 'frail, insignificant, shabby, a pest in a street full of men'¹⁰¹, who would understand that 'He could sow violence, but he needed publicity and the public to reap the harvest of terror.' The Bishopsgate bombing made the headlines for several consecutive days, moving Russia, Britain's economic recovery and Bosnia off the front pages. Jenkins wryly remarked that:

The metropolitan media conformed to its old rule-of-thumb, that a London atrocity is worth five Manchester atrocities, ten Belfast ones, 20 in Europe and 100 in China¹⁰².

He reported that newspapers called financiers all around the world to ask if they were frightened of London, trying to induce the very economic sanction the bombers intended. But he moved on to put this in perspective; that:

London is one of Europe's safest cities, and that to do much more would be to let the terrorists win and make people live in a state of fear. And therein lies the conundrum. How much should be spent so that people feel safe, whilst avoiding the charge that the mainland has been bombed into producing the very reaction intended.

Jenkins' conclusion was that 'meanwhile the IRA will go on bombing London for as long as it hurts us'¹⁰³.

¹⁰¹ *The Times* 28 April 1993 p. 16

¹⁰² *Ibid*

For the *Daily Telegraph*, quotes from the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development's annual conference served to show that London would continue as a major financial centre:

Deutsche Bank's presence in the City will continue. London is one of the most important financial centres. Chase Manhattan's commitment [is] unchanged... London is a very important financial centre and this [bomb] will not deter foreign banks [said Credit Lyonnais]¹⁰⁴,

At the individual level, the piece ends with a quote from Donald Swerk, working for US Development Alternatives Inc: 'I was in the City when the bomb went off. The building shook and I had a moment of fear. But you ask: "will I come back?" The answer is yes, but it doesn't mean everyone will.'¹⁰⁵ John Major, addressing the EBRD conference was unequivocal: 'They have won no sympathy for their cause and nothing but contempt for their campaign'¹⁰⁶.

The Church's view, in language consistent with that from Warrington, came from Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, who

condemned the "barbaric behaviour" of the perpetrators and accused them of sinning grievously. Their actions were "against everything that is right humanly and from a Christian point of view"¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁴ *Daily Telegraph* 27 April 1993

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁷ *The Times* 1 May 1993

In a retrospective look, following the events of 7 July 1995, Michael Snyder, a partner in the accountants Kingston Smith, recalled

Staff at Kingston Smith turned up for business in jeans on the next working day to help with the cleaning. Many of them brought their own rubber gloves and dustpans and brushes from home. By the end of that day, word processors and calculators were clicking away and by the following day we were advising clients and charging fees again. Nobody wanted to stay at home. Nobody wanted to let bombers and murderers keep us away from our business of earning a living in the world's leading business and financial district¹⁰⁸.

In a sense we should not be surprised at the lack of reaction from those on the mainland suffering both the bombings and the restrictions on personal liberty. Professor Simon Wesselly's lecture to Gresham College in 2007¹⁰⁹ looked from the Blitz to Bin Laden, but the parallels are the same for the intervening years of the IRA mainland bombings. The conventional wisdom was, as expressed in Richard Titmuss' *Problems of Social Policy* (1950)¹¹⁰, that

morale had been maintained during the War because of the equitable sharing of risk and danger and the rise of an egalitarian collectivism, of an informed citizenry standing together against the horrors of war.

Despite that model, there are those such as Angus Calder who point out the flaws, for example in the Blitz, looting occurred; delinquency rates increased; strikes carried on, occasionally impeding the war effort; and despite rationing, there was a clear black

¹⁰⁸ *The Times* 10 October 2006

¹⁰⁹ Gresham lecture by Simon Wesselly, 9 June 2007 - from Gresham website

¹¹⁰ Cited by Wesselly *Op cit*

market in operation¹¹¹. But Wesselly found in the declassified files of the Home Intelligence Division evidence of observation of the public that by and large supported the conventional viewpoint; that law and order was maintained, and that morale did not fail, and finally that there was not the surge in psychiatric casualties that had been predicted. Hence the Official Historian was indeed able to write in 1955¹¹² that ‘London can take it’¹¹³.

Wesselly then took that forward to the events of 7 July 2006 and the London bombings by Al Qaeda. In essence, after the bombs went gone off, places filled with smoke, the emergency services took thirty minutes to arrive and so it was left to the people who were there to carry out initial rescuing and lifesaving. Wesselly described the research of Chris Cokin, who took narrative reports from those involved in the incident. After the packed carriage filled with smoke, people panicked, but that only lasted a couple of minutes and people calmed down. A feeling of unity came through – people who were total strangers as fellow passengers suddenly become uniquely close. People started to help each other to see who was hurt and who needed help. Seven days after the bombing, Wesselly joined the Health Protection Agency in studying around 1000 people drawn at random in London. Some 25% reported feeling upset, and others noted poor memory, sleep, concentration and so on. There was anxiety about travelling on the Underground. Muslims felt even more anxious. These questions were chosen because they were

¹¹¹ Calder, A, *Disasters and Heroes – on War, Memory and Representation*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2004) – presumed Wesselly is referring to Chapter 2 here.

¹¹² Quoted by Wesselly but believed to be Crew, F AE, *Vol 2 Medical History of the Army Medical Services* (HMSO 1956)

¹¹³ Reflecting a common theme from newspapers such as the *Reading Eagle* 10 November 1940. Grayling notes that morale in Berlin when subjected to area attacks in the Second World War rose, not fell. See Grayling, *Op cit* p. 38

precisely the same ones asked in New York following the 9 November 2001 disaster, and the responses were virtually the same. Following up with 700 of the target group some six months later, whereas 30% initially said they were not bothered by the events in July, that figure had doubled six months later.

So how can we compare this with the IRA bombings? It is clear that some people had a serious reaction to the events, but many didn't, and the effects were relatively quickly over. People's reactions were to pull together. What came through from the reports of the mainland bombings of the IRA yet not in Wesselly's work was a feeling of extreme anger – one person from Warrington mentioned that he could never face the bombers; even with a six-inch steel wall he'd try to get at them. But the sense of community and pulling together was also clear. Unifying shock, a sense of common purpose, and a sense of defiance against aggression were elements common to the Second World War, 7/7, 9/11 and the IRA bombings. In summary, people tended to have an initial shock, got over it, wanted to live normal lives and it left the consciousness soon afterwards.

Business tended to look at the damage, worked on the elements of risk and how to manage them, and then saw how best to operate – even in alternate locations. The report of the Guardian Royal Exchange annual accounts noted the costs of the Arndale Centre bomb in Manchester of £5million, and a 29% fall in pre-tax profits, but this was confined to one line amidst otherwise normal business¹¹⁴.

¹¹⁴ *The Times* 1 August 1996 p. 1

What lessons can be drawn from the Second World War experience? Wesselly made the point that by 1944, 80% of the civilian population was actively engaged in the war effort in one way or another.

They knew why they were there, they knew what they were doing, they knew why they had been asked to accept the risk and adversity and hardship that they were, and not only did they know why and what the purpose was, but they were also playing, in a small way, a part in overcoming that¹¹⁵.

So in a society where the majority of people were not involved in the Province, and by and large appear to have been indifferent to both the way the campaign was conducted and the future of the Province, it is harder to establish that shared purpose to deal with the IRA bombings. Yet it does seem to have happened, with a sense of resignation, defiance and abhorrence. It is hard to see how the IRA ever thought they could influence public opinion through having a campaign against non-military targets on the mainland to make an economic case for withdrawal from the Province.

¹¹⁵ Gresham lecture *Op cit*

CHAPTER 6. BORNEO TO KOSOVO

This chapter addresses public perceptions of war from the campaigns in which British forces actually took part in the period from 1960 to 2000. There is a wide choice of operations, but five campaigns have been chosen as case studies: Borneo (a neo-colonial conflict); the Falklands (an invasion of British sovereign territory by another state, with a classical force-on-force nature, with little civilian involvement); the first Gulf War (Operation GRANBY, a combined campaign with the mandate of a UN Security Council Resolution); Bosnia and Kosovo, two liberal interventionist operations in former Yugoslavia involving peace support and enforcement. The latter campaigns also show that the UK and the US made choices when and where to intervene to support people exerting their right to self-determination, along the lines of the Atlantic Charter¹. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the extent to which public attitudes have changed to British actions over the period.

The methodology is to consider the political, elite and populace levels², and analyse perceptions of war as reflected in reactions to these campaigns. Cross-cutting themes are considered where information makes this possible, including the attitudes of the Churches (predominantly CofE, the Roman Catholic Church and the Free Churches); attitudes to taking casualties; and the differences between press and public perception. Evidence is primarily drawn from three different source types: opinion polls; newspaper comment

¹ Gaddis, John Lewis, *We now know* (Oxford: OUP 1997) p. 12

² Political level being based around the parliamentary system; the elite level including relevant academia, defence industries, the broadsheets and other informed commentators; the populace representing the remainder of British society – expanded upon in more depth in Chapter 2.

and letters; and individual memories, drawn from oral history or memoirs. In this way it is hoped to draw together a picture of the public views of the time.

As mentioned previously, opinion polls can be misleading if used in isolation. An example would be the MORI survey on the Falklands War conducted for the *Daily Star* on 26 April 1982³ which asked ‘Was the government right to resort to military force to regain the Falkland Islands, or not?’. One might argue that the use of the word ‘resort’ carries an implication about other alternatives to military action. This is a particular concern, when the final question of the three in that survey asks ‘Should British armed forces attempt to restore British sovereignty by invading the Falkland Islands?’. The use of the word ‘invade’ is interesting, since Britain supposedly had sovereignty anyway, and so could not truly invade islands they already ‘owned’. Whilst this choice of words could be unintentional, it is more likely that experienced pollsters use the questions to shape the response. Survey size is a similar issue, and there are therefore potential pitfalls in scaling the result to be a national perception. Similarly the age group, level of experience in a particular issue and geographic spread may all make the data less representative. Nevertheless, opinion poll data does give both a quantifiable measure of perception and a relative measure as polls are taken over the duration of each conflict.

Newspaper coverage has its own difficulties. The relationship between newspaper comment and public opinion will be discussed in Chapter 7, but the nature of the relationship on whether it leads, reflects or runs counter to public opinion is key in this respect. So the way it has been used in this chapter is to look particularly at the editorials

³ http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/trends/falklands_dailystar.shtml accessed 29 April 2007.

of the newspapers, which give a reflection of the views of both the popular press and the more considered opinions of the broadsheets, and then at the letters pages where available, to see how editorial and responses join. Again, both have difficulties. The editorials often reflect the views of owners, which again is part of the discussion on media. Letters reflect to a certain extent not the views of the respondents, but the editor's selection of which letters to print and the proportion of letters both for and against a point of view may represent the same proportion as received by the newspaper or a national view.

Memoirs and oral histories give a good view, if occasionally dimmed by the passage of time, of perceptions at the time. For the purposes of this study, however, they are limited as they reflect more closely the events of the day, rather than the populace's perceptions of them, and so must be used with care.

There is no single definitive model or measure of public perception on each campaign that can be used with certainty. Nor are the measures used here exhaustive in themselves. The best that can reasonably be achieved is to build a consistent pattern of approaches across each conflict to offer some views of perceptions at the various levels in society.

Case Study 1. Borneo

A combined force from UK, Australia and New Zealand took up positions in 1962 in an undeclared jungle war against Indonesia that lasted for four years and was known as the

‘Confrontation’. The plan for the defence of Borneo⁴ against overt attack was known as SPILLIKIN, whilst a contingency plan was formed for the destruction of Indonesia’s offensive capability - ALTHORPE⁵. Evidence from the draft minute from the Chief of Defence Staff⁶ to Ministers on the minimum force size needed to prevent intervention in Borneo by Indonesian forces in 1963 shows no anticipation of the length and depth of the campaign⁷. What is clear from the note is the support the Indonesian forces received from the Russians (which presumably underscored the British intervention), although there was no suggestion at the time that they would fight in Borneo.⁸ The early publicity was targeted at Indonesian incursions, but the Government stopped short of issuing a White Paper on Borneo⁹; as the Confrontation developed, publicity was not raised again but clouded in tight security. The 1965 Statement on the Defence Estimates¹⁰ simply said that the Army had ‘substantial forces engaged in the Borneo operations’ – which not only omitted the contribution of the other two Services but grossly understated the nature of the campaign¹¹.

⁴ Under the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Agreement, Borneo was split between Dutch and British spheres of influence, but was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War.

⁵ Brief to Secretary of State for Defence 6 July 1963 DEFE 11/593. Other plans existed for various other contingencies and gradations of effort, but these are not germane to this discussion.

⁶ Admiral Lord Mountbatten

⁷ DEF 157/200/01, CO 968/873 from CDS to Ministers dated 29 January 1963. Although the Treasury clearly were worried about the costs, and anticipated involvement to 1965 (reacting to a note of 29 May 1965 from the MOD). Note to Mr Mark from P H F Dodd dated 28 March 1963. T225/2554

⁸ JP 12/63 25 January 1963 CO 968/873

⁹ DH/1061/84(J) dated 27 August 1963 from J E Cable at the FCO. FO/371/169901

¹⁰ Statement on the Defence Estimates 1965 para 60 p. 16 CAB 129/120

¹¹ Smith suggests that, by early 1965, some 15 000 Commonwealth troops were engaged in Malaysia. Smith R *Op cit* p. 207

Bullock described the area as heavily-jungled, with an unmarked frontier; ethnic constituents covered both sides of the border and moved between sides at will¹². The only efforts to mark the border with signs were subsequently used by the Iban people as frying pans¹³. The Indonesians were, in Bullock's view, doing most of the attacking (much against the views of the indigenous peoples who viewed them as being as alien as the British)¹⁴. The reaction of British forces was sound when they caught the Indonesians, but they were always forced to be reactive¹⁵. As a result, the Director of Borneo Operations, Major-General Walker¹⁶, concluded by early-1964¹⁷ that permission was required from London to mount operations against military targets inside Indonesia, which Bullock describes as being 'politically-deniable'¹⁸. These were known as 'Claret' operations¹⁹. This case study considers how operations were conducted, and the lack of media coverage.

¹² Bullock interview 8 June 2009. Bullock was a Company Commander with 2nd Battalion 2nd KEO Gurkha Rifles in Borneo in 1965. He also noted that the only map they had at the start of operations was a Dutch map from 1936 with little detail.

¹³ Bullock interview *Op cit*

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ Walker was Director of Borneo Operations, Commander Land Forces in Borneo and senior Gurkha commander, commanding 17 Gurkha Light Infantry Division. He was replaced by Major General P M Hunt in his role with the Brigade of Gurkhas on 1 April 1964, and by Major General Lee as Commander Land Forces when the roles were split in theatre. Walker noted the end of his period in command in *The Kukri* (Regimental magazine – No 16 August 1964) by saying the Gurkhas had been 'fully extended in the Borneo territories'. Walker was later to become a full General and knighted; he later became a right-wing advocate with connections to Taiwan and Pakistan. See his book *Fighting On* by General Sir Walter Walker. Bullock, writing the history of the Gurkhas, said his later efforts were viewed as 'slightly embarrassing' and that he was 'a bit of a menace'. Walker was alleged to have been involved in the proposed military coup during Wilson's government in the 1970s.

¹⁷ Noted in CDS' note to Secretary of State COS.27th Meeting/64 7 April 1964 DEFE 11/551. Walker's assessment, endorsed by Admiral Begg as CinC FE, is in CBB 19 dated 27 March 1964 and covered by CINCFE.1684/1298/1 dated 3 April 1964 (despite the fact it says March!). DEFE 11/487

¹⁸ Bullock *Op cit* p Introduction (unnumbered).

¹⁹ Smith R *Op cit* p. 208

The first 'Claret' operations took place in May 1964²⁰. Each operation had to be approved by the MOD and, as a result, some were delayed²¹. The most successful operations were to attack the Indonesians when they conducted battalion movements by boat. Using the asymmetric advantage of helicopters for rapid access, the British were able to attack these in ambushes. Later 'Claret' operations in 1965 targeted enemy bases²². Each operation had a number of rules²³: there was no casualty evacuation by helicopter²⁴; incursions were not sanctioned further than 10000yards²⁵ into Kalimantan (the effective range of the 105mm howitzer); operations were to be totally deniable²⁶; every scrap of evidence had to be recovered; and artillery use was minimized for the operation²⁷.

²⁰ Bullock interview *Op cit*

²¹ *Ibid*

²² *Ibid*

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ To prevent the Indonesians downing a British helicopter and gaining a public relations victory at the UN, although the records show that clearance for 'hot pursuit' of Indonesian aircraft was considered up to fifty miles into Indonesian airspace. COS 2068/21/7/65 dated 21 July 1965 DEFE 11/593

²⁵ Confirmed in signal from CinC Far East (Admiral V C Begg) to CDS 300420Z July 1965 which requested authority for three deep raids without further clearance but held to the rule of ten thousand yard incursion. DEFE 11/593

²⁶ The public relations strategy surrounding cross border operations was to be limited to dissemination of Indonesian incursions to try and persuade the public of the need for strong counter-measures. COS.124/64 dated 10 April 1964. DEFE 11/551. Deniable was defined by CDS as 'one in which the Indonesians cannot prove that the border has been crossed'. Signal CDS to CinC FE 011935Z I July 1964. DEFE 13/385

²⁷ The initial approval by Ministers in April 1964 (Signal MOD to CinCFE 232805Z 23 April 1964 DEFE 11/551) was for 'limited and deniable retaliatory cross-border operations: artillery/mortar fire in self defence; deniable hot pursuit to 3 000 yards; deniable offensive patrols to 3000 yards (July 1964)'. Deniability was confirmed in a letter of 17 April 1964 from the Foreign Office to MOD, which notes that there would be no publicity initiated by us (the British) (DEFE 11/551) E1981. The cross border approval was extended to offensive patrols to 10 000 yards; sea patrols up to a 3 mile limit; and planning for graduated operations in Kalimantan in December 1964 to reflect a build up of Indonesian forces in Kalimantan (Signal CDS to CinC FE 151100Z January 1965 notifies the change. DEFE 11/621). Brief for Secretary of State for Defence 6 July 1965. DEFE 11/593

These operations were kept extremely secret²⁸. Bullock recalled²⁹ a visit from a Medical Corps Major-General, concerned over outbreaks of scrub typhus. The visitor produced a sack of sticks which he suggested could be used to mark areas where the typhus was prevalent; clearly, he was unaware that British forces were operating over the border and so couldn't leave such evidence. Press were not allowed into theatre. Even the SECRET situation reports excluded reference to border crossing³⁰. The Regimental magazines of the period contained no references to border crossing³¹. The SAS reports (with whom the Gurkhas were working closely) were limited in distribution³². The Gurkhas achieved many honours on operations; all citations used a form of words to circumvent saying the operation was across the border. An example would be the Military Medal awarded to Rifleman Ramprasad Pun³³:

On 2 September 1965, Rifleman Ramprasad Pun took part in an operation the aim of which was to ambush a stream bed in the border area of the Lundu District of

²⁸ Even the quarterly report to Chief of Defence Staff by the Commander in Chief Far East for September 1964 to March 1965 makes no reference to the cross border operations. CINCFE.54/65 dated 26 May 1965. DEFE 11/593

²⁹ Bullock interview *Op cit*

³⁰ Undated Sitrep from Bullock papers viewed 8 June 2009. Also Joint Sitrep No 41 (2 Div) from 122045H to 141900H in a signal from 2/2 GR to West Brigade, presumed to be July 1965. Bullock papers.

³¹ *The Kukri* Nos 16, 17 and 18 dated August 1964, July 1965 and July 1966 respectively. No 16 refers to the extension in the operational tour of duty from 3 to 6 months, and the casualties for that year of 2 British officers, 1 Gurkha officer and 14 other ranks killed, and 1 British officer, 4 Gurkha officers and 23 other ranks wounded in the report to the King of Nepal p5. No 17 has a similar report to the King, listing the casualties as 1 British officer and 20 Gurkha other ranks killed and 1 Gurkha officer and 35 other ranks wounded p5. The same edition contains a 'typical' patrol report, but uses the term 'Indonesian border village' to obscure the cross border operation p145. Casualties were only taken to Singapore at best, but not UK, so news of their wounds was confined (note that the *Daily Mail* 12 June 1964 complained that details of casualties were being withheld – see Signal CinC FE to Secretary of State 091045Z July 1964 DEFE 13/385. See for example 2/2 GR Battalion newsletter No 22 dated 31 December 1965 for the death from his wounds of 21151635 Balbahadur Thapa of C Company in Kuching General Hospital. Bullock papers.

³² Confined to the Director Borneo Operations, Commander Land Borneo, HQ SAS, West Brigade and the Gurkha battalion. See for example, Operation JACK SPRAT 25 August – 2 September 1965 OPS/90/99 dated 12 September 1965 signed by Major Peter de la Billiere MC commanding the SAS in Borneo. WO 305/4294

³³ 21150344 Rifleman Ramprasad Pun 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles

Sarawak which it was believed Indonesian infiltration parties used as a route into Sarawak³⁴.

This conveniently omitted the fact that the operation took place across the border, as we know from Bullock's evidence that he led it with the Support Company. Even the award of a Victoria Cross to Lance Corporal Rambahadur Limbu in July 1966 omitted to say it was across the border, simply that he 'discovered and attacked a strong enemy force located in the border area'³⁵.

Finally, the monthly battalion newsletters made no mention of cross-border activity. Some are quite short on detail; e.g. the September 1965 newsletter³⁶ described a major operation by Support Company, without making reference in the story to the cross-border action, and the important role played by SSM Lawrence Smith³⁷, 22 SAS, who subsequently received a Military Cross³⁸.

The conduct of the 'Claret' operations was described by Bullock as 'pushing the boundaries a lot'³⁹ yet he pointed out that such operations were only conducted in response to Indonesian attacks or carefully-planned intelligence-led ambushes. He felt that the Indonesians were strangling the local trade and sometimes cleared villages of their populace, who gave them no support⁴⁰. 'Claret' operations were designed to take

³⁴ *The London Gazette* 24 May 1966

³⁵ *The Kukri* No 18 July 1966 p. 1

³⁶ Battalion newsletter 2/2 GR dated 30 September 1965. Bullock papers.

³⁷ Letter Smith to Bullock dated 27 June 1966 in response to a congratulatory letter from Bullock on his MC says 'I have honestly never felt prouder serving with any other soldiers outside my own Regiment.' Bullock papers.

³⁸ *The London Gazette* 20 May 1966

³⁹ Bullock interview *Op cit*

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

place when the maximum numbers of enemy soldiers were present; every weapon available was then employed from rocket launchers to machine-guns. The only operation Bullock recalled⁴¹ as being ‘iffy’ was conducted using a medium machine-gun of 1940s vintage but with long-range and effective firepower. A village was judged to be empty of civilians and only enemy soldiers were in place. The village was machine-gunned for ten minutes before British troops entered the village.

The Durham Light Infantry (DLI) deployed from Hong Kong to Borneo in October 1965. The only public record lies in an undated article entitled ‘North Country Notes’, which noted that the DLI would undertake jungle training before deploying to Borneo⁴². An article from Kuching (Sarawak) from Easter 1966⁴³ reported an incursion by Indonesian soldiers into Sarawak at Balai Ringin, but made no comments on cross-border British operations.

An undated cartoon by Jak, presumably from a UK newspaper, depicted a Guards NCO in dress uniform with bearskin, talking to troops coming out of the jungle with shredded clothes and long beards looking very bedraggled saying: ‘Come on, come on, confrontation’s over – you’re back in the Army now!’⁴⁴. The DLI returned to Colchester in 1966; an article, presumably from a local Durham newspaper⁴⁵, had one mention of Borneo (and that referred to a comment from one soldier who said that his barracks were

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² D/DLI/2/1/287(256) in Durham Record Office.

⁴³ D/DLI/2/1/287(358) in Durham Record Office.

⁴⁴ Cartoon by Jak entitled ‘The Borneo Swamp Rat’, undated but estimated 1965, D/DLI/2/1/287(376) in Durham Record Office.

⁴⁵ D/DLI/2/1/287(388) in Durham Record Office.

better than conditions in Borneo) in its 2/3 page coverage of their return. In short, there is no recognition of the nature of the Borneo conflict.

Internally, the Standard Operating Procedures for 1st Battalion DLI⁴⁶, made no reference to ‘Claret’ operations or cross-border operations, but simply to ‘seek out and destroy terrorists or criminals who attempt to operate from, or take refuge in, the jungle’ and to ‘patrol the frontier and large tracts of sparsely-occupied country⁴⁷.’ In echoes of more recent conflicts, much of the internal correspondence was to do with shortcomings in equipment (e.g. webbing, boots, and mortar aids)⁴⁸. The DLI Regimental Journal for June 1966 talked about the deployment to Borneo and the takeover from 3rd Green Jackets, but made no reference to ‘Claret’ operations and just talked of border patrols⁴⁹. The same edition noted the loss of Private Griffiths (see below) but only talked of an engagement with Indonesian troops, making no mention of the location⁵⁰. The following edition in October 1966, following the Battalion’s return to Colchester, again made no mention of cross-border activity, concentrating on the handover to 1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Regiment instead⁵¹.

⁴⁶ D/DLI/2/1/146 in Durham Record Office. SOP for 1st Bn DLI dated 18 October 1965. The Jungle Warfare School instructions do not mention the cross border operations in Borneo, but do contain a rather confused definition of both guerrilla and insurgent, the main difference appearing to lie in their arrangements for pay and daily work. D/DLI/2/1/154 pp1-2. Durham Record Office.

⁴⁷ *Ibid* p. 10

⁴⁸ 191/Q dated 31 December 1965 3rd Green Jackets to HQ West Brigade. D/DLI/2/1/146(152) in Durham Record Office.

⁴⁹ DLI Regimental Journal June 1966 pp. 122-3. D/DLI/2/1/178 Durham Record Office

⁵⁰ *Ibid* p125

⁵¹ DLI Regimental Journal October 1966 pp. 10-11. D/DLI/2/1/179 Durham Record Office

Operation BLAYDON RACES was a 'Claret' operation against an Indonesian base at Lubok Sabok. The Operation Order⁵² (reconstructed in 1981 and therefore liable to minor error) demonstrates that the base was within range of the 105mm gun detachment at Bunan Gega (also known as Gunan Gajak), thus meeting one of Bullock's criteria for a 'Claret' operation. The Order shows the approach to have been through steep secondary jungle, and to have been carefully reconnoitred previously. The plan called for a track ambush and the destruction of bashas⁵³. The subsequent patrol report⁵⁴ showed that three bashas were burnt using lavatory paper and matches due to damp phosphorous grenade fuses, and a few civilians walked through the ambush position and were given tea and chocolate whilst held. Simulated firefights failed to initiate enemy activity at first, but after four hours, Indonesians set off claymore mines and were engaged. The final count showed eleven Indonesians killed and one British soldier killed⁵⁵. The Operation led to a Military Cross for the Company Commander Major J A G Arnot, and two Mentions-in-Despatches⁵⁶. Again, this 'Claret' operation was not publicised and no mention of the cross-border action was present in the citations. Even in a series of lectures given by Colonel Michael McBain⁵⁷ in the 1990s, much of the detail of the 'Claret' operations was omitted, showing the continued secrecy over these operations⁵⁸. Similarly, an article for the friends of the DLI, the *Durham Bugle*, published in 2002⁵⁹ mentioned the operations

⁵² D/DLI/2/1/160(1) Durham Record Office.

⁵³ Small native huts – probably ought to have been termed longhouses

⁵⁴ D/DLI/2/1/161 Durham Record Office.

⁵⁵ 23972763 Private Thomas Griffiths

⁵⁶ *The London Gazette* 13 December 1966.

⁵⁷ Mike McBain had been Company Commander, C Company 1 DLI in 1965/6.

⁵⁸ D/DLI/2/1/165 Durham Record Office. See numerous inclusions of 'BLANK' in text.

⁵⁹ Colonel R W H Crawford commanded B Company 1 DLI in 1965/6. His article appears in the *Durham Bugle* of Autumn 2002 pp. 8-9

by A and C Companies in passing, yet these were the principal operations of that deployment. Most of the article focused on the Indonesian incursions into Sarawak.

For the Gurkhas, the 1965 operations were viewed as very successful⁶⁰, if not publicised⁶¹. There was no press coverage in *The Times* of the 'Claret' operations in 1965/66 affecting the Gurkhas or the Durham Light Infantry; indeed, the only reference to Borneo in that period was to a Malaysian investigation of British police in Sarawak alleged to have acting as 'big bosses and colonial masters'⁶². Looking at the *Auckland Chronicle*, which covered Durham, there was no mention of the Borneo operation for any of the period the Regiment was deployed in 1966⁶³. Similarly, the *Hampshire Chronicle* as the home newspaper for the Gurkha Regiments made no reference to their activities in Borneo⁶⁴.

What the Borneo case study clearly demonstrates is that great efforts were made to keep the nature of operations secret. This policy was extremely successful, as the lack of

⁶⁰ See signal DOBOS (Director of Borneo Operations) to 2/2 GR dated 210455Z (presumably at the end of their 1965 operational deployment): 'Personal for CO. You have had a long though supremely rewarding haul and the laurels are yours. As you know only too well, the enemy has not mustered the courage to cross the frontier to do battle with you since Jul of last year. Such has been the measure of his respect for you although Nelson's Eye [the name for an OP at GR575932 and a previous Claret operation] and like escapades must also have had something to do with it (Claret operations). Also to your credit is the very high morale of the local people upon whose continuing support so much hangs. Well done Second Second for a job expertly executed. You have earned a respite.' Bullock papers.

⁶¹ See also the Battalion Orders for 21 December 1965 from Lieutenant Colonel D F Neill OBE MC on leaving the Regiment: 'For the second time now you have returned from Borneo with an unsurpassed record. Never in one operational tour has any other Battalion killed over one hundred Indonesian soldiers. No battalion in the whole of the British Army has killed as many enemy in Borneo as you.' Bullock papers.

⁶² *The Times* 29 March 1966 p. 9

⁶³ *Auckland Chronicle* 24 February 1966 to 2 June 1966.

⁶⁴ RTT 7017/241922Z March 1966 COSSEA 23 – referred to in a note from the Chief of the Defence Staff in his note to Secretary of State of 4 May 1966 and the subsequent signal from MOD to the CinC FE (ACM John Grandy) the following day. DEFE 11/623

public reaction shows. Denis Healey, Secretary of State for Defence, was later said to have argued that this operation would have been impossible to run under the media spotlight⁶⁵.

Case Study 2. The Falklands War.

Although the Falklands crisis had been building since the 1960s over sovereignty, the period of this review focuses from the Argentine landings on 2 April 1982 to the surrender of Argentine forces in Port Stanley on 14 June 1982. The reaction to the invasion can be typified by Roy Greenslade's recollection⁶⁶ that he had no idea where the Falklands were, let alone their history, having merely collected their stamps as a boy. He recalls that many seemed bemused at the idea of sailing 8000 miles to retake islands occupied by 1800 people, but that that was held to be a very unpopular idea by many, not least in the *Sun* office where he worked. Badsey characterizes the British response as emotional and patriotic, and largely incomprehensible to intellectuals⁶⁷.

MORI conducted several surveys for various newspapers and TV programmes over the period, but the most consistent set of results⁶⁸ was conducted for the *Economist/Panorama*, drawing on a baseline of 1018 adults aged 18 and over, from 53 sampling points across the UK. The data was then weighted to reflect the make-up of the

⁶⁵ Discussion with Prof Gary Sheffield, University of Birmingham 23 February 2010.

⁶⁶ Greenslade R, *Press Gang* (London: Pan 2004) pp. 441-442.

⁶⁷ Badsey interview *Op cit*.

⁶⁸ http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/trends/falklands_panel.shtml accessed 29 April 2007.

national population. The initial poll was conducted on 14 April 1982 and the subsequent polls all used virtually the same questions, thus allowing a true comparison.

At the political level, there is no doubt that the Conservative Government was unpopular before the Falklands War. This can be demonstrated by the Gallup poll of January 1980 which showed the largest reduction in optimism over the economy (-48%) since 1974⁶⁹ and a series of monthly polls which showed that the public perception was that strikes were the main problem facing the country (53% of people thought this the major problem), which was only superseded by the cost of living as the major issue from June 1979⁷⁰ (45% of people thought this the major problem)⁷¹. This was reflected in the Labour lead in the 14 April poll of 1% over the Conservatives (34 to 33) and 58% being dissatisfied with the way the Government was running the country. Over the seven polls up to 21-23 June 1982, Tory support increased from 33% initially to 51% by the end. This was borne out by success in the May local elections and in by-elections at Beaconsfield and Mitcham and Morden. Despite press and public condemnation of the Labour Party's approach to the conflict, support for the Party remained at 33-34% from 14 April to 16 May, and only reduced to 24-25% from the end of May into June, once the landings at San Carlos were completed and the victories towards Stanley were achieved. Much of the criticism was levelled at Labour Party leader Michael Foot personally, though he was to sack three Labour rebels, Tam Dalyell⁷², Andrew Faulds and John Tilley from their positions as Opposition spokesmen because of their action in voting

⁶⁹ *British Political Opinion Op cit* p. 314.

⁷⁰ *Ibid* p. 267

⁷¹ Noting that the Conservatives came to power on 4 May 1979.

⁷² Commissioned in the Scots Greys – the regiment his nine times great grandfather had raised in 1679 in Scotland – see Hickman *Op cit* p. 55

against the Government on 20 May⁷³. Tony Benn's opposition too, was seen as a major negative influence on the by-elections⁷⁴; Dr Owen attacked Benn as an 'inconsistent purveyor of platitudes', recalling his lack of objection when in the Cabinet in 1977 to send a submarine and frigates to the Islands when previously threatened by Argentina⁷⁵.

Michael Foot deserves an especial mention for his unique position in British politics. In the generally sympathetic biography by Kenneth Morgan⁷⁶, a left-wing Labour Party peer and academic, Foot's upbringing as a Liberal, with a very political family is described. Probably best noted in his early days as a member of the 'awkward squad' for his adopted Labour Party, his followership of Bevan (up to his speech of 1957 on nuclear weapons), his career as a journalist and editor of the *London Standard* and then *Tribune*, his adoption as a Trades Unionist supporter, and his founding membership of CND from 1958 marked his stance on issues from the closed shop to unilateralism. Given that background it was slightly unusual⁷⁷ for him to be brought into the Wilson Government as Secretary of State for Employment in 1974, and latterly as Deputy Leader to Callaghan, though even then, he was known to the press as 'Worzel Gummidge' for his dress sense⁷⁸. Foot was an unlikely choice to become Labour leader in 1980, but was elected in the face of a perception that Healey was too far to the right of the party and would lead to disunity⁷⁹. At 67, he was inexperienced at ministerial level, yet recognised

⁷³ *Daily Telegraph* 22 May 1982 p. 7

⁷⁴ Where the Labour candidate standing in his first election was one Tony Blair.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

⁷⁶ Morgan K O, *Michael Foot: A Life* (London: Harper Perennial 2007, this edn 2008)

⁷⁷ He was brought in to engage with the left-wing of the party.

⁷⁸ *Ibid* p284. Exacerbated by his accident in 1963 which left him with a limp for which he used a stick

⁷⁹ Arguably, his lack of clarity over the Party position on nuclear weapons (unilateral disarmament on taking power or to hold to seek compensating reductions from the Russians) caused just that disunity in the

as one of parliament's best orators. His support for the Falklands campaign seems to have stemmed from his background as a strong supporter of the navy as MP for Plymouth-Devonport⁸⁰. Equally, his subsequent derision from the media over his donkey-jacket at Remembrance Day in London should have held no surprises; the later picture of him on a hillside painted by Graham Jones in 1998 wearing said jacket testament to his sense of humour⁸¹.

Voting patterns do not seem to have mattered in support for the Government's handling of the crisis, which started at 60% on 14 April 1982 and increased steadily to 84% by 21-23 June. Anthony Barnett, in his book on the war which was an attempt to argue that the British opposition to the war had been ignored and that policy alternatives to military action had not been pursued, claimed that

twenty percent of the population expressed opposition to the war... Even after a brilliantly executed and cleverly publicized military victory⁸².

The footnote refers to the *Economist* of 22 June 1982

which reported that 22% of its poll sample was against the victorious war "given the cost in lives and money"⁸³.

1983 General Election. See Philo G, *Seeing is Believing: The Influence of Television* (London: Routledge 1990) p198

⁸⁰ Foot would have been present at the notorious Oxford debate of February 1933 "That this House would not fight for King and Country". *Ibid* p31

⁸¹ *Ibid* facing p 427

⁸² Barnett, A, *Iron Britannia*, (London: Allison and Busby 1982) p. 88.

⁸³ *Ibid* p. 158

This is impossible to reconcile with the poll for that date conducted by MORI for the *Economist* which clearly shows a figure for those dissatisfied with the Government's handling of 13%. The satisfaction rate of 84% is the highest for the campaign and the highest for any of the campaigns considered here. The actual question to which Barnett refers was '250 British servicemen have lost their lives recapturing the Falklands, and the operation is estimated to have cost £1Bn. Given the cost in lives and money, do you think Britain should have sent the task force or not?'. To say, as Barnett does, that this meant that 20% of Britons opposed the war stretches the point. Certainly, it was not supported by the poll undertaken by MORI for BBC1 which showed that only 14% of people believed the decision to invade was wrong⁸⁴. Perhaps in consequence, Barnett's book is largely overlooked in more recent texts on the conflict, although he was quoted in Freedman's official history of the Falklands Campaign⁸⁵.

The percentage of people in favour of military action, despite American pressure over the first three weeks of the campaign, never dropped below 66%. From 67%-89% were in favour of landing troops on the islands. That this was in the same poll as Barnett's claim that 20% opposed the war is inconsistent. And from an initial 52% to a final 79% were in favour of sinking Argentine shipping⁸⁶. By comparison, Gallup's polls (which unfortunately are not broken down by age or socio-economic group) showed an initial figure of 61% in favour of sinking Argentine shipping at the start of the conflict⁸⁷. But

⁸⁴ *Daily Mail* 25 May 1982 p. 13

⁸⁵ Barnett says, in the website of the liberal organisation he founded, Open Democracy, that Freeman 'salutes' his book, but this is perhaps extravagant. http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict-falklands-malvinas/churchillism_4487.jsp accessed 18 May 2009

⁸⁶ Also quoted in *The Times* 28 May 1982 p. 2

⁸⁷ King A ed, *British Political Opinion 1937-2000 The Gallup Polls* (London: Politico's Publishing, 2001) p. 334

people did show an aversion to widening the campaign to the Argentine mainland, thus showing a moral measure around proportionality: over 57% consistently opposed bombing the mainland; 93% opposed using nuclear weapons against Argentina. At the wider level of society, measures of casualty-aversion gave clues to people's attitudes. From an initial 49% opposed to the loss of British Servicemen's lives, the number steadily reduced to 34% by 25 May⁸⁸. The *Sunday Times* conducted a poll on 2 May which said that 60% would not be prepared to lose one Serviceman's life⁸⁹. The same poll, conducted by MORI, showed that only one in seven would be prepared to lose over 100 Servicemen's lives.

Polls overall demonstrated a much-increased support for the Government⁹⁰, and in particular Mrs Thatcher's leadership⁹¹, with increasing support for military action over time, with only slight wavering when maritime losses were high in the early stages. As the landings proved successful, confidence seems to have increased with a recognition that losses were not just inevitable but justifiable to secure the objective.

The initial political news coverage supported the poll data. Usefully, broadsheets of the day contained a greater verbatim coverage of the Parliamentary debates, which is therefore easier to track and more likely that more of the population will have seen. The

⁸⁸ *The Times* 28 May 1982 p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Sunday Times* 2 May 1982 p. 1.

⁹⁰ Badsey suggests that, as a general rule, public opinion polls will show a jump once a decision to deploy is taken, which is usually after some period of debate. Badsey interview *Op cit*.

⁹¹ Hennessy relates an apocryphal tale that HM The Queen, on hearing the War Cabinet was about to decide to deploy forces, asked for the Prime Minister's views, to be told that the Prime Minister was about to go into a meeting, whereupon the Queen quite deliberately used the word 'now', such that Mrs Thatcher had to go and brief the Queen. Whether true or not, this story does highlight the different relationship between the Armed Forces and the Queen as Commander in Chief rather than the Prime Minister. Hennessy interview *Op cit*.

Daily Telegraph of 3 April 1982 captured the political mood in its headline of ‘Fury in House over Falklands Humiliation’. The editorial said:

By landing troops on the Falkland Islands, Argentina has committed an act of war against British territory...But diplomatic efforts should be backed up by immediate military preparations by Britain to prepare for action to remove the invaders by force if all other measures fail...The difficulties of mounting military action to evict the Argentineans would be formidable, but not insuperable...⁹²

The immediate shock of invasion was replaced by a desire in Parliament to see who was to blame and to remove Ministers; in the event *The Times* of 6 April made much of the honour of Lord Carrington in resigning⁹³. At this early stage, public support for the deployment of the task force seems to have surprised the Royal Navy as:

Half the crew of 1000 lined the flight deck of the anti-submarine carrier on a sunny, spring day to acknowledge the noisy farewell from ships and well-wishers, crowded onto docks, jetties, beaches, ports and even rooftops to wave their Union Jacks and cheer⁹⁴.

Yet amidst the evident public show of support, the letters page showed that of the total of sixteen letters to *The Times* (which can broadly be used to represent the Establishment view in a newspaper of record), seven related to the Falklands and three of those opposed the war⁹⁵.

Analysing the letters columns as the campaign develops demonstrates a number of points on the type of people writing letters, the themes for their letters, and the editorial policy

⁹² *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1982 p. 1.

⁹³ *The Times*, 6 April 1982 p. 13.

⁹⁴ *Ibid* p. 1

⁹⁵ *Ibid* p. 13.

of newspapers on letters received. *The Times* of 7 April⁹⁶ had an editorial which considered the long term future of the Falklands, yet the six letters on the campaign covered issues from naval force cuts, to parallels with Cyprus, to an ironical view of the Argentine national anthem. The authors were drawn often from academia or retired officers e.g. General Sir Robert Ford's letter that day on government failings. In the same newspaper on 27 April⁹⁷ only three of the sixteen letters referred to the Falklands. The other theme that started to emerge, particularly from legal authors, was a need for a legal judgment on sovereignty. Again, *The Times* of 29 April had sixteen letters, seven of which related to the campaign. One related to the laws of war, one to the need for a legal judgment, one to previous negotiations on sovereignty, one on 'jingoism' (a recurrent theme), one to the need for mediation, one on naval cuts and one on historic claims to the islands. Again, using *The Times* of 4 May, five of the fourteen letters that day were based on the Falklands campaign; one on the role of the International Court at the Hague from a QC; one on democracy in South America; Dr Paton from Hertford College wrote on truth in war; one asked how many islanders were required to justify the conflict; and one from the Director of The Coalition for Peace through Security argued for strong defences. What seems clear is that the volume of letters relative to other issues did not seem to be in proportion to the coverage of the topic in the rest of the news; this indicates a considerable degree of editorial control of the letters published. Indeed, this was exposed in the editorial note in the letters section of the *Guardian* on 8 May 1982, which said

⁹⁶ *The Times* 7 April 1982 p. 11

⁹⁷ *The Times* 27 April 1982 p. 13

We try, in our selection of letters, broadly to reflect the weight of opinion in our post bag. On the subject of the Falklands crisis, we have received only a handful of letters supporting military action, and many hundreds opposing it – Ed⁹⁸.

The *Guardian* represents a useful counterpoint to other broadsheets, being broadly left of centre in political line, but having an influential readership drawn from, *inter alia*, academia and education. Its natural tendency was to oppose conflict, but here it had to tread a careful line not to antagonize readers by opposing British troops and being seen to be unpatriotic. A similar note appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* (a right-wing broadsheet) of 21 May 1982, saying that they received many hundreds of letters but couldn't print them all⁹⁹. This then raises questions when later in the conflict, there were days with no letters in some broadsheets relating to the campaign – had people's opinions changed, or was it deemed inappropriate to publish them? It seems unlikely we will ever know for sure. The authors of the letters were regularly drawn from Parliament, academia or professional institutions (e.g. lawyers), and thus the broadsheet letters columns were demonstrably a reflection of the 'elite' level and can be analysed as such. And the tenor and subjects of the letters were not consistent with either the editorial lines or the public poll data, implying that the elite level (to the extent one can take a small sample of letters pages) had a differing view of the conflict.

The *Guardian* showed itself to have a different approach to the conflict through its editorials to *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. An example was the editorial of 27 April¹⁰⁰ which said:

⁹⁸ *Guardian* 8 May 1982 p. 8

⁹⁹ *Daily Telegraph* 21 May 1982 p. 22

¹⁰⁰ *Guardian* 27 April p. 12

Mrs Thatcher may, briefly, have rejoiced in the evening of South Georgia conquest: but Westminster declined to rejoice as openly yesterday afternoon. Polite and warm tributes to professional soldiering were dutifully offered.

This more cautious line, with a less positive view of the military, continued throughout the *Guardian's* coverage of the campaign. Indeed, the newspapers lined up essentially as the pro-lobby of the *Sun*¹⁰¹, the *Star*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph*, with a combined circulation of around 11 million; whereas the more cautious group of the *Mirror*, *Guardian*, *The Times* and *Financial Times* had a combined circulation of 4 ½ million - hence despite the greater national reliance on television coverage, the pro-lobby had the majority of the newspaper circulation in any event.

The *Guardian* was clearly stung by some of the criticism of its coverage; the proof lies in the editorial of 13 May:

“standing up for our task force, our boys, our people, and the cause of democracy”. The boys Mrs Thatcher habitually refers to with fierce, almost maternal affection are of course the British men and women with the task force. And her phrase, by some curious process beyond strict logic, has come to be taken as one litmus test of patriotism....Barely a British word in print or over the airways through the last forty days has questioned that situation or seemed less than supportive....Every section of the Parliamentary spectrum has hoped – and continues to hope – that the troops in the South Atlantic fulfil their instructions (whatever they be) with professional brilliance, success and the minimum of casualties. They are not under scrutiny or question. They rightly receive every backing....¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, the *Sun's* editorial staff saw the conflict as a real opportunity to attack the *Daily Mirror* as its main competitor on grounds of patriotism, and hence appeal to the public to achieve greater sales. *Greenslade Press Gang Op cit* p. 442

¹⁰² *Guardian* 13 May 1982

This shows how the press divorced politics from military endeavour, remaining questioning, if not critical, of the political masters, but being seen never to criticize the military, especially in battle. This presumably reflected a concern that the readership would leave¹⁰³ if they did not feel the newspaper supported national troops who might have died on operations and a general desire to support the national position (i.e. be patriotic) during conflict (whilst challenging the political level in the event of perceived splits in elite and political views).

The *Sunday Times* reflected its daily partner in a very cautious approach. The editorial of 9 May 1982 was particularly strong:

the task of recapturing the islands is too difficult and likely to be too costly in human life. Last week's casualties on both sides have come as a rude awakening to the reality of war. We should therefore desist from further active operations, other than those of maintaining the extended blockade, and wait for the impact of international sanctions against Argentina to make itself felt¹⁰⁴.

And of the four letters in that edition, only two related to the campaign, one pro from an ex-RAF officer, the other bemoaning jingoism. But later, the comments seemed to show a greater support for the military, whatever the view of the politicians:

For the moment, and whatever the apprehensions about the future, what matters over the Falklands is that British forces are fully committed and must be supported¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰³ See Chapter 7

¹⁰⁴ *Sunday Times* 9 May 1982 p14

¹⁰⁵ *Sunday Times* 23 May 1982 p. 14

The paper also recognizes the personal and unusual bond between a strong Prime Minister and the military:

No British Prime Minister now living could have taken on the role [of war leader] with half the aplomb that she [Mrs Thatcher] has shown....The military like her and respect her. She has the military virtue of clarity¹⁰⁶.

Reinforcing both the point of splitting support for the military from considering the political position, and the change in attitudes once the landings had taken place, can be seen from the considered editorial of the *Daily Telegraph* of 22 May 1982:

They [our troops] have the complete confidence of the nation, eight thousand miles away. That and our prayers.....Every Briton will now hope that the action is swiftly consolidated and casualties as light as may be. If such is the outcome, criticism will wither away....the argument about how to resolve the Falklands conflict has reflected a very deep ideological division in our culture. Ironically, the spokesmen for appeasement (and they travel by many names and speak from many pulpits) have also been constrained by virtue of their intellectual ancestry to rage against Argentine oppression and colonialism. But this is a hollow anger. The logic of their argument may be that the cost of individual human life must be considered too great for us ever to defend ourselves against aggressors... The British landings on the Falklands, however, have shown what the past few weeks did not always make clear, namely that a British Government is, after all, prepared to bear all the costs of defending its people....This operation represents in a reassuring way the victory of nationhood¹⁰⁷.

The choice of the word ‘pulpits’ may be significant in considering the mixed messages emerging from the Churches. Appeasement is a theme harking back to national guilt over Chamberlain’s Munich agreement of 1938, and was commonly used by the press whenever there was a feeling that the government might not have been standing up to perceived aggression – not just here but also in the first Gulf War. And the underlying

¹⁰⁶ Young, H, *Inside Politics* in the *Sunday Times* 23 May 1982 p. 14

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Telegraph* 22 May 1982 p. 14

message, that the loss of British servicemen is acceptable, seemed to coincide with the opinion poll evidence of a greater public acceptance of losses, particularly once the landings were proving successful.

Worthy of note was the editorial of the *Economist*, partly because it covered the militarily critical week of 1-7 May, and partly because it employed the MORI opinion poll data referred to earlier. Under a headline of ‘Voting for a spectator’s war’ the editorial said

Support for Mrs Thatcher’s handling of the aggression increased steadily after the invasion by Argentina on April 2nd to reach 76% this week. British public opinion, in other words, appears to be taking the government’s leadership on trust and doing what most responsible politicians have asked of it: rally to the flag. Last weekend when our sample was last questioned, with nothing but British success to report and no serious casualties, voters found the Falklands crisis politically absorbing, militarily exhilarating and a welcome outlet from chauvinist self righteousness. There is little trace of populist warmongering. On whether it is really worth going to war to regain the Falklands if substantial loss of life is involved, the response is evenly divided. A rising proportion accepts that there may have to be a loss of British service lives, but even that figure is only 58%, and no more than that would agree to sinking Argentine ships. This appears to reflect a nation eager - as many of Britain’s allies are – for a ‘spectator’s war’, in which clear principles must be upheld, but not if it means anyone getting hurt¹⁰⁸.

This analysis of the raw data from opinion polls which, from the numbers, must have been based on the data from 22-23 April, demonstrates the dangers in using limited information sets at a time of rapid change. Some of the narrative is also hard to reconcile with the opinion poll output, although it is possible that the writer might have had access to unpublished poll data or comments.

¹⁰⁸ *Economist* 1-7 May 1982 p14

The tabloids showed a greater focus on individuals, such as the *Sun*'s headline of 'My Son',¹⁰⁹ on 6 May, referring to the loss of Lieutenant Nick Taylor in a Sea Harrier, and on 31 May, the *Daily Express*'s headline of 'H My Hero',¹¹⁰, referring to the death of Lieutenant Colonel 'H' Jones, commanding 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment. The latter captured much of the coverage of the time, in a way that Sergeant McKay, the other Victoria Cross winner of the campaign, never did. The opinion column of the *Daily Express* said:

We can now celebrate a brilliant exercise of arms and military craft [referring to the battle for Goose Green]...Herbert Jones – H to his men – will be proudly remembered¹¹¹.

The latter gained praise in many papers quoting tributes from Mrs Thatcher, Major Chris Keeble, his second-in-command, and Brigadier Julian Thompson. This raises interesting questions about the particular level of praise for officers rather than men, and the need for heroes and the cult of heroes – but this is more than this piece can consider in depth.

The *Sun* managed to irritate the rest of the press in its strident editorial of 7 May, saying 'There are traitors in our midst', referring to radio and TV commentators, particularly Peter Snow for the *Panorama* programme that week (discussed below) and the *Guardian*, with its 'pigmy circulation and absurd posturing', and the *Daily Mirror*, which:

has pretensions as a mass sale newspaper. What is it but treason for this timorous, whining publication to plead day after day for appeasing the Argentine dictators

¹⁰⁹ *Sun* 6 May 1982

¹¹⁰ *Daily Express*, 31 May 1982

¹¹¹ *Ibid* p. 2

because they do not believe the British people have the stomach for a fight, and are instead prepared to trade peace for honour¹¹².

Harris highlighted that the newspaper used all the tricks first developed by the *Daily Mirror* in the 1950s¹¹³. The *Daily Mirror*'s response under a Comment section headline of 'The Harlot of Fleet St', said that

The *Sun*, a coarse and demented newspaper, yesterday accused the *Daily Mirror*, the *Guardian* and Mr Peter Snow of the BBC of being traitors to Britain¹¹⁴.

and went on to discount the claim. Although this might seem somewhat frivolous and almost amusing rivalry, underpinning it was a real debate about the role of journalism in reporting events, or taking sides in a national conflict. Through this, and other headlines like the notorious "Gotcha" headline after the sinking of the *Belgrano*, the *Sun* got a reputation for jingoism which was debated widely, lost them sales and irritated many Servicemen, some of whom threw copies overboard in disgust¹¹⁵.

The more significant debate was that over the *Panorama* show on BBC that week¹¹⁶, which caused Mrs Thatcher to attack TV reporting as treating the British and

¹¹² *Sun*, 7 May 1982 p. 6

¹¹³ Harris R *Gotcha!* (London: Faber and Faber 1983) p. 40 – going on to note that despite the rhetoric, sales did not increase in what he described as a saturated market.

¹¹⁴ *Daily Mirror* 8 May 1982 p2. Also in Harris *Op cit* pp. 51-2

¹¹⁵ John Shirley, *Sunday Times* reporter on board HMS *Fearless*, cited in Greenslade *Press Gang Op cit* pp. 444-445. Harris also points out that many newspapers were forced to paraphrase the TV reporters with the task force for their news – suggesting that this implies a reduced significance for newspapers over television. *Op cit* p. 55

¹¹⁶ See also the media chapter for a wider discussion on the government's opposition to TV coverage of several incidents in conflicts across the period.

Argentines as equals, almost on a neutral basis which would ‘give offence and cause great emotion among many, many people’¹¹⁷.

This is especially relevant as we know from the opinion poll data that 65% of people felt that television had given them the best coverage of the conflict, whereas only 15% of people favoured newspapers¹¹⁸. The resulting programme brought the resignation of presenter Robert Kee from the programme; his letter to *The Times* of 14 May 1982¹¹⁹ made clear his objections to presenting the minority view against the war, without adequate presentation of the pro-lobby. George Carey’s, *Panorama* editor, response in the same paper said that they had broadcast several parts of a longer interview with Mrs Thatcher from previous programmes and a piece with party chairman Cecil Parkinson who could have provided the balance. Though there was a clear question of the role of the BBC, and particularly given its worldwide broadcasting role, in portraying the British perspective as the national broadcaster¹²⁰ or standing for real objectivity, the question for this study is of the effect on the British people and their perceptions. The BBC had commissioned Audience Selection to conduct a poll prior to the *Panorama* programme, though the research was carried out subsequently. This found that 81% of people thought the BBC had covered the crisis in a ‘responsible manner’ and that it should ‘pursue its traditional policy of reflecting the full range of opinions’¹²¹. That same poll showed that 89% of the public used the BBC in their range of courses on the campaign, and 79%

¹¹⁷ *Sun* 7 May 1982 p. 4 and others

¹¹⁸ http://ipsos-mori.com/polls/trends/falklands_panel.shtml accessed 29 April 2007.

¹¹⁹ *The Times* 14 May 1982 p. 11

¹²⁰ Lord Greenhill’s suggestion (a previous BBC governor) in the same letters page that there should be the occasional reference to ‘our troops’ rather than British troops for example.

¹²¹ Fiddick, P in *The Arts Guardian* 20 May 1982 p12

independent TV¹²². This was supported by a Gallup Poll in the *Daily Telegraph* which found that 59% of the sample believed the criticisms of the BBC were unjust, independent of their own political beliefs¹²³.

Phillip Knightley, author of *The First Casualty*¹²⁴, wrote an article in the *Sunday Times* on that *Panorama* programme, quoting Conservative MP Bernard Braine in a piece on American TV: *Panorama* was the pathway to anarchy¹²⁵. He analysed the main complaints against the programme: the reaction to the occupation was portrayed as hysterical; it was a mistake to send the Task Force; some Service chiefs advised against sending it; the government was spoiling for a fight; many Conservative MPs had private reservations; the military timing was appalling; bombing Port Stanley had cost the support of allies; and Britain was likely to give the Falkland Islands to Argentina in the end anyway. As Carey said above, Knightley pointed to the balance provided by the Parkinson interview, but asked if it was the BBC's role to support the country as being 'British', or to be neutral or challenging? He countered the Government's criticism of not portraying the 'truth' with the fact that governments do lie, using the exaggerated claims of enemy kills during the Battle of Britain as an example.

From the opinion poll evidence, the public perception was that the BBC seemed to have presented a fair case, supporting Knightley's contention. Williams, though, considered

¹²² *The Times* 17 May 1982 p4

¹²³ Fiddick, *Op cit*. Also in the *Sunday Times* 16 May 1982 p. 1. Harris quotes some slightly different figures (*Op cit* p89) but breaks them out by political party to show that the closer to the centre of politics, the more in favour of the BBC.

¹²⁴ Title refers to the old saying that truth is the first casualty of war (attributed to Senator Hiram Johnson, an isolationist senator from California, in 1917, and also to Arthur Ponsonby in *Falsehood in wartime* in 1928). Knightley explores government attempts to manipulate the press to convey particular messages, and the press's willingness to participate on occasion.

¹²⁵ *Sunday Times* 16 May 1982 p. 16

that there is a difference between the people's right to know, and what they want to know in wartime – that the people are prepared not to know if it safeguards their own troops' lives¹²⁶.

A review of the local papers, such as the *Oxford Mail*¹²⁷ and the London *Evening Standard*¹²⁸ shows that although editorials sometimes mentioned the conflict, there were few letters from the public on the topic. One exception was the *Oxford Mail* on 5 May¹²⁹, where four of the fifteen letters concerned the campaign; two were against the campaign, one was for, and the other disassociated the author from a previous letter purporting to represent the National Union of Journalists. More usually, despite a main story on the campaign, neither the editorial nor the letters mentioned the war at all. Most of the letters revolved around local issues, suggesting that although the war predominated at national level, other issues had importance more locally.

A review of the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Bristol Evening Post* for April 1982 shows an initial surge of interest but then rapidly waning. The *Yorkshire Post* provided coverage on the front page, and generally 2 inside pages. One of the early editorials¹³⁰ begged Mrs Thatcher: 'Please Mrs Thatcher, not another Suez' – an interesting observation

¹²⁶ Williams K in *Ethical Issues in Journalism and the Media Op cit* pp. 154-168. Morrison and Tumber's research from 1998 after the Falklands War showed that 75% of those polled were in favour of reporting information, even if unfavourable to British troops, but 49% favoured publishing it after the war, and only 26% during the war. Carruthers *Op cit* p. 154. A similar finding emerged after the Gulf War - Carruthers *Op cit* p. 155

¹²⁷ The newspaper is a useful reference point as its geographical coverage area includes both the University with influential academia, but also the homes of several MPs and industrialists, who form part of the elite level in this debate.

¹²⁸ Not a typical local paper, but covering a substantial proportion of the population based in the capital.

¹²⁹ *Oxford Mail* 5 May 1982 p. 6

¹³⁰ *Yorkshire Post* 5 April 1982 p. 8

demonstrating that the impact of the Suez campaign was still a powerful influence on the public perception twenty-six years later. Letters on the war only started to be published from 8 April, and were initially balanced – one for military action and one against.¹³¹ Only on two further dates (10th and 23rd) in April were four letters published on the war, the remaining days having none or one letter. Most of the early letters deplored the lack of foresight that led to the conflict; later letters were less critical. The editorials revealed interesting perceptions: on 10th April, the editorial¹³² said that ‘Labour must stop playing party politics with the lives of our servicemen and the Falklanders’ – a theme also apparent in the Bristol press. On 12th April, the editorial¹³³ said that

The latest opinion polls notwithstanding, the impression we get [unclear on what basis they made this judgment] is that the people of this country are not nearly as hardline as Parliament is over this affair...they are certainly backing the Armed Forces...but they will react very strongly if there is a real or apparent failure.

Although there was no evidence produced to support this assertion, it did reflect the theme expressed elsewhere in this thesis that the public will generally support their Armed Forces, if not the political leadership. And it reinforced the point made by Johnson and others in Vietnam that what matters to the public is success¹³⁴. Finally, the *Yorkshire Post* coverage reduced markedly from 15 April¹³⁵ (only 13 days after the Argentine invasion). Previous full front page coverage reduced to 1/3 or even 1/4 on 22

¹³¹ *Yorkshire Post* 8 April 1982 p. 12

¹³² *Yorkshire Post* 10 April 1982 p. 8

¹³³ *Yorkshire Post* 12 April 1982 p. 8

¹³⁴ Although it is worth noting that Knightley quotes an unreferenced Gallup poll of 1967 which he asserts said that half the American population at that time had no idea what the war in Vietnam was about. See Knightley P, *The First Casualty* (London: John Hopkins University Press 2002 (original edn 1975) p. 441

¹³⁵ *Yorkshire Post* 15 April 1982

April¹³⁶, and the internal coverage was demoted from pages 6 and 7 in the first half of the month to ½ page 9 on 18th¹³⁷, and small sections on pages 19 and 21 by 30 April¹³⁸. With few letters published, this seemed to show a reducing local interest in the campaign.

The *Bristol Evening Post* is a useful measure of interest, not least because one of the local MPs (Bristol SE) was Tony Benn, one of the most dominant opponents of the war. The paper's coverage of the conflict was much less than the *Yorkshire Post*, with generally just front page coverage and little inside. Only on two days (3 April¹³⁹ and 20 April¹⁴⁰) was the war given 4 or 5 columns on the front page – more usually it received 2 ½ columns. The reduction in coverage after 8 April¹⁴¹ is striking, with local issues predominating. Interestingly, on 6 April¹⁴², the coverage on the front page was given equal billing with an article on soldiers being quizzed over a murder of an 83 year-old lady in Bulford – suggesting that the paper was not swayed by any patriotic fervour that might have put the ladies' murder on the inside pages. The editorials reveal a degree of naivety and a lack of interest in the conflict. On 5 April¹⁴³, the editorial drew parallels with the Channel Islands occupation in the Second World War. Following the recapture of South Georgia, the editorial on 26 April¹⁴⁴ said that 'Britain walks tall in the world today' and that it was 'like 1944 D-Day' – surely a rather odd misuse of history. Ahead

¹³⁶ *Yorkshire Post* 22 April 1982 p. 1

¹³⁷ *Yorkshire Post* 18 April 1982 p. 9

¹³⁸ *Yorkshire Post* 30 April 1982 p. 19 and 21

¹³⁹ *Bristol Evening Post* 3 April 1982 p. 1

¹⁴⁰ *Bristol Evening Post* 20 April 1982 p. 1

¹⁴¹ *Bristol Evening Post* 8 April 1982 p. 1

¹⁴² *Bristol Evening Post* 6 April 1982 p. 1

¹⁴³ *Bristol Evening Post* 5 April 1982 p. 8

¹⁴⁴ *Bristol Evening Post* 26 April 1982 p. 4

of the main assault on the Falklands, the paper¹⁴⁵ hoped: ‘May it be done quickly and cleanly, with no loss of British lives’ - perhaps hoping that Admiral Woodward’s initial assessment of a ‘walkover’ would be right. When it became clear this would not be the case, the paper talked on 29 April¹⁴⁶ of withdrawal of forces and joint administration.

The letters pages were more active than any of the other regional press looked at. The 7 April edition¹⁴⁷ had a special page of Falklands-related letters, ranging from the need for resolute action from Michael Colvin MP (a veteran of Suez), the Labour candidate for Westbury called for a negotiated settlement, fears over Gibraltar being next for invasion, disappointment at the US’ lack of support, disgust at the television coverage of the Argentine motorcycle Grand Prix, and a parallel with the 1914 Falklands battle. More local comment came from a sailor’s mother on 8 April¹⁴⁸, being against Mrs Thatcher, but the recurring themes over subsequent days revolved around an anti-nuclear weapon debate¹⁴⁹ (failure of deterrence and the need for more conventional forces) and an anti-Labour (and particularly anti-Benn¹⁵⁰) thread for their lack of support for the Government and the Armed Forces. But after 13 April, there were never more than two letters per day on the Falklands, and sometimes none. Taken together with the reduction in coverage, this suggests that the public and press interest at local level was short-lived.

¹⁴⁵ *Bristol Evening Post* 27 April 1982 p. 4

¹⁴⁶ *Bristol Evening Post* 29 April 1982 p. 8

¹⁴⁷ *Bristol Evening Post* 7 April 1982 p. 3

¹⁴⁸ *Bristol Evening Post* 8 April 1982 p. 32

¹⁴⁹ See particularly *Bristol Evening Post* 8 April 1982 p. 32, 15 April 1982 p. 30, and 21 April 1982 p. 30

¹⁵⁰ See particularly *Bristol Evening Post* 13 April 1982 p. 20, 23 April 1982 p. 32 and 26 April 1982 p. 20. Also 30 April 1982 p. 32 attacking Michael Foot.

Aside from opinion poll evidence and letters, another piece of evidence of public support for the military came from the donations for the South Atlantic Fund, set up to provide support for the families of those lost in the conflict. The *Guardian* reported ‘sackfuls of mail arrived [at the Ministry of Defence] containing cash, cheques and postal orders from the public, businessmen and industrialist¹⁵¹.’ The fund received donations from such events as a friendly between Plymouth Argyle (reflecting the importance of the Plymouth naval base to the local community) and Everton football teams on 13 August 1982¹⁵². By November 1982, the fund had disbursed £1.9m to families of the bereaved as interim payments, and £400 000 through Service and specialist charities such as St Dunstan’s for those seriously injured¹⁵³. The Fund was to go on to assist those suffering from psychiatric illnesses as a result of the war (twelve cases by July 1984), but this caused some debate in the Royal British Legion as to whether help was going as fast as required¹⁵⁴.

Despite the overarching trend to support for the war, there was evidence of tangible opposition. The *Daily Mail* recorded that:

More than half Britain’s million students would refuse to fight if they were called up because of the Falklands crisis, according to a poll of 363 students in London, Manchester and Belfast¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ *Guardian* 28 May 1982 p. 2

¹⁵² Football programme dated 13 August 1982 from the match played in aid of the South Atlantic Dependants Fund.

¹⁵³ HC Deb 30 November 1982 vol 33 c111W Response by the Prime Minister to a question from Mr Churchill MP.

¹⁵⁴ HL Deb 19 July 1984 vol 454 cc1627-8 Question from Lord Molloy, President of the Royal British Legion, to Lord Trefgarne, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Armed Forces.

¹⁵⁵ *Daily Mail* 13 May 1982 p. 2. A similar fear of conscription being reintroduced in the Gulf War amongst students and parents is mentioned in *The students companion to sociology* by Ballard, C; Gubbay,

There is no evidence from the newspapers of any serious proposal for conscription; indeed, the *Daily Mail* reported that the Royal Navy and Royal Marines received hundreds of volunteers at recruiting offices, some 59 at their Liverpool office in one day, the equivalent for a normal month¹⁵⁶. Even the *Daily Express*, which might have been expected to have favoured conscription, used its leader on 2 April 1982 to say that conscription was a good thing for community care, conservation and domestic peace, but not for military purposes¹⁵⁷. In a London Peace Rally organized by the Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in the Falklands, some 2000 people (according to *The Times*) to 2500 people (according to a later version of the paper) marched and delivered a wreath to the offices of the *Sun* because its' coverage was 'a disgrace to peace hopes'¹⁵⁸. In truth, this was nothing like the scale of marches against the Poll Tax or later the march to oppose the second Gulf War. Similarly, Arthur Scargill's resolution at the Barnsley Labour Party (supported by the National Union of Mineworkers) calling for withdrawal of the task force received scant coverage, and was more noted for the opposition to it by the local Labour MP than anything else.

The only explicit reference to consideration of Just War theory (as discussed in Chapter 3) was on 30 April 1982 in Cardinal Hume's comments on the war:

J; and Middleton, C (Wiley-Blackwell 1997) p. 34 though there is no evidence or footnote to explain this fear, which probably stemmed from parental experience of National Service.

¹⁵⁶ *Daily Mail* 29 April 1982 p2

¹⁵⁷ *Daily Express* 2 April 1982 p2

¹⁵⁸ *The Times* 17 May 1982 p4

Britain is morally justified in using an appropriate degree of force in reasserting its right over the Falkland Islands “as a last resort” Cardinal Hume said.’, which goes on to say he ‘reiterates the traditional Christian principles of the “Just War”¹⁵⁹.

One of the continuing themes in the broadsheets was the internal debate within the Church. Archbishop Runcie and Cardinal Hume were criticized for their lack of clear direction. In one such letter, Bishop Paul Burrough¹⁶⁰ looked at Christians and War, arguing that the statements from previous Lambeth conferences still stood such that war was incompatible with the teachings of Christ¹⁶¹ (which Dr Mike Snape, Birmingham University, felt was representative of the wider views of the Church at that time¹⁶²). In another, the vicar of Emsworth stated that he did not wish to comply with the directive from the Archbishop of Canterbury who commended all to pray for the task force¹⁶³. Ted Harrison¹⁶⁴, from the BBC’s Religious Unit, in *The Times* of 4 May, said that the BBC went ‘to great lengths’ to question the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Hume, but both refused. Archbishop Runcie issued a statement to say that the ‘use of armed force can be justified’ but Harrison said that the ‘Church is undoubtedly divided on this issue’. Bishop John Robinson¹⁶⁵ said that the battle with Argentina was not a Just War, but the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster said it was. The Bishop of London, preaching at the RAF’s church, St Clement Danes, said that ‘British forces were now

¹⁵⁹ *The Times* 30 April 1982 p1

¹⁶⁰ Rt Rev Paul Burrough from Empingham, Oakham, Leicestershire worked in Korea during the war there, and had a diocese in the then Rhodesia. He was a member of the Lambeth Conferences of 1968 and 1978.

¹⁶¹ *The Times* 27 April 1982 p. 13

¹⁶² Email Lamonte/Snape 13 May 2009

¹⁶³ *The Guardian* 6 May 1982 p. 12

¹⁶⁴ Journalist BBC Radio News religious programme, *Sunday*

¹⁶⁵ Bishop Robinson, who died of cancer in 1983, was a liberal theologian, noted for his book *Honest to God* in 1963 which caused a considerable stir for a redefinition of God as Love, rather than a being ‘out there’ as a ‘cosmic supremo’. His life and works were reviewed in books by Eric James (*A life of Bishop John A.T. Robinson: Scholar, pastor, prophet*) and Alastair Kee (*The Roots of Christian Freedom: The Theology of John A.T. Robinson*).

involved in a just cause'. Harrison complained of the silence of the Church leadership¹⁶⁶.

Later, on 7 May, John Reardon of the United Reformed Church in a letter to the *Guardian*, suggested that the media have simply not been reporting the Church's views, despite being told¹⁶⁷. Church opposition continued, contrary to the evidence of public support, as an article from Dr Kenneth G Greer, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council entitled "Church leaders and the Falklands" showed:

On Easter Day, just after the Falklands crisis broke and the task force was being sent on its long and perilous journey, I was invited to comment on the BBC's *Sunday Programme*. I said that the use of military force to settle the Falklands issue would be an anachronistic folly. Nothing that has happened since has caused me to alter that view¹⁶⁸.

Another small example was that of the Rev Merfyn Temple, Methodist minister from Abingdon, who set off from the UK to Chile just eating his own yoghurt and honey, aiming to reach the Falklands to publicise the need for rich nations to stop selling arms to Third World nations – but significantly he said it was the 'apathy of the people of Abingdon'¹⁶⁹ that angered him into starting his fast, suggesting he lacked even the support of his parishioners. Even the post-war Service at St Paul's caused controversy by church opposition to a nationalistic service of celebration¹⁷⁰, against political pressure.

Belgrano

¹⁶⁶ *The Times* 4 May 1982 p. 8

¹⁶⁷ *Guardian* 7 May 1982 p. 14

¹⁶⁸ *The Times* 22 May 1982 p. 11

¹⁶⁹ *Guardian* 26 May 1982 p. 2

¹⁷⁰ Davie *Op cit* p. 87

There were noticeable cross-cutting changes at moments of great drama. The sinking of the *Belgrano* and the closely following loss of HMS *Sheffield* had a profound effect at all levels. *The Times* of 5 May recorded the Parliamentary reaction to the sinking of the *Belgrano*, where Mrs Thatcher said the ‘first duty was to protect and minimize danger to the task force¹⁷¹’.

She was challenged by Michael Foot, Labour Party leader, Tam Dalyell and Jo Grimond on the grounds of whether this was use of minimum force, why couldn’t the ship be crippled rather than sunk, and was the force still under political control. In the House of Lords, the *Daily Telegraph* recorded that Lord Jenkins of Putney accused the Government of ‘committing mass murder on the high seas¹⁷²’ by sinking the *Belgrano* – but this was a lone protest. After Mrs Thatcher, John Nott was challenged further by Dennis Healey, John Gilbert and David Steel on the precise position of the *Belgrano* but refused to give its position. There was no evidence in the newspaper editorials of great concern over the sinking of the *Belgrano*, which caused the first significant casualties of the war, and certainly nothing in the polls or from letters to show great public concern at any level at the time. Mrs Diana Gould, a geography teacher from Cirencester, achieved brief fame when she was given the chance to ask a question on *Nationwide* in 1983, and chose to ask it on the sinking of the *Belgrano*¹⁷³. The normally-poised Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher was evidently ruffled by the strong questioning. Only later polls by Gallup

¹⁷¹ *The Times* 5 May 1982 p. 4

¹⁷² *Daily Telegraph* 5 May 1982 p. 6 – Lord Jenkins of Putney was a former MP, Aldermaston marcher Chairman of CND, Chairman of Victory for Socialism and Trades Unionist – see obituary in the *Observer* 28 January 2004.

¹⁷³ Text of questions to Mrs Thatcher on *Nationwide* in May 1983 taken from <http://www.peacenews.info/issues/2486/2486082.html>. Sequence is also at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3Ja3k3RqJc> accessed 20 May 2009. See Appendix 1.

from September 1984 demonstrate that 91% of those polled had read about the sinking of the *Belgrano* (showing a high degree of public awareness), but only 49% felt the Government had been right to order its sinking¹⁷⁴. What did cause great concern was the news of the loss of HMS *Sheffield*, perhaps best summarized in the editorial of *The Times* of 5 May: the ‘loss of HMS *Sheffield* is a sombre reminder of the price the nation may be expected to pay¹⁷⁵.’

The subsequent day, *The Times*’ editorial said:

The flag-waving and the fanfare are no longer part of the fun... This shock came upon the House of Commons yesterday and the night before as the details of British casualties were announced. It will percolate more widely to the public, though whether the same sense of shock is reflected in voting patterns at today’s local elections will only be evident when the results are declared¹⁷⁶.’

Interestingly, the editorial then went on to question the public’s preparedness for such news, based on their lack of awareness of defence issues:

There is a sense in which the age of deterrence and the abolition of conscription have deprived the British people of the means to understand the facts of their own security¹⁷⁷.

If that were true then, then it would be so much truer by the end of the period.

¹⁷⁴ King A ed, *British Political Opinion 1937-2000 The Gallup Polls* (London: Politico’s Publishing, 2001) p. 336

¹⁷⁵ *The Times* 5 May 1982 p. 11

¹⁷⁶ *The Times* 6 May 1982 p. 13

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*

At the political level, concerns were expressed about how the ship could be lost, the apparent price of previous naval cuts, the use of aluminium in ships and a sense of shock at the losses. At the elite level, most of the concerns seem to have been reflected in the first major British losses and the naval cuts – a theme continuing throughout the conflict. Interestingly, when interviewed later, Field Marshal Lord Bramall said that: ‘We estimated, and not over-estimated, we estimated the number of ships we would lose pretty accurately¹⁷⁸’.

Of the letters to *The Times*, though, only one related to the loss of shipping, in which Professor Bernard Crick¹⁷⁹ from Birkbeck College suggested that the loss of the *Belgrano* and the *Sheffield* suggested that the conflict had now lost all proportionality¹⁸⁰. The tabloids over successive days picked on individual servicemen lost from the ship and their families, whilst the polls show the only dip of the campaign in support for the Conservatives, and Government handling of the campaign, with an increased sense that the Government was too willing to send the task force. The *Daily Mail* took reaction from a North London street market in an article by John Edwards¹⁸¹, where Lorraine Cooksley, a 20 year-old costumier was quoted as saying ‘It’s terrible. I don’t know what to think. I just didn’t think it would come to this. I just wish it would all stop’ and stallholder Mrs Lilian Mears said ‘like everyone else I feel stunned... We fought for freedom in the past and we should go on fighting now.’

¹⁷⁸ Interview Lord Bramall 24 July 2007

¹⁷⁹ Professor (later Sir) Bernard Crick, Department of Politics and Sociology at Birkbeck College, London was a well-known left wing academic and self-proclaimed polemicist. He was the author of *American Science of Politics* (1958), *Defence of Politics* (1962), *Reform of Parliament* (1964) and *George Orwell: A Life* (1980). David Blunkett was one of his students, and later to employ him on a number of reviews.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁸¹ *Daily Mail* 6 May 1982

Edwards toured the market to gauge reactions which ranged from ‘Bomb Buenos Aires’, ‘Kill the bastards’ and ‘It’s dog eat dog now’ to ‘It’s disgusting, why has Britain suddenly decided that these tiny islands are so important that people have got to die for them?’. There is no reason to suggest that these feelings represented more than a tiny sample, but they seem to fit proportionately to the opinion poll data of the day. Linda Lee Potter (a right-wing journalist) similarly went out to gauge opinion and wrote

The talk everywhere was of war. And if the country people, railways porters, taxi drivers, teachers, lorry drivers and students are a reliable sample of the rest of Britain then the talk is of the will and the need to fight.

That said, the proportion¹⁸² of people willing to support sinking Argentinean shipping prior to that point had been 58% at maximum; after the loss of British ships, by 25 May that support had increased to 79%.

After the conflict, the comments of the editorials showed the definite respect for the military, but perhaps with some recognition of the close-run thing¹⁸³ the operation had been:

The Falklands victory is a great relief... The professional and human qualities displayed by the British armed forces are beyond praise and probably without equal¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸² Gallup polls *Op cit*

¹⁸³ Lord Bramall said ‘I always thought we would get away with it provided the carrier wasn’t hit’ and agreed that it was ‘a close run thing’. Bramall interview *Op cit*.

¹⁸⁴ *The Sunday Times* 20 June 1982 p. 16

The Times reflected the outcome of the poll undertaken for the previous day's Sunday paper:

Other findings of the MORI poll, carried out for *The Sunday Times*, illustrate the national mood of both satisfaction and realism in the aftermath of victory¹⁸⁵.

What the Falklands campaign shows is that a place, largely unknown to the general public, can sometimes dominate the public consciousness. Quite against the rational arguments of many at the elite level, the public backed the military effort to retake the Falklands in a very emotional response. For the largely unpopular Government of the day, this success bred great popularity, and made the position of the Labour Party difficult, in balancing anti-war concepts with being in step with the popular mood to free the islands. For the press, the campaign showed a split between the national press and the regionals; the latter losing some interest over the days of the campaign. For the *Guardian*, the problem was balancing its anti-war stance with the desire not to lose readership by not supporting British troops. This fine line could be overstepped, as the *Sun* found when its jingoism was perceived to be excessive for public tastes. Similar problems faced the television broadcasters, when BBC1 was harangued for its *Panorama* programme, in an argument over its independence to portray the news against its Charter responsibility to the State. But despite the parliamentary debate over the programme, poll evidence shows that the public still thought the BBC to be fair and impartial. The campaign also brought to light the divisions and confusion in the Church – finding the right moment to provide moral guidance and leadership and trying to balance strong

¹⁸⁵ *The Times* 21 June 1982 p. 4

views that Christianity is about peace not war, with using Just War theory to try and explain the circumstances under which force could be legitimized.

Case Study 3. The Gulf War – Operation GRANBY

The Gulf War had a gradual build-up from the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on 2 August 1990 as US and coalition forces deployed initially to protect Saudi Arabia from invasion and subsequently built up for the relatively short conflict to retake Kuwait. After the UN trade embargo against Iraq was imposed on 6 August 1990, Saudi Arabia requested US troops to prevent any possible invasion by Iraqi forces (Operation DESERT SHIELD). A naval blockade of Iraq was put in place on 12 August. The UN Security Council approved the use of force to make the trade sanctions work on 25 August 1990. The UK announced its first phase of ground force deployment on 14 September 1990. By 17 October, the UK had 15 000 troops in the region¹⁸⁶. The UN set the deadline for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops by 15 January 1991 on 29 November 1990. In the absence of such a withdrawal, Operation DESERT STORM (US)/GRANBY (UK) commenced on 17 January 1991, at which point Allied forces had grown to 580 000, of which the UK contribution was some 43 000¹⁸⁷. The operation was completed on 28 February 1991. Opinion polls were taken through the period and the most consistent picture is given by Gallup in their polls¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁶ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/861164.stm accessed 1 June 2009.

¹⁸⁷ Crocker III, H. W. *Don't Tread on Me*. (New York: Crown Forum 2006) pp. 386.

¹⁸⁸ King A ed, *British Political Opinion 1937-2000 The Gallup Polls* (London: Politico's Publishing, 2001 p. 345. The opinion poll data is not broken down by class or age groups, which would have allowed further analysis.

The initial deployment of forces to protect Saudi Arabia was supported by 88% of those polled in August 1990¹⁸⁹, with only 9% disapproving. Between 29 August 1990 and 11 December 1990 no less than fourteen polls were conducted, and so a good picture of changing views can be established. When asked whether they preferred the military assault option or a continued blockade, most people surveyed favoured a blockade, but this reduced steadily from 67% at the beginning of August (i.e. just after the invasion of Kuwait) to 55% by mid-December (once the UN had made the ultimatum for withdrawal of Iraqi forces). The reductions in those favouring a blockade did not automatically imply they favoured an assault instead; that option only received 25% to start with, increasing to 31%, but the number of don't knows nearly doubled. But when asked if they were in favour of military action if the blockade failed, two-thirds were in favour initially, but gradually this reduced to 61%. Thus it seems that the population was, by and large, in favour of blockade for as long as possible, but prepared to use force – but not by a great margin¹⁹⁰.

When people were asked what purposes those forces might be used for, roughly equivalent numbers advocated the defence of Saudi Arabia as returning independence to Kuwait. Rather fewer (by 5-7%) were in favour of toppling Saddam's regime and fewer still to protecting Israel. But the highest percentage (69-87%), by consistently one or two percent over other alternatives, was in favour of defending the West's oil supplies, which suggests that, despite political rhetoric, the public had a clear idea of what the forces

¹⁸⁹ All figures here from Gallup polls *Op cit*

¹⁹⁰ Knightley highlights a poll quoted by the *Daily Mirror* (owned by the pro-Israel Robert Maxwell) on 22 October which said that 86% of British people were in favour of a military attack – but no such poll seems to have been conducted. Knightley *Op cit* pp. 489-90

should be doing. When the pollsters went on to ask whether people would be in favour of using force against ships breaking the blockade, bombing military targets, bombing civilian targets, invading Kuwait, using chemical weapons or nuclear weapons the results were quite clear. Up to the December poll, the highest percentage in favour of use of nuclear weapons if Iraq used them first was 26%. In the first week of January (with the UN ultimatum close to expiry) this rose to 36%. With a similar picture for chemical weapons in response to first use, other than for late August at 32% the figure again increased in January (ahead of the start of offensive operations). Use of ground troops was never supported by less than 63%, and never opposed by more than 27%. By January (just ahead of the start of the air war), those in favour had reached 74%, and those against 20%. Bombing of military targets varied from 62% to 76% in favour, whilst bombing of civilian targets only ever reached 11% in favour. The figure for those in favour of military action, even if it involved putting hostages at risk, started at 63%, but steadily reduced to 50% by January. This demonstrates that people were broadly aware of the strategic issues, and placed greater weight on oil than the politicians, who were resolute that this was about the relief of Kuwait, were saying. Military action was accepted, short of chemical or nuclear warfare, even if used by the other side first. But the protection of civilians, as a moral issue, was still important¹⁹¹.

Even in December 1990, with the UN deadline still a month away and forces patrolling heavily, 22% of people still thought a major shooting war in the Middle East unlikely, and only 25% thought it very likely – a major reduction from 39% in August. This suggests that people still had faith in the UN process and Iraq's willingness to accede.

¹⁹¹ Gallup polls *Op cit*

Indeed, even from August, people were expecting a long conflict – 72% expected it to go on for some time, compared with 65% by mid-December. When asked in January if people expected a war to last a few months, 32% agreed, and 30% expected it to last longer than that. Some 65% of people at that moment also said that the war aims should extend to toppling Saddam, as opposed to 26% who just wanted to free Kuwait. All this suggests that people were prepared for a long campaign, and wanted to see Saddam replaced. When asked in January whether they thought this conflict more important than the Falklands, 54% said yes, and 30% said about the same.

Over the period from January to March when the war ended, popular support for the Government's handling increased from 79% being somewhat or very satisfied to 80%, and rarely dipped much below. But the level of those very satisfied was striking, rising from 47 to 55% and probably thus set the way for the Conservatives win at the next election. Between 76-82% felt that the coalition were right to launch an assault on Iraq after the deadline for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces had ended, and never less than 78% were in favour of a ground assault if the air campaign did not achieve the aim by itself. All these indicators show strong support for military action once diplomatic efforts failed. Perhaps the short duration of the ground campaign prevented real analysis of views over that period, but the picture of general support is clear.

Press coverage from soon after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces on 2 August 1990 shows a change in thinking from the Falklands War. Professor Michael Howard¹⁹² was

¹⁹² Sir Michael Howard was Chichele Professor of the History of War and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. He served with the Coldstream Guards in the Second World War, awarded a Military

amongst a number in the 'elite' to advocate maintaining an effective blockade to either force Iraq out of Kuwait, or to allow elements within the Iraqi Government to topple Saddam¹⁹³. The *Daily Telegraph* was equally explicit

It is important for the Government to emphasise that this crisis is no rerun of the Falklands Conflict. It is a global issue, in which Britain's role must be minor; whatever the outcome, that of the United States will be predominant¹⁹⁴.

Politically, there were both shadows of the Falklands, yet differences too. In the Gulf debate in Parliament of 7 September 1990, Mrs Thatcher declined to rule out the use of force, and Mr Kinnock and Mr Heath reinforced the need to act under UN authority¹⁹⁵. The Conservatives broadly supported the need for military options, and to follow the lead of the US. The Labour Party, under Neil Kinnock, faced a number of challenges. Mr Kinnock was known as a strong left-winger as a junior MP, an advocate of unilateral disarmament and a critic of Mrs Thatcher's handling of the Falklands War, and many members of his party were strongly anti-war (and members of CND). But the Labour Party had to be sensitive to public opinion and could ill-afford to criticise the Armed Forces. The Prime Minister was pressed by the same people as nine years earlier: Tam Dalyell and Tony Benn. Benn said

I will use plain language: I fear that the United States has already decided that when it is ready it will create a pretext for war against Iraq... Britain is a minor player in this game: we have had a debate today as if everything hinged on

Cross during the battle of Salerno. He is credited with the creation of the War Studies Department at Kings' College London and wrote extensively on Clausewitz, the Franco-Prussian War and intelligence. See his memoirs *Captain Professor Op cit.*

¹⁹³ *The Times* 6 September 1990, p. 10

¹⁹⁴ *Daily Telegraph* 6 September 1990, p. 18

¹⁹⁵ *Independent* 7 September 1990, p. 4

whether the Prime Minister decided to go to war. The Prime Minister is a minor player in this unfolding tragedy¹⁹⁶.

Despite the differing views of a few senior parliamentarians, the paper described the outcome as more unified in its headline ‘Commons puts the country before party’¹⁹⁷.

The significant difference between this emergency session and the previous one, for the Falklands conflict, was that the latter was held within twenty-four hours of the invasion, whereas this took some five weeks to be held, reflecting perhaps the difference between a war of perceived national sovereignty (Ceadal’s defencist war) and one of strategic interest, but not vital national interest (arguably more in the style of Ceadal’s crusading). This had been an issue for a number of MPs who had expressed a desire for a Parliamentary debate as far back as 13 August¹⁹⁸. On the following day, Tom King, Secretary of State for Defence, thanked the other parties for their support for Britain’s actions (in sending forces to defend Saudi Arabia), but the subsequent vote showed less unanimity: thirty-four Labour MPs and one independent voted against the Government because, as Tony Benn put it, Douglas Hurd (Foreign Secretary) had ‘made it plain that the outcome would be interpreted as a “licence for war”’¹⁹⁹.

Even by 10 January 1991, five days before the end of the UN deadline for withdrawal of Iraqi forces, Shadow Foreign Secretary Gerald Kaufman was still advocating delay:

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid* p. 1

¹⁹⁸ *The Times* letter from Tony Marlow MP (Conservative, Northampton North) 13 August 1990. Also raised by Dr Rhodes Boyson *The Times* 20 August 1990, and Patrick Cormack MP (Staffordshire South) in *The Times* 22 August 1990 p. 9, who demanded the recall of Parliament.

¹⁹⁹ *The Times* 8 September 1990 p. 6

We must not resign ourselves to war, but must work harder than ever for peace on the firm basis of the United Nations resolutions²⁰⁰.

He said that he had previously raised fears that the all-party consensus was under threat, and that the five months and thirteen days since the trade embargo was applied was not long enough. Mr Heath was equally strong, saying 'We have got to be prepared, in order not to have this ghastly war, to let this man save face²⁰¹.'

The record rebellion of 55 Labour MPs on the Gulf debate as recorded on 17 January, with one third of the Labour Party rebelling or abstaining, highlighted the difficulty Labour faced: to both pay heed to local activists whilst reflecting that the electorate in general did not share the pacifist tendencies of many in the Party. Mr Benn's comment in the Gulf debate of 21 January 1991 that 'A substantial minority do not support military action in the Gulf' reflected a poll in *The Sunday Times* which had said that 20% of people opposed the war²⁰². His comments were echoed by John McAllion (Labour MP for Dundee East) who had serious doubts about the legitimacy of military action, whilst accepting that this was a minority view in the House of Commons, but thought this was the majority view in Scotland. Marion Fyfe (Labour MP for Glasgow Maryhill) was equally angry, saying that she'd received one hundred letters, all but two supporting her anti-war stance. Indeed, the Scottish MPs formed a group: Scottish Labour against War in the Gulf, but here, as in Lambeth, where the local Labour authority was rebuked by the

²⁰⁰ *Daily Telegraph* 10 January 1991 p. 1

²⁰¹ *Ibid*

²⁰² *Guardian* 22 January 1991 p. 6

national Party for passing an anti-Gulf War motion which said that ‘patriotic and pro-war hysteria’ in Britain amounted to racism²⁰³, opposition seemed to be small and muted.

Much as the Falklands War had proved a political and electoral success for the Conservatives, there were some commentators suspicious that this might be a motivating factor for the Conservatives in this campaign:

I am not sure how the Conservatives would fare if the war went badly wrong, but it seems pretty clear that if it is fought to a successful conclusion without heavy losses the Government would reap such political benefit as there is²⁰⁴.

One big difference was the personality of the new Prime Minister John Major. Gordon Greig, Political Editor of the *Daily Mail*, joined the Prime Minister on his tour of the troops in the Gulf and assessed him thus:

Mr Major is no orator. He is not particularly inspiring. In any case Maggie was an impossible act to follow. But quietly and fluently, under a relentless Saudi sun, Britain’s new Prime Minister explained why they might have to fight, and die, in a desert war. And, as he would insist, he did it his own way²⁰⁵.

Much thought had been given to his image for the visit, discarding the grey suit for an open-necked tan shirt, and darker tan trousers. Did it work? Two soldiers were interviewed by the *Daily Mail* and said ‘He was alright, but we’d rather have Maggie. I mean, she was a bit of magic. This situation was made for her²⁰⁶.’

²⁰³ *The Times*, 4 February 1991, p. 5

²⁰⁴ Rogaly, J, ‘Politics Today’, *Financial Times*, 25 January 1991

²⁰⁵ *Daily Mail* 6 January 1991 p. 6

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*

That said, the image presented to the public was avowedly *not* Mrs Thatcher, and a much calmer more reflective style that led the *Daily Express* to talk of ‘Tough-talker Major in war alert’²⁰⁷, – describing his trip to the troops.

One article²⁰⁸ noted the differing experience of the War Cabinets of the Falklands²⁰⁹ and the Gulf: in the Falklands War, Whitelaw and Pym had both won Military Crosses in the Second World War, whilst Nott had also served in the Gurkhas²¹⁰. In the Gulf War, Prime Minister John Major had been too young for National Service, whereas Hurd, Wakeham and King had all been National Servicemen, the latter having served in Kenya against the Mau Mau. In later conflicts, virtually none of the Cabinet had had military service, demonstrating the generational shift in experience and therefore in perceptions of the Armed Forces.

The general tenor of the broadsheets thereafter was of a need for something to be done, and that this would imply the threat of, or actual use, of force.

Assuming that a counter-attack on the Iraqi forces that invaded Kuwait is in prospect, sending extra tanks may well be the most valuable contribution we can make...Mention of tanks should remind everyone what a serious business this is. Getting rid of the invaders could prove a bloody business. There is, however, little value in preaching against President Saddam, if we are not also prepared to act²¹¹.

²⁰⁷ *Daily Express* 9 January 1991 p. 4

²⁰⁸ *Daily Telegraph* 17 January 1991 p. 17

²⁰⁹ Lord Bramall recalled that Harold Macmillan had given Margaret Thatcher advice that ‘when you form your war cabinet, don’t have anybody from the Treasury on it’ which she didn’t during the Falklands War. Bramall interview *Op cit.*

²¹⁰ Nott served as a lieutenant in 2nd Gurkha Rifles in Malaya 1952-1956 in extended National Service before attending University. <http://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id=EAD%2FGBR%2F0014%2FNOTT> accessed 1 June 2009

²¹¹ *Independent* 12 September 1990 p. 20

The debate then started on what the war aims should be: whether to limit them to removal of forces from Kuwait, or to broaden them to attacking Iraq itself. Efraim Karsh, of King's College London, was amongst those advocating strikes against strategic Iraqi targets.²¹² The *Daily Telegraph* summed up the more resigned but forceful line of many:

Between now and next Tuesday [deadline for Iraq to withdraw], the world will continue to cherish a slender hope that Saddam will act, even at the eleventh hour, to save his own people from the catastrophe that otherwise threatens them. However, the probability is that it will be necessary for the Americans and allied forces to attack Iraq as soon as proves militarily convenient after the deadline has passed²¹³.

A *Sunday Times* round-up of the newspapers on 13 January 1991, two days ahead of the UN deadline, gives a very consistent view of the press opinion²¹⁴:

The terrible consequences of not going to war now are the strongest reasons for taking up arms after the expiry of the UN deadline on Tuesday. If Saddam is not stopped now, he will have to be stopped in the future and at much greater cost.²¹⁵

The *Observer* shared this view:

‘unless Hussein withdraws from Kuwait the allies have no choice, but to drive him out. This century has already shown that there are times when right demands might, and this is one of them.

²¹² *The Times* 14 September 1990 p. 10. Karsh later said that, in his view, an air war has to hit where it hurts most, and that the targets in Kuwait, including Saddam's army, were not as vital as the strategic targets in Iraq on which Saddam's regime rested. He qualified the more general point by saying that the nature of the targets will vary with the regime's military, social and economic infrastructure. Email Karsh/Lamonte 4 June 2009

²¹³ *Daily Telegraph* 13 September 1990 p. 5

²¹⁴ *The Sunday Times*, 13 January 1991 p. 3

²¹⁵ *Ibid*

Only the *Sunday Mirror* was opposed to the war, much as it was in the Falklands, though the *Mail on Sunday* did say that war would be a ‘catastrophe for the world community’ but that did not mean we should ‘appease our way out of a war’. Of all the broadsheets, the *Guardian* was the most outspoken in challenging the war and seeking time for sanctions to work. One article by John Pilger²¹⁶ in the *Guardian* accused the British press of a patriotic silence that would prevent the public from knowing why they had gone to war. The *Daily Mirror* was more obsessed with internal power struggles with Robert Maxwell wishing to dismiss reporter John Diamond; to beat Rupert Murdoch’s *Sun* (which in part they did through Field Marshal Lord Bramall’s column); and, on the eve of the ground assault, a remarkable attempt by Maxwell to force the editor to promote vitamin pills for children, designed to improve IQ²¹⁷. For those (such as Chomsky) keen to advocate a kind of combined media effect in support of political/establishment objectives, this type of confused reality in at least one newspaper tends to suggest otherwise.

An article by Sebastian Faulks²¹⁸ in the *Independent* highlighted the lack of public debate:

Almost everyone I meet these days says “I don’t think anyone understands how serious this war is going to be”. I deduce from this that in fact pretty well everyone does understand; that we are all aware of the problems of blazing oilfields and of chemical warfare, of the family grief caused by thousands of

²¹⁶ Pilger was famous for his reporting of wars, but he later became a strong anti-war campaigner – see media chapter for the Media Against The War group.

²¹⁷ Greenslade R, *Maxwell’s Fall* (London: Simon & Shuster 1992) p244 and 265

²¹⁸ Although Faulks is known as an author eg *Birdsong*, he was also the first literary editor of the *Independent* and became deputy editor of the *Independent on Sunday* before leaving in 1991 to concentrate on writing.

dead...And if we are all truly aware of these things, then why do we seem to have slipped into this dreadful situation without really having debated it? The mood of the country seems to me very odd, in that there is no profound rational argument against war, only a sort of resignation that it is inevitable. This shoulder shrugging is now - late in the day – being accompanied by some easy noises from Gerald Kaufman and Neil Kinnock²¹⁹.

Perhaps the answer to the former question lies in Phillip Knightley's assertion that 'We are a warrior race. Waging war is as British as roast beef'²²⁰.

A likely explanation for the lack of opposition is that, despite many personal reservations, politicians are reluctant to be seen not to support troops once deployed on operations, maintaining the Clausewitzian paradoxical trinity of nation, army and government²²¹.

In contrast, Peter Jenkins set out the opposing view in his article entitled 'The case for going the "extra mile for peace"²²²', writing that

War in any circumstances has to be a moral question. Down the ages it has centred mostly on degree or in the theological language of the Just War "proportionality". It is a subtle calculus which involves weighing not only good against evil, but one evil against another.'

This is typical of the more reflective style of journalism in the *Independent*, which appeals to the more 'liberal' audience. He raised the question of a parallel with Munich appeasement, but said that could only be a valid comparison if Saddam ended up conquering the whole region. 'The British, tutored by Margaret Thatcher, the mythology

²¹⁹ *Independent* 13 January 1991 p. 18

²²⁰ *Ibid* p. 18. Perhaps supported by the fact that 1968 was the only year since 1945 that a British serviceman has not been lost on active service somewhere around the world

²²¹ Clausewitz, *Op cit*

²²² *Independent* 5 December 1990

of the Falklands War and the folk memories of Munich, have settled in their minds for war as the necessary response to territorial aggression²²³.

Actually, there is little evidence that anyone was concerned with the lessons of 1938; one might have expected to see reference to appeasement in other countries but this does not exist either. However, it would appear that any post-Suez nervousness went after the experience of the Falklands to give a greater confidence in a military expedition. John Keegan²²⁴, Defence Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, also alluded to the opposition view, saying that the 'voice of anti-war party gains strength', referring to Mr Heath 'who demanded that the Gulf crisis be settled by negotiation', and to 'The Arabists [who] find a wider measure of support among those who fear for the future of Christendom's relations with Islam.' He went on to say that 'All these voices are entitled to be heard. That does not mean they have to be heeded²²⁵.'

As with the Falklands, the Church had all shades of opinions and was clearly uncomfortable with the idea of going to war. Initially, little was forthcoming from the Church, prompting the Secretary-General of the General Synod of the CofE, Philip Mawer to write that the

House of Bishops felt that no statement was desirable [but that] they did endorse a call by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for a prayer for peace in the Gulf²²⁶,

²²³ *Ibid*

²²⁴ John Keegan was to receive an OBE for his efforts on the Gulf War – presumably reflecting his positive stance during the campaign for the government's approach.

²²⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 1991, p. 2

²²⁶ *The Times* 10 November 1990, p. 13

which neatly covered over the cracks between the bishops. The same issue of *The Times* included a letter from the President of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, suggesting that colleagues should not look to Aquinas (source of much Just War theory), but to the New Testament and the 1978 Lambeth Resolution (of General Synod) that ‘the use of violence is ultimately contradictory to the Gospel²²⁷.’

The debate over Just War thinking was also raised by Rev Professor Jack Mahoney (King’s College London). He noted the view that Just War theory could be seen as Constantian betrayal (i.e. the Church ‘sold out’ its principles to buy favour with the Christian Emperor Constantine) or was ‘realpolitik’, and in that context, how just would winning be in the Gulf²²⁸? Professor Collinson from Trinity College Cambridge made the only press mention of what the Islamic Just War doctrine might be, but this did not seem to have been picked up elsewhere²²⁹. A rejection of the war was signed by one hundred churchmen on 26 November, though subsequent letters to *The Times* noted its ‘shoddiness’ and ‘lack of rigour’, asking just how one can ever know when the last resort really is, and how one can know what is going to be proportionate in advance – key questions in Just War theory²³⁰. The Pope said that war would be a ‘tragic adventure’²³¹;

²²⁷ *Ibid*

²²⁸ *The Times* 16 November 1990 p. 17

²²⁹ *The Times* 17 November 1990 p. 17

²³⁰ *The Times* 26 December 1990 p. 9, letters from Dominic Flessati and Monsignor Patrick O’Mahoney Chairman, Commission for Justice, Peace and Overseas Development.

²³¹ *The Sunday Times* 13 January 1991 p. 3

whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury²³² said that war with Iraq ‘might be justifiable’²³³.

He went on to say, in an interview on *Newsnight* that

I think that there can be occasions when, for the sake of a greater peace in the future, it may be necessary to have as limited as possible military action²³⁴.

Some two weeks later, the Archbishop spoke of his ‘profound sadness’²³⁵ about the Gulf War, whilst the Archbishop of York, Dr John Hapgood, said that the ‘decision to go to war was right’²³⁶ Dr Billy Graham, the American evangelist, was ‘disturbed’²³⁷ that not all the conditions for a Just War had been fulfilled in the Gulf Conflict – particularly that it had not been the last resort. But this reflects the common difficulty in the Just War tradition of knowing when the last resort really is there, or when other means can still be tried. Dissenting church voices led to the organization of Christian Coalition for Peace in the Gulf, drawn from Pax Christi, Clergy against Nuclear Arms, the Quakers, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation²³⁸. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow, Thomas Winning, said that ‘Given the present circumstances, war would be morally indefensible’²³⁹.

O’Donovan noted that one of the changes in Just War thinking during the 1980s which might have affected US attitudes was the relationship of President Reagan to Catholic

²³² Robert Runcie had been Archbishop of Canterbury since 1979, and so had seen the way the Church’s lack of views in the early stages of the Falklands Campaign, and the post war reconciliation message, had been received. Runcie was succeeded by George Carey in 1991.

²³³ *Ibid*

²³⁴ *Ibid*

²³⁵ *The Times* 28 January 1991 p. 5

²³⁶ *Ibid*

²³⁷ *Ibid*

²³⁸ *The Times*, 4 February 1991, p. 5

²³⁹ Quoted retrospectively in *Daily Telegraph*, 1 March 1991, p. 19

bishops to satisfy his Catholic conscience²⁴⁰, though there is little written evidence of how this affected US/UK relationships in this conflict.

According to an opinion poll conducted by Gallup for the Association for a Free Kuwait as reported in *The Times*, Britain was the country of the five largest European nations most in favour of the use of force: 86% of Britons polled backed the use of force if sanctions failed, compared with 75% in France, 66% in Spain, 63% in Germany and 59% in Italy²⁴¹. The same poll also showed that the British were most inclined to use force to free hostages kept by Saddam: 86% of Britons were in favour, compared with 82% in France, 72% in Italy, 70% in Germany and 63% in Spain. Britons were also the largest group in favour of using force to protect oil supplies (78%). Whilst one must have some suspicions because of who the poll was being conducted for (i.e. Association for a Free Kuwait), it does show some interesting differences in levels of support. One might suggest that the successful outcome of the Falklands War gave the British more confidence in the use of force; Germany and Italy might still have been affected by their Second World War experience, with France perhaps still affected by their emotional experience in Algeria. Nonetheless, the other nations were more in favour of using force in support of the hostages, whereas there was no increase in British support, perhaps reflecting more emotional identification with individuals in the rest of Europe. The

²⁴⁰ Interview Prof Oliver O'Donovan, writer on Just War theory, University of Edinburgh 26 September 2007

²⁴¹ *The Times* 19 October 1990 p. 1

hostage issue became a really difficult one²⁴² in the British press when Tony Benn went to intercede on their behalf:

Mr Benn said he had told President Saddam Hussein that keeping westerners hostage would not protect Iraq from war. He said it served the US and British Governments' purpose for Iraq to hold onto its hostages as they proved a pretext for war²⁴³.

There were relatively few references to public opinion in the press. One can only therefore get occasional snapshots, such as the comments from Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Rogers of the Staffordshire Regiment.

There has been a tremendous response from the people of our area ever since we got ordered to the Gulf; masses of letters wishing us well and piles of parcels at Christmas. The men are very aware of the support back home, and I think it breeds even greater determination not to let anyone down if it comes to battle²⁴⁴.

Similarly,

A deluge of unsolicited mail from former girlfriends, old schoolmates, former servicemen and strangers is helping to pass the hours between sorties and exercise the writing talents of the aircrews at the largest RAF detachment in the Gulf....Many get replies and, according to Wing Commander John Broadbent, none has so much hinted at criticism²⁴⁵.

It is hardly likely that protestors would write to individuals or squadrons deployed; they would be more likely to write to newspapers and the Government. An example would be

²⁴² It was a difficult issue for the press to portray, showing sympathy for the hostages, whilst reflecting the strong hard line from the Government against Saddam Hussein, and little support for Tony Benn.

²⁴³ *Financial Times* 30 November 1990 p4

²⁴⁴ *The Times* 28 January 1991 p. 3

²⁴⁵ *The Times* 4 February 1991, p. 2

the letter from Nicholas Walter (presumably a member of the general public) to *The Times* on 18 January 1991, the day after the fighting started, in which he said:

The only comfort in this terrible situation, when almost the whole national press supports the Gulf War, is that one-third of the population oppose military action and one-eighth oppose any British involvement at all. This is a larger minority than opposed any previous war of this kind and it includes many of your readers. You owe it to them, and to yourself, to give better attention to their arguments and fuller coverage of their activities²⁴⁶.

Equally, a MORI poll on 28 January 1991 showed defence to be the biggest issue for the public at 54% - the first time since MORI started polling that any single issue other than unemployment had broken 50%.

Opposition to the build-up of forces was not confined to the politicians; a man set himself on fire at the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph in London in protest at the conflict²⁴⁷. The Committee to Stop the War in the Gulf marched from the Embankment to Hyde Park on 20 January 1991, estimating their numbers at 10 000, although police estimates were closer to 5000. *The Times* reported that this was a lower figure than the previous weekend's march; similar marches in Glasgow drew 2000 on 20 January compared with 6000 the previous weekend. Both figures are extremely low compared with the marches on, for example, the Poll Tax or even the CND marches of the early 1960s or 1980s, suggesting this was a fairly marginal activity and decreased in importance once the UN deadline had been reached.

²⁴⁶ *The Times* 18 January 1991, p. 15 letter from Nicholas Walter.

²⁴⁷ *The Times* 12 November 1990 p. 24

The letters pages were most notable for their absence of Gulf War-related correspondence. Again, caution has to be used with this as it is a function of editorial choice, but nevertheless, there does not seem to have been a particular strong view in any direction, except on particular issues. In the lead up to the conflict, on 25 September only three letters in *The Times* referred to the Gulf, one on UK control over its own forces (as opposed to release to US leadership), one on the press linkage between 7 Armoured Brigade in 1990/1 and the Desert Rats of 1943, and one on the likely morale of Iraqi troops²⁴⁸. This was the general sort of correspondence leading up to Christmas 1990, with the exception of a debate in church circles, such as that from Brian Wicker in the *Independent* highlighting the signature of an anti-war statement by over one hundred theologians²⁴⁹. By 23 December 1990, of seventeen letters to the *Sunday Times*, none referred to the conflict. As the UN deadline for Iraqi withdrawal approached, one or two letters stated that war should be the last resort, but these were few and far between. After the deadline passed on 15 January 1991, more letters appeared: in the *Daily Telegraph* on 17 January, all the letters were on the conflict – one on the need to protect antiquities in Iraq, two on the links to Eighth Army in the Second World War, two on US forces, one on the need for low flying, one on the speech by the Archbishop of Canterbury that the author described as ‘depressing’ and one on troops doing crosswords²⁵⁰. None of these suggested deep engagement by the British public in the campaign. Only a few letters opposed the war: two in *The Times* on 19 January consider the US’ imperialist aims and the longer term aims for the war, whilst another sought legal views on what constitutes

²⁴⁸ *The Times* 25 September 1990 p. 11

²⁴⁹ *Independent* 29 November 1990

²⁵⁰ *Daily Telegraph*, 17 January 1991, p. 16

proportionality in war in the Just War tradition²⁵¹. Two letters in the following day's *Independent* opposed the bombing campaign as 'bullying'²⁵². Indeed, the *Independent* seemed the home of much intellectual debate on the Gulf (whereas *The Times* broadly reflected the Establishment view, and the *Guardian* provided an opposing view to conflict), the 24 January issue containing letters from Trinity Cambridge opposing the war, Clare College Cambridge on the role of the Italians and one from a Government Minister on the effect (or lack of them) of sanctions²⁵³. Press coverage seems to have caused considerable comment on 25 January 1991, with four letters to the *Daily Telegraph* critical of the BBC and CNN. But by 4 February, across the range of broadsheets, only three in the *Daily Telegraph* concerned the Gulf, and even then, one related to the Second World War, one to a biblical plague of locusts, and one on the role of women in the operation²⁵⁴. Thereafter, few if any letters concerned the Gulf war. In sum, with minor debates over church views, and some disquiet in academic circles, there was very little debate in the letters columns, presumably reflecting less public concern or interest.

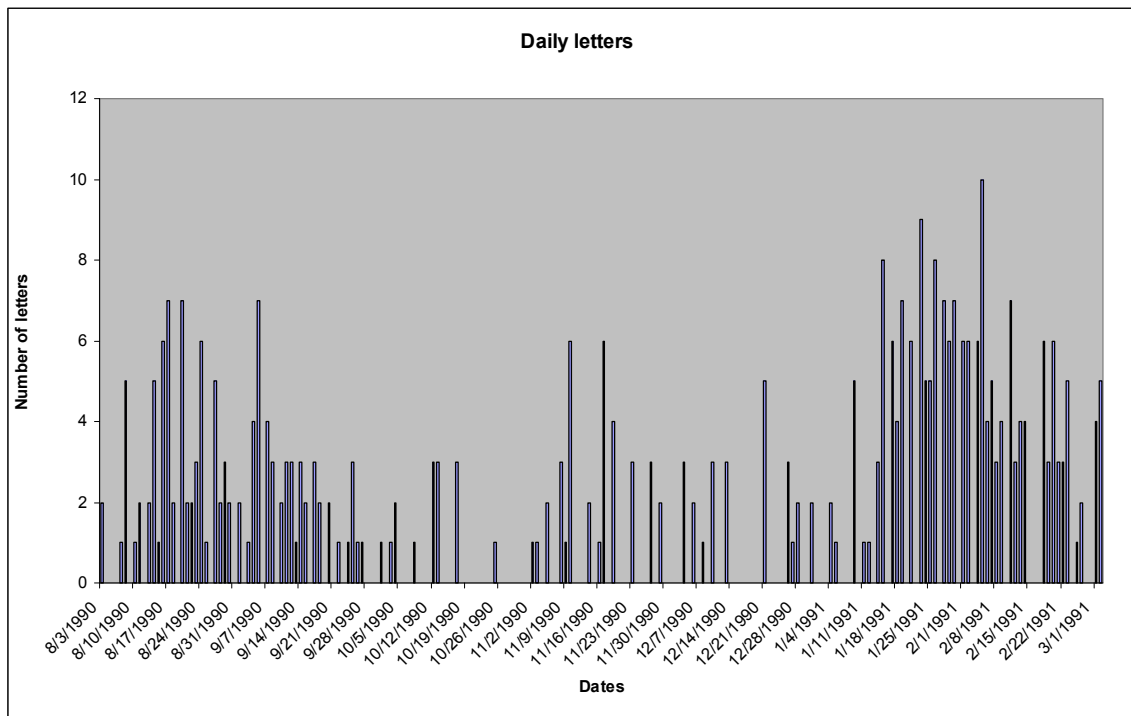
A systematic review of the letters page of *The Times* from 3 August 1990 (the day after the invasion of Kuwait) up until 2 March 1991 (ceasefire was declared on 28 February) shows interesting trends. The 384 letters looked at over the period were sent in the pattern below:

²⁵¹ *The Times* 19 January 1991 p. 9

²⁵² *Independent* 20 January 1991 p. 18

²⁵³ *Independent* 24 January 1991 p. 26

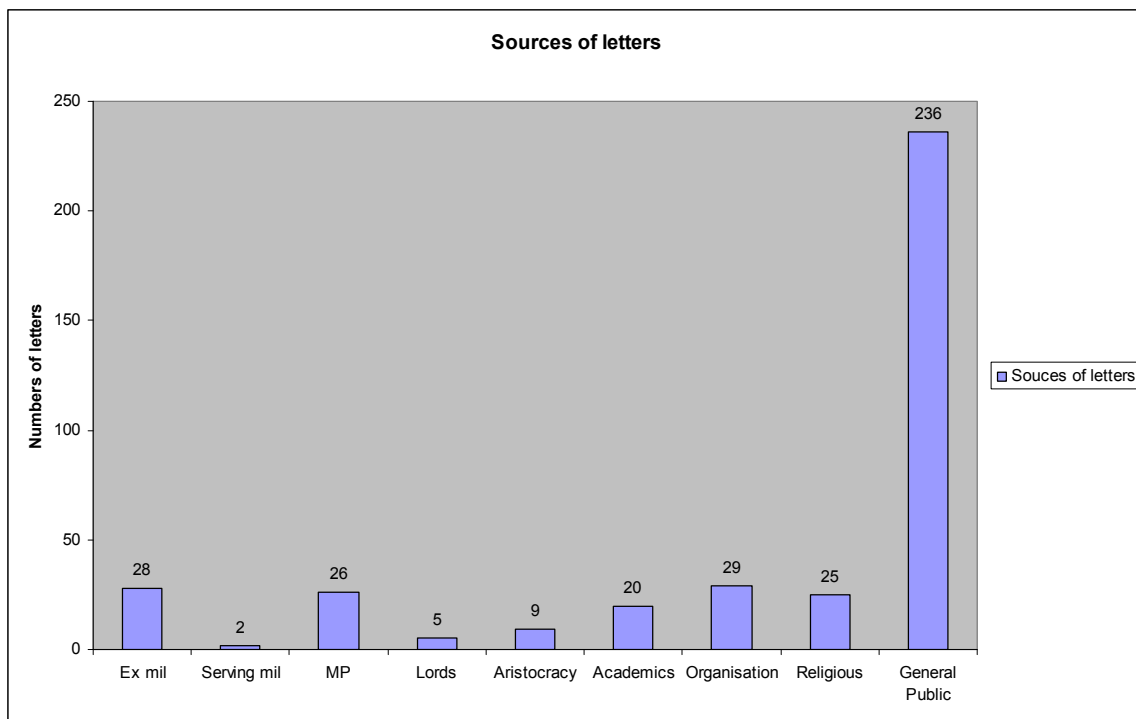
²⁵⁴ *Daily Telegraph* 4 February 1991 p. 16



It can readily be seen that, from about 27 August, and certainly from the second week in September, the letters started to dry up. This may be due to lack of editorial interest, and this does not necessarily reflect the post-bag received by the newspaper; merely the letters published. But it is not until the UN deadline was reached on 15 January, and the start of the coalition attack thereafter, that correspondence started to increase again. The overall impression is, however, that the public were less engaged after the initial invasion, suggesting a lack of interest, despite the deployment of British troops during the period and daily media coverage.

The next question is what the sources of the letters were. These have been divided into groups of serving and ex-military; MPs (which includes prospective candidates and councillors); members of the House of Lords; ‘aristocrats’ (anyone with a knighthood,

not explicitly representing any cause or organisation); academics; organisations (from CND to the UN Association); religious leaders of any denomination; and members of the general public. The latter group was the most extensive, and may have been unduly high since editors may not have printed their organisation or this may not be apparent from their letters. The results are as below:

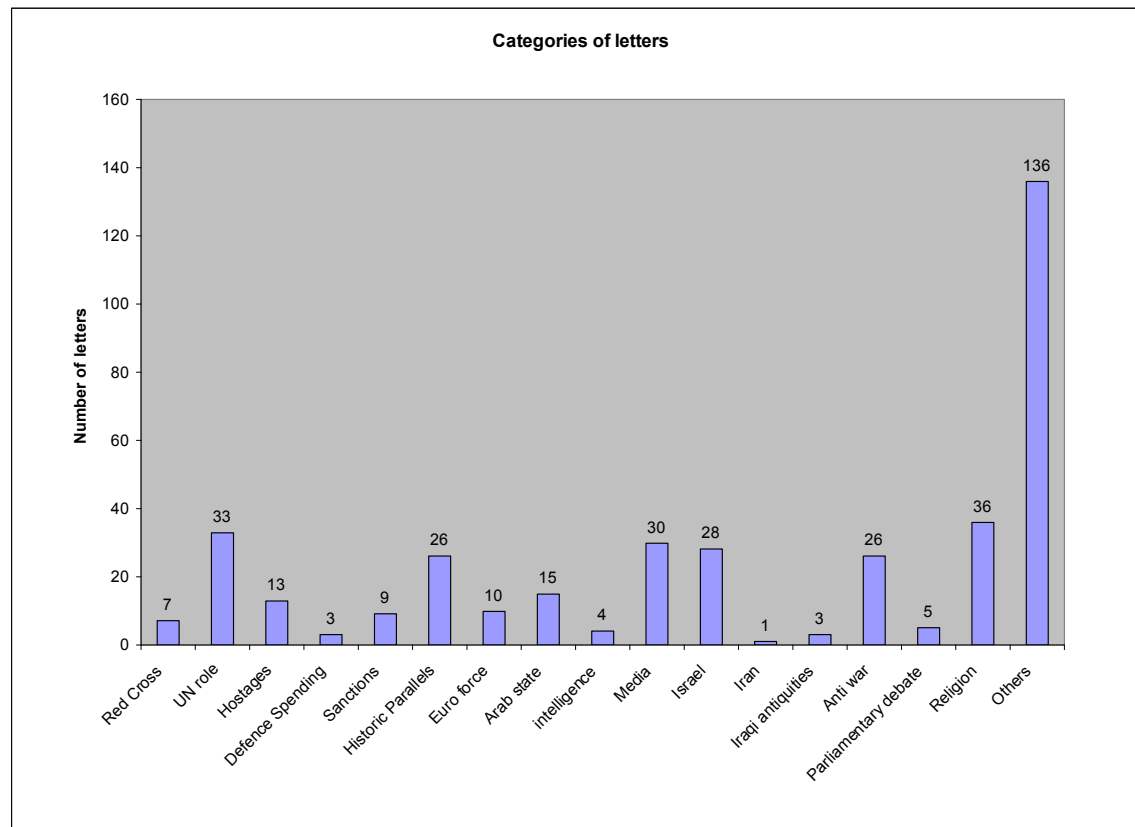


Noting the limitations on the general public, it is clear that this category far outweighs any other, suggesting that the debates in this broadsheet were widespread. The next significant group is the organisations, which include charities as well as institutions. To some extent, these can all be viewed as lobbying groups with a particular agenda. The next most significant groups are the ex-military (which might be higher if some of the general public had military experience), and MPs. There is a suspicion from the MPs

letters that the issues they raised could and perhaps should have been raised in Parliament, but perhaps were not adequately covered. The ex-military often provide qualified commentary on events, such as the letter from a retired group captain on 1 February 1991 which suggested that the degree of military success was being downplayed and that people's expectations in the modern day were too high²⁵⁵. Some of the most strident pieces were actually written by religious leaders, both for and against the conflict, but generally around questions of morality.

The final element was the issues raised in the letters. Grouping these is a difficult task, particularly if letters included two or more topics. Some were slightly tangential to the issue and so caution must be paid to these results. Again, it is not clear whether the editorial team picked on these letters because of the issues that they raised, or because they were representative of the postbag. Nevertheless, it gives an impression of the issues the public were raising at this elite level of debate. The categories, in no particular order, were: the role of the Red Cross; the role of the UN; the British hostages in Iraq; the relationship of the conflict and defence spending; the efficacy of sanctions or not (as distinct from the UN's political role, though arguably these overlap somewhat); parallels with other historical events, most usually the Second World War; the implications for Europe as a collective, and particularly for European defence; the wider aspects of an Arab state in the Middle East; the utility of intelligence; media issues; the relationship with Israel and Palestine; the relationship with Iran; the status of historic sites in Iraq; general anti-war issues; the need for a proper Parliamentary debate; religious issues, particularly around morality and Just War; and others.

²⁵⁵ *The Times* 1 February 1991, letters p. 11



The size of the ‘others’ group shows the range of issues raised in the letters.

Nevertheless, the size of the religious issues group, mostly coming from religious leaders, clearly shows the strength of the debate in the church on the approach to war and how split church leaders were. Doubts over the utility of the UN were a major part of the next group of issues, which also include several references to the dangers of appeasement – a clear reference to the events of 1938. This was followed by extensive debate on the media. Two strands emerge; the first about the extent of coverage for this conflict (the CNN factor), whether that be too much for some, and in particular, was too much information made available to the Iraqi enemy. The second strand was support or not for the BBC, and in particular for *Panorama*’s work. The figures show strong views on

Israel, most notably when Iraq fired missiles into Israel, but also on the need for a Palestinian state. Many writers, mostly from the general public, alluded to parallels with previous conflicts, and particularly to formations and units in the Second World War. The anti-war letters, whilst there were several, were not pronounced as a group. Hidden within the categories were several concerns over the war aims, which range from Just War concerns not to exceed the relief of Kuwait to several others who clearly felt that Saddam Hussein should be a target and removed.

Learning from the Falklands media experience, the military were much more involved with the media campaign. Brigadier Patrick Cordingley (Commanding 7 Armoured Brigade) was reported in several papers with a warning about potential conflict:

He said the British public “must be prepared for a particularly unpleasant war” in which Iraq was likely to use chemical and biological weapons. “They should be told there will be a lot of casualties. As a nation we have not addressed that yet”²⁵⁶.

The changes in media contact were explained in the rules given to editors and reporters on reporting news from the Gulf on 7 January 1991, as reported in the press on the following day. Changes from civil to military escorts for reporters, on the spot censorship rather than time-delaying centralized processes, and specific prohibitions on reporting special forces operations or troop numbers or casualties caused some concern, but were broadly accepted by Max Hastings of the *Daily Telegraph*:

²⁵⁶ *Financial Times* 30 November 1990 p. 1

Most of these rules seem absolutely sensible. Newspapers and broadcasters are obviously anxious not to do anything that risks the safety or operational security of our forces, and the clearer the help we are given by the Ministry of Defence in achieving this, the better job we shall be able to do.²⁵⁷

What perhaps was less expected was the TV coverage on a virtually twenty-four hour basis from CNN, which appears to have been much-watched in homes across the globe. ITN deployed a team of forty in Saudi Arabia and six in Baghdad, whilst the BBC had thirty in the same locations²⁵⁸. Academics voiced warnings - ‘watching too much war can be bad for you’ said James Turner, psychologist at the University of Savannah, who termed it the ‘CNN complex’²⁵⁹. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.

One effect of the coverage was to affect television advertisers. Concern was raised over a Territorial Army advertisement, which was broadcast despite opposition that this was promoting militarism at a time of conflict when in fact few Territorials were deployed²⁶⁰. But allegedly, ‘most advertisements featuring militaristic scenes have been taken off for fear of offending viewers during the war’²⁶¹. In the US, ‘many companies abandoned advertising entirely for fear that their commercials would be screened next to shots of carnage’.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ *Daily Telegraph* 8 January 1991 p. 8. This has echoes of the First World War, where Bond suggests that the press barons were convinced that newspapers had a duty to maintain civilian morale and to support the Army. Bond *Op cit* p. 11

²⁵⁸ *The Sunday Times* 13 January 1991 p. 9

²⁵⁹ *Independent* 24 January 1991 p. 6

²⁶⁰ *Financial Times*, 16/17 February 1991, p. 5

²⁶¹ *Ibid*

²⁶² *Ibid*. That said, Boyd-Barrett argues that advertisers soon get over their fears due to higher audience figures in war and the potential for linking their products with a patriotic agenda. In *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* ed Allan S and Zelizer B (London: Routledge 2004) p. 26

In the UK, despite audience figures for TV AM increasing by 2/3, advertisers deserted the station, particularly for products targeted at young women and children²⁶³.

Concern was also expressed at the Iraqis' effective use of the media in their pictures of the effects of bomb damage on civilian targets. Geoffrey Best²⁶⁴, an expert on war and law, was among those concerned about the impact of such coverage to undermine the legal and moral case for the allies, though there is little evidence in polls or letters to demonstrate that it had any great affect on UK public opinion. *The Times* did suggest that such pictures affected attitudes²⁶⁵, but were just as unable to get facts to quantify the effect in any real way. Jeremy Bowen's coverage of the Al-Amiriya bombing (which killed many civilians) seemed to contradict US reports that it had been a military bunker, but the effect it had on public opinion is not clear. Three letters²⁶⁶ to *The Times* on 20 February 1991 refer to this attack: one from a British-based Iraqi wrote in defence of the women and children killed; another asked if the bunker was a valid target; and a third from a retired air-marshal asked if the coalition were winning the propaganda war. This followed a letter²⁶⁷ to *The Times* on 18 February from a lawyer, which suggested that the US were unlikely to have deliberately bombed a shelter, had they known what it was. There do not appear any long term effects on public opinion from this attack, unlike the effects of aerial bombardment in Kosovo.

²⁶³ *Times Literary Supplement* 22 March 1991

²⁶⁴ Author of *War and Law since 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997) and *Humanity in Warfare* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1980), former Professor of Modern History at the University of Edinburgh

²⁶⁵ *The Times*, 11 February 1991, p. 3

²⁶⁶ *The Times*, 20 February 1991, p. 15

²⁶⁷ *The Times*, 18 February 1991, p. 13

As with the Falklands, the BBC was accused of bias. This time, in perhaps a reflection of the controversy over the *Panorama* programme in the Falklands, the BBC was accused of censorship and being subject to political bias for electing not to transmit the third in a series of *Panorama* programmes on the so-called supergun project²⁶⁸.

The lessons of the Falklands were also evident in the decision to have an information committee under John Wakeham²⁶⁹ to ensure all government departments were ‘singing from the same hymn sheet’²⁷⁰. This was particularly important at the outbreak of the coalition action in January when ‘ministers were concerned about sinking public morale’²⁷¹.’ The opinion polls do not really offer clues as to why ministers thought public morale was sinking – the figures remained fairly consistent throughout, albeit that people preferred the option of a blockade to military assault. The committee was later challenged by the *New Statesman* and the *Guardian* as acting as ‘news managers’. Equal comment went to the *Sun* who had published a front-page Union Jack and invited readers to display it in their windows, an act which Tony Benn described as ‘the greatest wave of jingoism I have ever seen in my life’²⁷².

Though we do not know how many flags were displayed, that edition sold 3.8M copies. An NOP poll commissioned by the *Independent* and *Newsnight* suggested that news

²⁶⁸ *The Times*, 28 January 1991, p. 5

²⁶⁹ Energy Secretary (1989-92) until given a peerage in 1992, when he became Leader of the House of Lords.

²⁷⁰ *Independent* 24 January 1991 p. 2

²⁷¹ *Ibid*

²⁷² *Times Literary Supplement* 22 March 1991

coverage by the broadsheets was trusted by half of their readers, whereas the tabloids were believed by less than 33%²⁷³.

In the aftermath of the war, opinions were still divided. Professor G Lee Williams, of the Institute of Economic and Political Studies in Cambridge was amongst those believing that military defeat had only been created by technical superiority, and that disaffected Arabs would now line up behind Saddam Hussein to challenge the Christian West²⁷⁴. In the same issue, Sir Gilbert Longden wrote that we had gone unwillingly to war, but that that it had been the only appropriate response²⁷⁵. The concept of having a Gulf victory parade had been viewed by the Prime Minister, John Major, with misgivings, because of concerns that such celebrations might be too triumphalist and a glorification of war, precisely the concerns of the Bishop of Durham who described the idea as ‘obscene’, saying that ‘At the moment there is all this euphoria over a great victory and we should never have got into it²⁷⁶’.

But the Prime Minister was persuaded by Defence Secretary Tom King for it to go ahead, and church leaders were concerned not to repeat the rift with the state after the Falklands service where the Archbishop of Canterbury combined the themes of thanksgiving with mourning and a plea for Christian reconciliation – to which Mrs Thatcher’s reaction was allegedly described as ‘spitting blood’.²⁷⁷ Badsey (and his publishers) conducted market research prior to publishing a book on the conflict, and was surprised to find that there

²⁷³ *Times Literary Supplement* 22 March 1991

²⁷⁴ *The Times* 1 March 1991 letters

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*

²⁷⁶ *The Times*, 4 March 1991, p. 1

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*

was little mass interest, and that it was perceived as America's war²⁷⁸. In the years after the war, a measure of protection was afforded to the Kurds and the Marsh Arabs by the No-Fly Zones over Iraq. In retaliation for Iraqi attacks on Coalition air patrols, a number of Iraqi targets were hit but, with the exception of Operation DESERT FOX in 1998, much of this was done far from media glare, and Rupert Smith suggests that aircrews termed this 'recreational bombing' – which could certainly not be done under greater press scrutiny²⁷⁹.

Case Study 4. Bosnia

MORI interviewed 1002 adults over the age of 18 on 16-18 April 1993, when Bosnian Serb forces were surrounding the town of Srebrenica, for the *Panorama* programme of 19 April 1993. 60% of people were dissatisfied with the Government's handling of the situation in Bosnia (only 20% were satisfied), and 58% said that Britain was not doing enough. The same percentage felt that the UN's response was inadequate. Some 64% were in favour of sending an international force, including British troops to help, but of those, 48% were opposed to sending the force if it meant staying there for several years and 55% were opposed if it meant taking large numbers of casualties²⁸⁰. The first British soldier was killed on 12 October 1994, a year in which attacks in Markale Square in Sarajevo had attracted particular media attention²⁸¹.

²⁷⁸ Badsey interview *Op cit*

²⁷⁹ Smith R *Op cit* p. 4

²⁸⁰ <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/attitudes-towards-bosnia1.ashx> accessed 10 March 2008.

²⁸¹ Smith R *Op cit* p. 343 for early 1994, and p. 364 for the attack on 28 August 1994 which killed twenty-three people.

MORI conducted a poll of 1104 adults over the age of 18 on 21 July 1995, not long after British troops had been taken hostage in May that year. The results²⁸² were weighted to represent the profile of the population. The results were used on London Weekend Television's *Dimbleby* programme on 23 July 1995. By then, 65% of those interviewed were dissatisfied with the Government's handling of the war, and 67% were dissatisfied with the UN's performance – both figures were significantly higher than the comparable MORI poll in 1993. But now 47% felt that Britain was not doing enough, 5% lower than the 1993 poll, whereas 14% felt that Britain was too involved already. Some 52% of people were in favour of Britain being involved in armed conflict, with 39% opposed. Support for deploying forces even if it would take years had declined to 39%, and if it meant taking casualties to 36%. Some 59% of people supported air attacks on Serb positions to protect Bosnian Muslims but 31% were opposed. And 50% of people felt it right to risk the lives of British soldiers to protect Bosnian Muslims, but 40% were opposed.

Gallup carried out eight polls²⁸³ between February 1993 and January 1996 on Bosnia. Those indicating they were dissatisfied with the Government's performance on this issue ranged from 43% initially to 39% at the end, but dissatisfaction had peaked in 1994 and 1995, coincident with the deployment of British troops in numbers. In contrast, British political opinion in 1994 was viewed by some US politicians as 'wet', for opposing

²⁸² <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/attitudes-towards-bosnia.ashx> accessed 10 March 2008. The poll results were not split by socio-economic grouping or age groups which would have allowed further analysis

²⁸³ King A (ed), *British Political Opinion 1937-2000 The Gallup Polls* (London: 2001, Politico's Books) pp. 355-360

airstrikes yet the British chided the US for a failure to commit ground forces²⁸⁴. Michael Foot was one of the great activists for action from 1991-2, relating to his personal love of Dubrovnik as a favourite holiday destination for many years²⁸⁵. Looking at comparable time points with the MORI surveys, it is hard to equate the figures; one would have to join the ‘neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied’ group to the total to get similar levels of dissatisfaction. But the size of the ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ group at 16-23% and routinely around 19-20% indicates a high level of lack of interest. When asked with which ethnic group the respondents had most sympathy in 1993, Gallup’s largest group was either none of them (21-25%) or don’t know (26-29%), with the rest well split. This suggests either a lack of understanding of the situation or a lack of interest or both.

In these Gallup polls, up to 1994, 67-74% routinely supported the use of British forces on convoy escort duties to dispense humanitarian aid – but that dropped to 62% in the first week of June 1995, and only recovered to former levels in 1996. When asked if British forces suffered major casualties, whether the UK should pull forces out, limit them to fighting back if attacked or reinforce them, opinion was roughly equally divided between reinforcement or pulling out, with 14-17% advocating limiting them to fighting back if attacked. By 1996, a clear margin (43% vice 35%) was in favour of pulling troops out in such a circumstance. Hopes for success were clearly limited; when asked if people thought an international force could enforce a peace settlement, only 37-46% thought it would, while 34-43% thought it wouldn’t. Nevertheless, a substantial majority still felt it would be worthwhile sending an international force anyway, and between 2/3 and 3/4 of

²⁸⁴ Silber L and Little A, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, (London: Penguin/BBC Books 1995, this edn 1996) p. 332

²⁸⁵ Morgan *Op cit* p. 456

people thought British forces should be part of that force. Dandeker, not usually an advocate for conflict, felt that the Armed Forces could have used more robust tactics without endangering their impartial status²⁸⁶.

With politicians fearing a larger conflict spreading into Europe, people were asked if they shared that fear. In 1993, opinion was fairly evenly divided on whether it would or would not do so. Between 1993 and 1995, less than 2/3 of people felt that Britain and European nations should intervene, whereas a third advocated leaving the Bosnians to sort it out themselves. Evidence of a lack of interest or knowledge was also evident in the January 1996 question regarding numbers of actual British casualties in the conflict to date. Some 17% thought it was a fair number or more, 54% thought very few, but significantly 29% simply didn't know. By mid-1996, when asked to look back on the success of British troops in theatre, 3% thought it completely successful, 27% mostly successful, 44% somewhat successful, 10% not at all successful and 17% didn't know.

Looking at the overall results in the round, there was clear widespread dissatisfaction with the Government's handling of the situation throughout. Equally strong is the feeling that a fair proportion of the group either did not know or were not interested in what was going on, many being quite content to let the Bosnians get on with it. Rupert Smith highlights the lack of clarity in determining the status of an army when a force such as the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) becomes the Bosnian Serb Army in 1991²⁸⁷; the former being recognised as a legal entity in support of the state, but the latter being closer to an

²⁸⁶ Dandeker, C, and Gow, J, 'The Future of Peace Support Operations: Strategic Peacekeeping and Success' *Armed Forces and Society* Vol 23 No 3 Spring 1997 pp. 327-348

²⁸⁷ Smith R *Op cit* p. 8

irregular force, and as such harder to identify with. The case for intervention was not evident to all, and that despite the efforts of the media, such as Martin Bell: 'I didn't have a political intention [in Bosnia]. I wasn't consciously trying to change the non-policy of my government but I did hope that just showing these pictures [of death and suffering] in my country would have an effect, that eventually people would say, "This is unconscionable what we're not doing"'²⁸⁸. Whilst people were broadly in favour of use of British forces on humanitarian operations, there was no great appetite for taking casualties, and no great feeling that success would be quickly if ever achievable. Even after the Dayton Peace Agreement had been signed and in process of delivery in 1995 and 1996, people were still not entirely convinced that the British had been successful.

Given the length of campaign, it is not practical in this research to undertake an analytical review of the letters columns as with other wars, but this would be worthy of further work.

Case Study 5. Kosovo

In the spring of 1999, NATO allies led an air campaign lasting 78 days against Serbia to protect Kosovar Albanians from ethnic cleansing. Gallup polled in March, April and May 1999 as the conflict developed²⁸⁹. Ipsos/MORI also polled on 26-27 March 1999 and 1-2 April 1999 for the *Mail on Sunday* and again on 30 April-1 May 1999 ahead of

²⁸⁸ Cited in McLaughlin G, *The War Correspondent* (London: Pluto 2002) p. 191

²⁸⁹ King A (ed), *British Political Opinion 1937-2000 The Gallup Polls* (London: 2001, Politico's Books) pp. 360-363

the local government elections²⁹⁰. From an initial 58% in favour of the campaign in March according to Gallup, approval ratings increased to 67% by May, but the disapproval rate remained high (33% to 28%). More interestingly, some 60% of people felt there had been insufficient public debate (including in Parliament) prior to NATO's military actions. Half-way through the conflict, less than half the people thought it had been managed competently, with 44% believing the management was incompetent, though support for Prime Minister Blair's role was much higher at 66%. And even in March 1999, 70% of people expected that ground troops would eventually be required to secure Serbian agreement to autonomy for Kosovo. If ground troops were to be required, only 52% of people would have approved of their use, despite the fact that 73% felt there was a danger of the present war spreading into neighbouring countries. Some 41% felt that Kosovo peace and stability was not worth the sacrifice of any British soldier or airman. And even at that halfway point, only 57% of people believed the campaign would be successful in returning Kosovo refugees to their homeland.

The MORI polls show a similar picture. Only 55% of people in March thought Britain right to join the bombing campaign (compared with 58% with Gallup) and only 49% of people were satisfied with the way the Government had handled the crisis. MORI tested how much people really knew about the war; only 54% of people could correctly identify the Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic and only 19% correctly identified which ethnic group the air raids were designed to protect. Nevertheless, 87% of the 606 adults interviewed felt that Britain had a moral duty to help stop further killings and human rights abuses in

²⁹⁰ <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/1999/ms990327.shtml> accessed 29 April 2007

Kosovo (even if they didn't really know which ones they were protecting). At that stage (26-27 March 1999):

Table 6.1 MORI Polls March-May 1999

%	26-27 March	1-2 April	30 April – 1 May
Not worth loss of British life	56	57	45
Don't know	34		34
In favour of bombing campaign		76	70
Satisfied with Government approach		60	
Said there had not been adequate public debate		51	
Not enough information on the consequences of NATO actions		66	
Thought NATO actions had made it more dangerous for ethnic Albanians		57	67
Made no difference		23	

Despite the elite level debate over the seemingly outrageous ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, as in Bosnia, the British public was not entirely convinced, and in particular, felt there had been inadequate debate. Whilst recognizing the need for ground troops, there was not the body of support for their use, and still less acceptance of the cause being worth the loss of British lives. The figures are fairly consistent, yet do show some oddities in the desire to undertake an air campaign when the majority felt it was not having the desired effect or even making it worse. This seems to support the view that many of the public simply did not understand the issues, but felt something had to be done – but not at the cost of British servicemen and women. Alastair Campbell, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, was later to claim that public opinion was much more robust than media opinion²⁹¹, which does not seem to be supported by the figures.

Politically, the Commons debate described in *The Times* of 26 March 1999²⁹² shows a cautious Parliament. As the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, made the case for the campaign, the Shadow Foreign Secretary Michael Howard said that the airstrikes ‘met the requirements of a Just War’, whilst questioning whether the UN Security Council resolutions gave legitimacy for action²⁹³. Menzies Campbell for the Liberal Democrats was concerned over the potential for civilian casualties. Tony Benn, as with previous campaigns, was opposed to it: ‘I think this is a war of aggression. NATO is being set up to replace the UN.’ Former Defence Minister Alan Clark said: ‘What we are debating here is whether or not we are within our rights to be bombing a sovereign nation without

²⁹¹ Campbell, Alastair in the *Guardian* 10 July 1999. Cited by Dixon *Op cit* p. 117

²⁹² *The Times* 26 March 1999 pp. 8-9

²⁹³ Herman reflects a similar debate in the US media, castigating the legal opinion of ‘illegal but legitimate’ as inappropriate. In *Tell me lies* ed Miller D (London: Pluto 2004) p. 180. The phrase was also used by the Independent International Commission on Kosovo (IICK 2000 p. 289).

the authority of the UN or indeed the House of Commons in pursuit of the interests of one side in a civil war.’ In the event, Tony Benn failed to force a vote on the issue. Prime Minister Blair was, however clear – saying in the 13 April debate that ‘This is military action for a moral purpose²⁹⁴.’ The opponents were still there – Benn, Dalyell, Mahon and Clark amongst them – but they were in a minority, and even the hard-left Campaign Group was split on the issue²⁹⁵. Those MPs were amongst the eleven voting against the Government on 20 April, analysed by the paper to be splits along generational lines (Dalyell, Benn), anti-America (Galloway, Corbyn), anti-military (Mahon, Wise, Gerrard) and pro-Serbian (Wareing)²⁹⁶. But then the Tories started to wonder if the strategy was right – Michael Howard talking of the need for a negotiated peace; Crispin Blunt saying the strategy had failed and calling for the replacement of the Chief of Defence Staff²⁹⁷. After the Chinese Embassy bombing (see below), Michael Howard accused NATO of incompetence, and why it had taken until that point, several weeks into the conflict to consider the legitimacy of a planned oil embargo²⁹⁸. At that point, political unity had broken down. Andrew Robathan, Conservative MP for Blaby, said that he had been warning about the air campaign since March, and that Clinton and Blair had no idea of military strategy²⁹⁹.

Opposition to the war was reported in an article on 27 March 1999³⁰⁰.

²⁹⁴ *The Times* 14 April 1999 p. 2

²⁹⁵ *Ibid* p8

²⁹⁶ *The Times* 21 April 1999 p. 2

²⁹⁷ *The Times* 14 April 1999 p. 19

²⁹⁸ *The Times* 12 May 1999 p. 2

²⁹⁹ *The Times* 13 May 1999 p. 27

³⁰⁰ *The Times* 27 March 1999 p. 5 ‘Backlash in Britain against bombing’.

Streams of letters and telephone calls are beginning to fuel the debate raging at newspaper offices across the country. Supporters of the government's stance are heavily outnumbered....People living in the north and the Midlands seem to be most vehemently opposed to the bombings. The *Manchester Evening News*, the biggest evening paper in the North-West, conducted a two-day poll on the issue. Robert Ridley, assistant news editor, said "Our readers are wildly against the bombing campaign. When we asked, first of all, if they thought it was right to bomb Kosovo, 79% said no. We also asked if we should pursue a long-term campaign and 82% said no, we should not." Elsewhere, Norwich is twinned with Novi Sad, which was hit on the first night, leaving local people 'shocked'. The *Western Mail* reported 'strong feelings both for and against the campaign.' The editor of the *Birmingham Post* reported qualified support from local people, whereas the *Leicester Mercury* reported receiving telephone calls from people, particularly elderly ones, "quite tearful about the war"³⁰¹.

Some academics were vociferous in opposition. 'NATO activity is...worse than a crime, it's a blunder!³⁰²' Gelber returned to the fray on 13 April to say that the war in the Balkans was 'misconceived in origin and bungled in execution'³⁰³. Organisations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom said that the 'result of NATO bombing has been more barbarity and killings in Kosovo'³⁰⁴. Mick Hume, editor of LM³⁰⁵ magazine, said 'The war against the Serbs is about projecting a self-image of the ethical new Britain bestriding the world. It is a crusade'³⁰⁶.

Right-wing author Frederick Forsyth³⁰⁷ was especially strident in his opposition, from his comment of 15 April - 'worst planned military adventure this country has been involved with since Suez'³⁰⁸ - to his later comment that politicians had not even been in the cadet

³⁰¹ *Ibid*

³⁰² Professor Harry Gelber, Centre for International Studies, London School of Economics in a letter, *The Times* 29 March 1999 p21

³⁰³ *The Times* 13 April 1999 p19

³⁰⁴ *The Times* 31 March 1999 p. 21

³⁰⁵ *Living Marxism*

³⁰⁶ *The Times* 15 April 1999 p. 22

³⁰⁷ Known for his strident right wing views.

³⁰⁸ *The Times* 15 April 1999 p. 23

forces let alone combat forces, and so didn't know what they were doing³⁰⁹. Though not on the scale of the Poll Tax riots or the anti-war demonstrations for the later Gulf War, 2000 anti-bombing protestors met in Trafalgar Square, London, led by several Labour MPs including Tony Benn as part of the Committee for Peace in the Balkans³¹⁰.

From around 9 April 1999, attention in the press started to focus on the air campaign's failures³¹¹. Simon Jenkins wrote

By targeting cities, factories and bridges, and hitting enough houses to kill civilians (including, of all obscenities, native Kosovans in Pristina) the bombs have increased support for the regime and made compromise less likely³¹².

This theme was picked up by Professor Williamson, Edinburgh University, in his letter that day which said the 'escalating NATO violence hardens Serb resolve and undermines the prospects for moderate political forces in Belgrade³¹³.' Somewhat defensively, an RAF source said: 'a mistaken public perception has been created by films like *Star Wars* in which the enemy is vaporized³¹⁴.'

Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent for *The Times*, commented on 12 April 1999 that the deployment of a further 82 US aircraft showed that after three weeks of bombing, the

³⁰⁹ *The Times* 17 May 1999 p. 21

³¹⁰ *The Times* 12 April 1999 p. 4

³¹¹ It is interesting to contrast this with the perception as expounded by Knightley in his book *The First Casualty* (London: John Hopkins University Press 2002) p. 462 that the coverage of the Vietnam war reduced from 1969 because of the switch from a ground campaign to an air campaign which seemed far more distant and thus less newsworthy.

³¹² *The Times* 9 April 1999 p. 22

³¹³ *Ibid* p. 23

³¹⁴ *The Times* 14 April 1999 p. 2

Yugoslav defences were still intact³¹⁵. The following day saw the first major NATO error in bombing a passenger train at Grdelica, leaving nine dead and 16 injured³¹⁶. On 14 April, NATO bombs hit a refugee convoy, killing 72, at Dakovica³¹⁷. The news postulated an ecological disaster after NATO bombed a petrochemical complex on the Danube, creating a cloud of toxic gas.³¹⁸ The attack on a TV station on 23 April provoked a number of letters in response, notably one from a former Army officer suggesting it was ‘murder’³¹⁹. A stray bomb on 28 April hit houses 300m from a Yugoslav barracks killing 20 civilians. The ultimate error was the bomb on the Chinese Embassy on 10 May 1999³²⁰. The first thing to take from this is that NATO forces and the RAF were used synonymously here; if NATO got it wrong, then the RAF faced guilt by association. Next, all these incidents seemed to shake the confidence of the public and particularly the elite figures in coalition capabilities, having been raised on the success of the first Gulf Campaign. They started to question the strategy for the war, and then they questioned those in charge. Perhaps that was why, with diminishing support for President Clinton at home, and no end in sight, the coalition adopted low-level flying from 6 May 1999. But even by 21 May 1999, a Ministry of Defence source was quoted as saying that Serb forces in Kosovo had only suffered ‘light casualties’³²¹, adding to the impression of unease for the public. The Editor of *Jane’s Fighting Ships* could not resist the

³¹⁵ *The Times* 12 April 1999 p. 5

³¹⁶ *The Times* 13 April 1999 p. 1

³¹⁷ *The Times* 15 April 1999 p. 1

³¹⁸ *The Times* 19 April 1999 p. 1

³¹⁹ *The Times* 27 April 1999 p. 21

³²⁰ *The Times* 11 May 1999 p. 13

³²¹ *The Times* 21 May 1999 p. 1

opportunity to observe that limitations of air power showed the error in creating distinct air Services³²².

The debate over means was highlighted in Simon Jenkins' article of 28 April entitled 'The manner in which we conduct this war demeans British values³²³.' He called for morality in method, arguing that

One of the most sickening spectacles of the past fortnight has been liberal hawks deriding the conduct of the war 'so far', a war they wanted high off the ground, clean, technological and with no NATO dead. I can only report that this war is leaving thousands of patriotic people baffled, concerned and even outraged

The religious debate seen in other conflicts resumed in the Kosovo campaign. Bishop Hugh Montefiore said that the actions of coalition forces negated two principles of a Just War: defensive action and the probability of success – and hence it was no longer a Just War³²⁴. On 29 March, *The Times* summarized the churches' divided views³²⁵: the Archbishop of Canterbury 'highlighted the divisions among Christians about bombing Yugoslavia.' Veteran pacifist Canon Paul Oestreicher, Coventry Cathedral, said it might have been right to fight the Serbs on the ground, but that air raids were wrong because they were likely to fail. The Right Rev Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh and a critic of previous military actions said, 'Reluctantly, with considerable anguish probably, I support the NATO line but with enormous anxieties³²⁶.'

³²² *The Times* 21 May 1999 p. 27

³²³ *The Times* 28 April 1999 p. 20

³²⁴ *The Times* 27 March 1999 p. 23

³²⁵ *The Times* 29 March 1999 p. 7

³²⁶ *Ibid*

The Most Rev Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, said that the bombings were such a dilemma that we could ‘only pray for and be grateful to politicians and commanders making decisions.’³²⁷ The Right Rev Cormac Murphy O’Connor, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, called for the ‘use of military force to be as limited as possible’³²⁸. But the Bishop of Bradford, Right Rev David Smith, wondered how the bombardment of Yugoslavia was going to bring about a solution³²⁹. By 5 April, as public attitudes seemed to move in favour of military action, Archbishop Carey said that ‘Military action thus far is recognition that the civilised world cannot stand by and accept that evil should triumph.’³³⁰ And the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Westminster and Oxford all supported action against ‘evil.’ However, at parish level, the concerns were shown more in the letters, e.g. Rev Hunt ‘NATO is bombing Serbia illegally’³³¹. After all the NATO bombing errors, some questioned legitimacy, discrimination and proportionality³³². By 19 May, Canon Oestreicher was amongst a number calling for peace³³³. And Rev David Platt, Didcot, even went so far as to say that Just War has ‘become a mere talisman, a shibboleth....all war is evil’³³⁴.

A commentator on Just War, Oliver O’Donovan, viewed it rather differently: he suggested that having tried to think of ourselves (the British) as good Europeans, we recognised difficulties in our neighbourhood that needed resolution, establishing a moral

³²⁷ *Ibid*

³²⁸ *Ibid*

³²⁹ *Ibid*

³³⁰ *The Times* 5 April 1999 p. 6

³³¹ *The Times* 15 April 1999 p. 23

³³² See Rev Harrison, Rural Dean of Ashbourne letter *The Times* 15 May 1999 p. 23, and Rev Harvey, Sub Dean Westminster, Zaki Badawi Principal Muslim College Ealing and David Goldberg Senor Rabbi St John’s Wood Synagogue in *The Times* 17 May 1999 p. 21

³³³ *The Times* 19 May 1999 p. 21

³³⁴ *The Times* 21 May 1999 p. 27

case for intervention³³⁵. However, he also challenged the use of air power to replace the use of troops on the ground in a Just War sense of not being prepared to take casualties as an immoral stance, on the basis that it does not give ‘proper weight to the claims of the non-combatant population that’s suffering’³³⁶.

Media coverage by the BBC came in for more criticism, especially John Simpson’s coverage from Belgrade, where it was felt he was giving biased views – despite the obvious constraints he was under. Accused by the Government of ‘falling short of the standards expected of a leading journalist’³³⁷, again the mood of the general public and indeed media experts supported Simpson’s position. What was more surprising was a letter from a Mr Maton to say that a picture published in the press of an injured woman lying in the road went too far, and she ought to have had some dignity.³³⁸

Although letters started to reduce in early April, it was only on 21 April that the Kosovo campaign was no longer a headline in *The Times*. By the following day, the daily war reports, previously around pages 4-7, were now confined to pages 17-20. This seems to reflect a deliberate decision to downplay the war in favour of other news, and may reflect a decreasing interest in the public – though it is unclear what exactly was the cause and effect here. On 28 April, there was nothing about Kosovo on the front page of *The Times* at all.

³³⁵ O’Donovan interview 26 September 2007.

³³⁶ O’Donovan interview *Op cit*

³³⁷ *The Times* 16 April 1999 p. 23

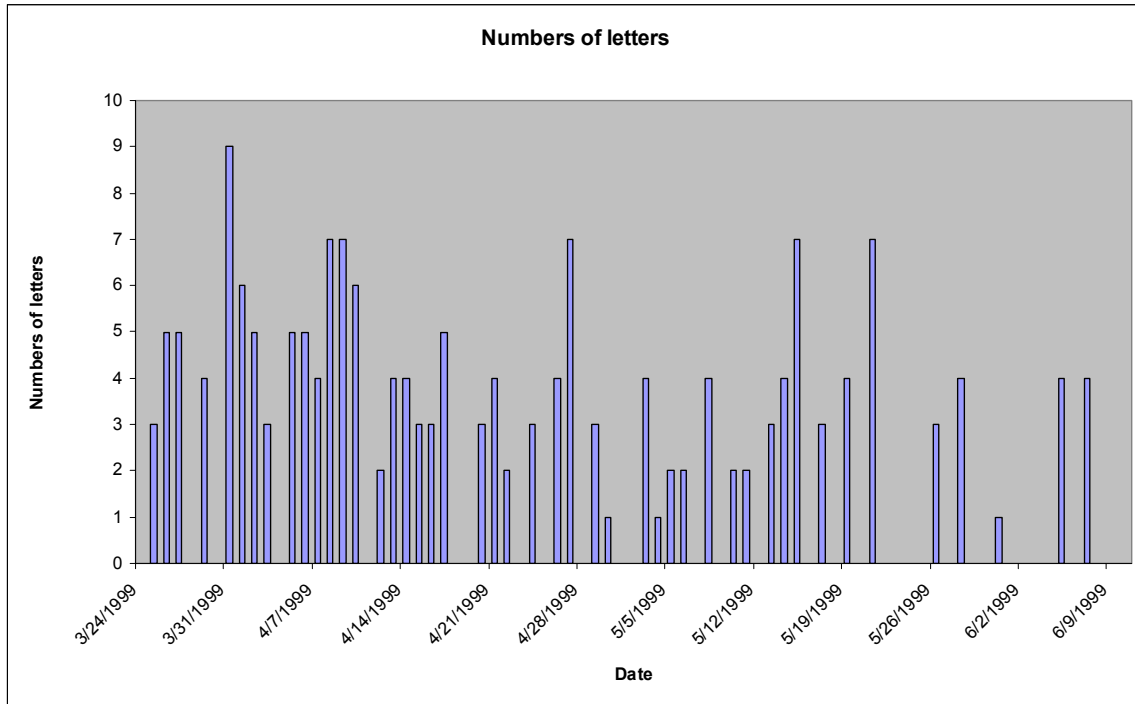
³³⁸ *Ibid*

For the first time, this campaign was debated on the internet. Although there is no real way to analyse it in this work, this is an area for future study. Chat sites were established and debates raged. The Serbs used sites to publish comment on the Kosovo Liberation Army and vice-versa, both showing pictures to make their points. US soldiers were also known to put their views on chat sites. Hackers saturated the servers used by NATO and Serbia deluged the system with 2000 emails a day³³⁹. The value of the internet was demonstrated by Robin Cook's letter to the Serbs, translated into Serbo-Croat and placed on the web, which expressed regret for two former allies against the Nazis now being enemies³⁴⁰.

In the same way as for the first Gulf War, a systematic approach was used to consider the letters published in *The Times* from 24 March 1999 (when airstrikes were ordered) to 10 June 1999 when the Serbs surrendered. The 183 letters considered were analysed according to date, source and issue. Again, similar health warnings are required on the basis that this is a single broadsheet, and it does only represent what the editorial team chose to publish, rather than what might have been sent in. It cannot therefore be a definite proof of public opinion, but it does serve as a measure of the debate during the 78-day bombing campaign. The distribution of the letters was as follows:

³³⁹ *The Times* 1 April 1999 p. 9

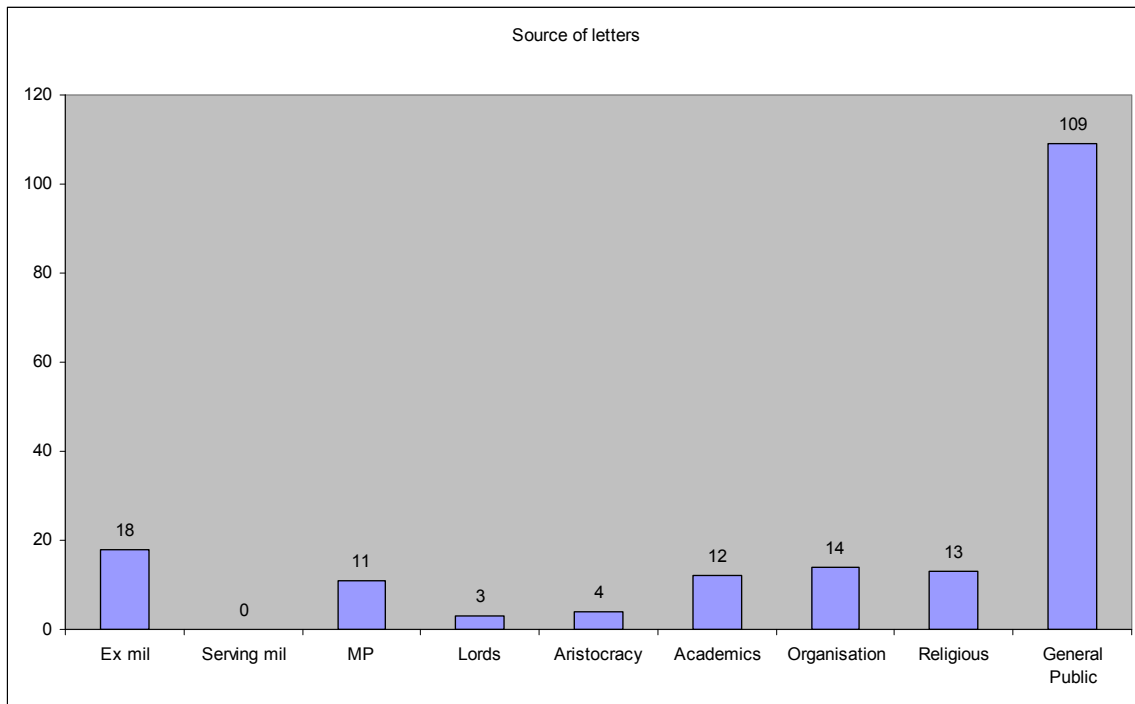
³⁴⁰ *The Times* 5 April 1999 p. 5



It can be seen immediately that, with one or two notable exceptions, the flow of correspondence slowed considerably after 17 April – quite early in the campaign. It is not clear whether this was as a result of boredom in the public or in the newspaper, but the flow from mid-way through the campaign through the second half was very sparse. It is possible that many of the fundamental points were made early on, and did not bear repetition. But the truth, tying this to the poll evidence, would seem to be that a lot of people were either opposed to the war or not bothered. An example is a letter³⁴¹ on 4 May which highlighted an appeals trolley in Tesco's; the one for Kosovo had two packets of pasta on it, the one for the Scottish Society for the Protection of Animals was full – a real indication of the place of Kosovo in the scale of importance for many people.

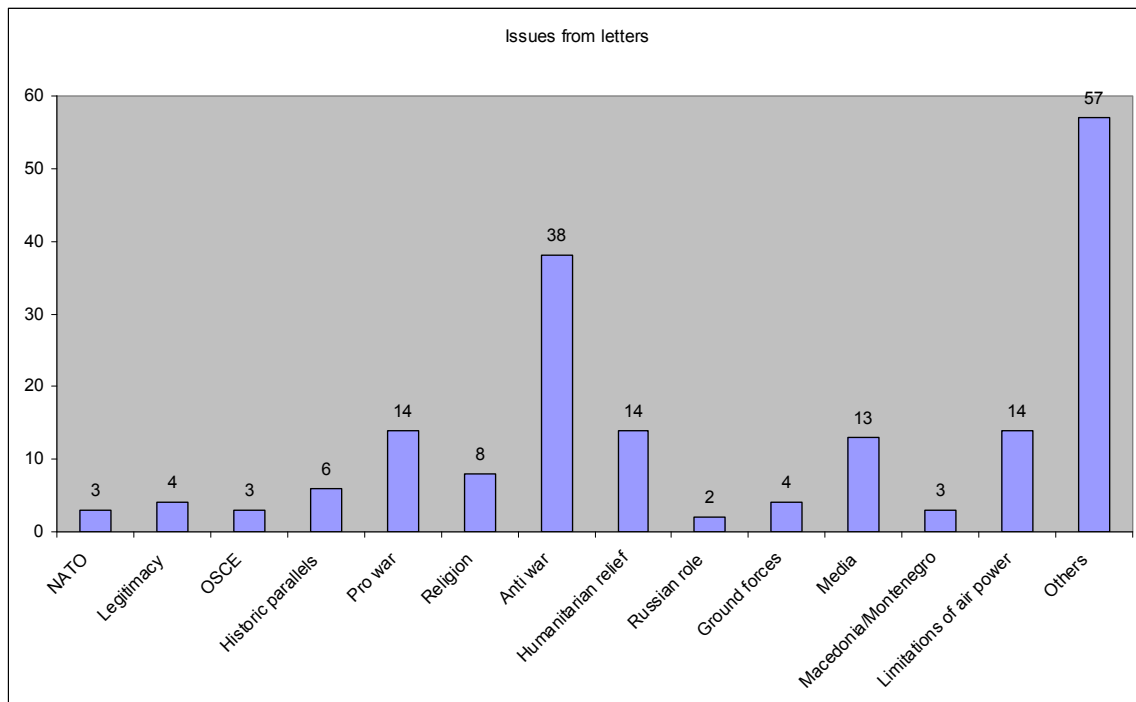
³⁴¹ *The Times* 4 May 1999 p. 21

Turning to the authors of the letters, these have been categorized in the same way as for the Gulf War example i.e. military, both serving and retired, MPs, members of the House of Lords, ‘aristocracy’, organisations, academics, religious leaders and the general public. Where foreign dignitaries have written, they have been accorded equivalent status with British authors. The results are shown below:



On this occasion, the general public produced a significant proportion of the letters, with ex-military playing a proportionately large part. There does not appear to be any pattern to this, or any evidence of an editorial policy to put forward letters from particular segments.

The results were grouped into issues around NATO's role; legitimacy of the operation; the role of OSCE (and, as in all these categories, letters appear for and against); historic parallels (both World Wars and several smaller operations); those actively pro-war, which includes those for whom 'something had to be done'; religious issues (predominantly Just War and morality); those anti-war; humanitarian relief (not just for Kosovar Albanians but others caught up in the Balkans area); the role of the Russians, particularly in diplomacy; the need (or not) for ground forces; media issues (especially John Simpson); the link to Montenegro; the limitations of air power (which includes some more anti-war sentiment around the perceived failure of bombing and its inaccuracy); and others.



Whilst the list of ‘others’ is again large, it does not dwarf the other categories, suggesting a more focused debate. The anti-war letters were very significant here, reflecting a more unpopular campaign (even if the causes merited action, this was about the means to conduct it), yet the pro-war letters reflected the need for action. The timing of the letters is important; attitudes changed from around 2 April to harden in favour of the war. This was possibly the result of more media coverage of the plight of the Kosovar Albanians and stories of atrocities becoming more evident. Several mentions are made of comparisons with the Holocaust. The letters on the limitations of air power link to the ground forces issue; many said that air power can never win a campaign alone, and that correspondingly ground forces would be required to win this war. The need for ground forces became a particular issue from the end of the first week in April. Bombings of civilian targets figured strongly in the anti-war and air power categories and dented the perception of a successful campaign. Several letters discussed the plight of the refugees, whether in Kosovo or if brought to the UK (both for and against).

Though the end of the conflict on 10 June 1999 was muted in terms of letter responses to the newspapers, perhaps reflecting apathy or quiet relief, some key messages were present on 7 June when it seemed that an end to hostilities was in sight. Air Commodore (Retired) Mackie³⁴², former Vice-President of CND, said that air power had led to a humanitarian tragedy³⁴³. The Bishop of Barking said that a Just War had been conducted

³⁴² Alastair Mackie served in the RAF from 1940-1968, gaining a DFC with 233 Squadron during the Second World War. He was later a pilot on nuclear bombers before retiring and becoming CND Vice President for 15 years. His memoirs are published as *Some of the People All the Time* (London: Book Guild Publishing, 2006)

³⁴³ *The Times* 7 June 1999 p. 21

in an unjust way, and called for a re-examination of Just War theory³⁴⁴. And a Denis Christian, presumably a member of the general public, said it had not been our finest hour, that there should be no victory parade, and that we should be very careful in issuing medals³⁴⁵. Whether these be reasonable responses is largely irrelevant; this was a campaign with publicly evident errors, with a single strategy that did not work. Public support might have been strong for the plight of the refugees, but the image of the Armed Forces was tainted.

Conclusion

The five campaigns considered here show different slants on British opinion. Borneo showed what was possible away from the eyes of the media. The Falklands showed an unpopular Government facing much debate internally within the party and within Parliament over the reasons for the conflict, yet military success brought popularity and a unique bond between the political leadership and the military. When much of the elite urged caution or outright opposition to war for a few islands with a tiny population so far from the UK, where ownership claims were uncomfortably confused, they were surprised by the depth of feeling from the populace which aligned strongly with the Government that action needed to be taken for people they'd never heard of, but were effectively British. This was a true defencist campaign³⁴⁶ and, if there were any sense of humiliation from Suez, this campaign exorcised it for the British in a way that the Gulf War did for the US. It showed the divisions in the church, and an inability to respond to what the

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*

³⁴⁶ Though opponents would argue it was colonialist in nature – and arguably crusading in Ceadal's terms.

public (and politicians) wanted and expected to hear. It split the newspaper community, part-advocating a strong response and part-wanting diplomatic actions to be allowed to prevail. It was a unique campaign, small in size, with military forces opposing each other with little or no civilian involvement.

The first Gulf War was a campaign over a much longer period, with general political consensus, and a public who seemed much clearer that this was over oil than either politicians or elite debaters. The populace seems to have been the strongest advocates for action within Europe, and the most prepared to take military action, perhaps a reflection of military success in the Falklands. Military success led to political success, and the elite debates over the efficacy of sanctions seems to have passed most of the rest of the public by. The Church seems to have tried to respond to their ill-prepared approach to the Falklands by producing a more positive, Just War-based, commentary, but that simply exposed the splits with those more pacifist in nature. The role of the BBC was again brought into sharp relief; to what extent was it the mouthpiece of the British perspective, and to what extent should it portray truth in its reporting, however uncomfortable that might be. In some senses this was the first media war, and the attempts to manage that media were made much harder by the pace and immediacy of information. For the public though, the lack of correspondence in the press is striking, and seems to indicate quiet support, or resignation.

Bosnia marks the first of the more moralist interventions, or crusading in Ceadal's terms. The public was quite clear that something needed to be done, and was prepared to support convoy escorting, but did not accept that this was worth taking losses over.

Kosovo marked yet another stage in the debate. Now in a very moralist intervention, where ethnic cleansing was the issue, the public seemed to accept that something needed to be done, but were very unconvinced that the case had been made, or debated adequately. And there was not a consensus for taking losses.

What is clear from the evidence is a differential picture of engagement at the political level, divergence of views at the 'elite' level, and a general lack of interest or depth of knowledge by the wider population. There is also a strong sense of a return to previous conflicts, rather than the one at hand, which links strongly to earlier comments on Remembrance and the First World War in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 7. THE MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE

Much of this thesis has relied upon evidence from the media to evaluate public opinion to events. But the media itself deserves some study. There is a tendency to talk of mass communication and mass media. But the reality is that the media is not of a single type or format, and the audience is not a mass either, but a series of groups by age, sex, religion, socio-economic groups and so on¹. Mass has been used in various texts as a deprecatory term² – hence the mass-circulation newspapers are assumed to be trivial in content and mass art is viewed as not good enough for the elite. What is curious is that newspapers and television are designed to communicate with the individual reader or viewer, rather than a group. But the potential power of the media was recognised by the Committee for Imperial Defence in the First World War as being of ‘incalculable significance for political stability’, and during the General Strike of 1926 as offering the Government ‘a most powerful weapon’, given suitable control and expertise³. As sociologists like Gouldner⁴ pointed out, the media mediates in selecting and editing items, accentuating some and repressing others according to their own rule set. The media stands between the public and the ‘elites’ of politicians, institutions, industry and other driving groups. They will therefore have their own rules for operating in that space,

¹ Wright-Mills distinguishes between a mass society and a community of publics, depending on the degree of autonomy, the ability to voice opinion, the rule sets that apply, and the ratio of givers of information to receivers. Neither extreme describes the UK public (as Wright-Mills would recognise) but the way the media operates tends to treat the populace as a mass. Wright-Mills *Op cit* p. 302.

² Badsey and Philo interviews *Op cit*

³ Eldridge, J, Kitzinger, J, and Williams, K, *The Mass Media & Power in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997) p. 13. ‘War not only creates a supply of news but a demand for it. So deep-rooted is the fascination in war and all things appertaining to it that...a paper has only to put up on its placard “A great battle” for its sales to mount up.’ Cited by Lasswell 1927 and then by Carruthers, S, in *The Media at War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2000) p. 3

⁴ Gouldner, A, *The Dialectics of Ideology and Technology* (London: Macmillan 1976)

which will determine what is reported and how it is presented, quite apart from any claims of objectivity⁵. Even Kate Adie⁶ acknowledged that the characteristics of television news include being ‘highly selective, necessarily simplified, [and] suspected of some bias⁷.’ Nick Davies, formerly of the *Guardian*, talks of ‘masses of journalists who are....genuinely dedicated people, ..yet frequently they fail to tell the truth⁸.’

Hiram Johnson’s 1917 statement of truth being the first casualty of war has been much-used, but the reality is that war and peace are not distinct states, particularly during the four decades studied here, and as Carruthers points out, we do not move from truth in peace to lies or half truths in war neatly either⁹.

The study of media and the effects on the public in the UK started with Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince in 1958 and their work on television and the behaviour of children¹⁰. Much of the work over the next twenty years focused on the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, bringing together neo-Marxist, structuralist and semiotic theories¹¹. Empirical studies were conducted by the Glasgow Media Group from the mid-1970s, and became the main source for those looking at how messages are received, as much as how they are transmitted¹².

⁵ Tuchman suggests that journalistic objectivity is claimed by presenting ‘conflicting possibilities’. Tuchman, G, ‘Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen’s Notions of Objectivity’, *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972) p. 676. See also Mermin *Op cit* p. 9

⁶ BBC correspondent

⁷ Adie, K, ‘The Media Portrayal of the Military’ in Badsey *Op cit* p. 51

⁸ Davies, N, *Flat Earth News* (London: Chatto and Windus 2008) p. 13

⁹ Carruthers, S, *The media at war* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2000) p. 23

¹⁰ Cited in Eldridge, J, *Getting the Message*, (London: Routledge, 1993) p. 35

¹¹ Davies, H, in Eldridge, J, *Getting the Message*, *Op cit* p. 36

¹² It is notable that that Curran and Seaton observe no historic correlation between public opinion and the political character of the press, quoting the power of the radical press in 1860 when the working class was

Media, the plural of medium, covers such things as television, radio, film, newspapers, advertising and more recently, the Internet. We know that the media can have a dramatic effect on public opinion: the report on Ethiopia by Michael Buerk for the BBC in July 1984 raised some £9M for the starving population¹³. The situation had been developing for many months, and so it is clear that the effects of the BBC and ITV coverage were largely responsible for the surge in public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee. Not until the Buerk report of October 1984 did the situation become a crisis in the public's mind. Buerk's first report in July was syndicated to 63 television stations around the world; his second report was carried by 425 broadcast stations worldwide, with a potential audience estimated at 470 million people. That led to *Band Aid* releasing a hit single that Christmas. The subsequent *Live Aid* concert in July 1985 was watched by an estimated 1.5 billion people¹⁴.

But it was more than just a financial reward from the public; it galvanised governments into action. Reports anticipating the famine had been coming in for some time:

The entire aid world has been screaming from the rooftops for the last eighteen months that what has happened in Ethiopia was about to occur, yet it was only when we saw it in colour on the screens in our living rooms that the Government acted¹⁵.

divided and defeated, and the election of 1918, where Labour gained 22% of the vote, yet no support from any national daily or Sunday newspaper. In Curran, J, and Seaton, J, *Power without Responsibility* (Abingdon: Routledge 2003 6th Edn) p. 25

¹³ Eldridge, J, *Getting the Message*, *Op cit* p. 106

¹⁴ *Ibid* p. 121

¹⁵ Russell Johnston MP, in *Hansard* 68(1984-5), 22 November 1984

Oxfam's July 1984 report of the likely famine in Wollo and Tigre provinces of Ethiopia was ignored by the public and politicians alike. So, too, were the reports from the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and the International Disasters Institute dating back to 1982¹⁶.

The key questions here are why do some news reports have an effect and others do not? What is it about the way things are said or portrayed that makes them more or less effective? How does the public discern the difference between fact and fiction? And in the context of war, what effect does media coverage have? In particular, do the media lead opinion, follow it, reflect it, or run counter to it? This is avowedly not a sociological study, but an historical one, nevertheless, there are opportunities to utilise much of the research already carried out by other social and media institutions albeit in a slightly different way. This chapter looks at a series of case studies to try and consider the relationship between public views and media coverage: the *Mayaguez* incident; the audience data for *Trooping the Colour* and the *Festival of Remembrance*; the fourth series of *Blackadder*; and *Soldier Soldier*. It goes on to consider film, theatre and cartoons. But before that, it is necessary to consider a few factors about the nature of the media, and how it works.

In 1950, 344 000 television licences were sold. Only ten years later, the number had increased to 10 470 000. At that time, all of the licences were for black and white televisions; colour was introduced in 1967 and the first 20 000 colour licences were

¹⁶ Demonstrated by the inaction at the UN General Assembly until *Visnews* coverage in October 1984 inspired them to address the issue as their main agenda item.

issued in 1968, still a low figure compared with the 15.1 million black and white licences¹⁷. Colour only overtook black and white in 1977. By 2000/1, the BBC issued 23.4 million TV licences¹⁸, albeit Terra Media estimates there to have been nearly an additional million sets in use in UK¹⁹ whilst BARB estimated 24.1 million homes to have televisions in 2000²⁰. The first commercial video cassette recorder (VCR) was produced by Philips in 1972²¹. After a battle over formats (Betamax v VHS) these became significant in the 1980s. The Annan Report²² estimated there to be 40 000 machines in use at that time. By the end of 1985, Crisell estimates there to have been 8.5m VCRs in use, and by 1989/90, 60% of all households had a machine²³. Gunter estimated that 70% had a machine in 1989, and 80% by 1993; with rises in teletext from 30% to 49% and home computers from 26% to 29% over the same period²⁴. It is simply not possible to evaluate how this changed people's viewing habits or still less their attitudes²⁵, but it is reasonable to suppose that people watched rather more television than the broad figures below suggest, simply by watching recordings. Though relevant, VCRs will not be considered further in this work because of estimating difficulties.

¹⁷ http://www.terramedia.co.uk/reference/statistics/television/television_licences.htm accessed 9 January 2009.

¹⁸ HC 821 Session 2001-2002: 15 May 2002 'The BBC: Collecting the Television Licence Fee' NAO Report

¹⁹ http://www.terramedia.co.uk/reference/statistics/television/television_households.htm accessed 9 January 2009.

²⁰ <http://www.barb.co.uk/tvfacts.cfm?fullstory=true&includepage=ownership&flag=tvfacts> accessed 6 December 2008.

²¹ Crisell, A, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (Abingdon: Routledge 2007 2nd Edn) p. 215

²² Annan Committee, *The Report of the Committee on the Future of Broadcasting 1977* Cmnd 6753

²³ Crisell *Op cit* p. 215

²⁴ Gunter, B, Sancho-Aldridge, J, and Winstone, P, *Television: The Public's View 1993* (London: John Libbey 1994) p. 11

²⁵ Although Gunter's work quotes the power of having a remote control with the first VCRs! See Gunter *Op cit* p. 9

Radio licences were combined with television licences in 1946, but the importance of radio should not be underestimated. The peak number of radio licences were issued in 1950 (11.9 million²⁶), but this declined steadily over the next few years as television took over. The clear implication is that, throughout the period, the vast majority of homes had access to radio or television broadcasts.

Newspapers consolidated considerably between the First and Second World Wars, but matched that by dramatic increases in circulation,

²⁶ http://www.terramedia.co.uk/reference/statistics/radio/radio_licences.htm accessed 9 January 2009.

Table 7.1 Newspaper circulation²⁷

	1910	1939	1951	1960	1970	1974	1997
<i>Daily Express</i>	900 000	4.2m	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.2m	1.2m
<i>Daily Mail</i>	900 000	1.5m	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	230 000	640 000	n/a	n/a	1.4m	n/a	1.1m
<i>News of the World</i>	n/a	n/a	8.4m	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>People</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5m	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Sunday Pictorial</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.5m	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Sunday Times</i> ²⁸	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.5m	1.2m	1.4m

Circulation increased into the 1960s, with the *Daily Express* reaching its peak around 1960 and the Sunday papers performing similarly. But the 1960s saw the start of the decline in circulation as television took over in importance. Indeed, by 1959, the ITV advertising revenue already exceeded the combined revenues of all the Fleet Street

²⁷ Also worthy of note are the ex-Servicemen from the Second World War who went on to take editorial or ownership roles in newspapers for the next 30-40 years eg Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Cudlipp (*Daily Mirror*), Colonel David Astor (*Observer*), Lieutenant Colonel Michael Berry (*Daily Telegraph*), Major Alastair Hetherington (*Guardian*), Major William Deedes (*Daily Telegraph*) Major Tiny Lear (*News of the World*), John Junor (Fleet Air Arm pilot) (*Sunday Express*) Greenslade R *Press Gang* (London: Macmillan 2003) p. 5

²⁸ Rubenstein, Prof William D, Professor of Modern History University of Wales – Aberystwyth <http://www.socialaffairsunit.org.uk/blog/archives/001137.php> accessed 9 January 2009.

products combined²⁹. In 1992 it was estimated that 59% of adults read one or more national daily newspapers.³⁰ From 1993 onwards, the Office of National Statistics shows that the most widely-read newspaper was the *Sun* (around 22-20%), followed by the rest of the tabloids³¹. The broadsheets (*Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Financial Times*) cumulatively only gained 16% of daily readership in 1993/94, and 12% in 2000/01. Of these, only the *Daily Telegraph* exceeded the lowest performing tabloid (*Daily Star*) routinely. But the period from 1960 was not simply about a reduction in circulation figures, and fewer titles, but also to a transformation in production from 1986 and the move from Fleet Street to Wapping. The move itself was significant; the technological change to computer typesetting removed swathes of employees; and the implications for faster, easier communication from journalist to reader was transforming.

From these figures, it is evident that, although cinema and radio are significant, particularly in the early years, it is newspapers and television that predominate in terms of people seeing those media³². That does not translate directly into effective communication of messages however³³. Kate Adie noted that the top three stories of the BBC 6 and 9 o'clock news bulletins of 1995 were about the Balkans, yet the headlines were 'in flat variance' to those of the broadsheets, suggesting that television tends to

²⁹ Sandbrook, D, *White Heat* (London, Little Brown 2006) p. 242

³⁰ http://www.editorsweblog.org/2007/12/uk_paper_readership_dips_5m_in.php accessed 9 January 2009

³¹ Social Trends 32 Table 13.7 <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5191.csv> accessed 9 January 2009.

³² Lloyd suggests that the newspapers became the preserve of the elite. Lloyd *Op cit* p. 28. 'television is now the supreme news medium, in the sense it is used and respected by almost everyone. It is the only news medium presently capable of reaching across the whole of British society.' Hargreaves, I, and Thomas, J, *New News, Old News* (London: Independent Television Commission and British Standards Commission 2002)

³³ Bourdieu suggests that 'Television (much more than the newspapers) offers an increasingly depoliticized, aseptic, bland view of the world, and it is increasingly dragging down the newspapers in its slide to demagoguery and subordination to commercial values'. Bourdieu, P, *Acts of Resistance* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1998) p. 74 He goes on to discuss the coverage of the death of Princess Diana as a case in point.

favour, or focus on, war whereas the broadsheets do not.³⁴ Actually, researchers at Cardiff showed that the coverage of newspapers and television was not that different: 48% of broadcast stories in their research were in papers published earlier that day, and a further 42% of stories appear in newspapers the following day³⁵. Rupert Smith, working in London in 1993, focusing on the Balkans, recalls that he relied heavily on the media for his contextual information, but equally swiftly found that television can be so persuasive that it meant viewers could ignore other reports from other sources because the images were so powerful; he therefore took to listening to the radio, and not watching television until he had read all the other reports³⁶. Williamson also noted³⁷, in a study of 1973 television, that BBC1 and ITV had a particular flavour for retrospective military material. The Glasgow University Media Group³⁸ quoted a BBC survey from 1962 which demonstrated that 58% of the population used television as their main source of news, with only 33% relying on newspapers³⁹. This is significant given the data above which shows that the early 1960s saw peaks in newspaper circulation, whilst television licences were still on the increase. The same survey showed that 68% of those interviewed thought that the television news was the most trustworthy, whilst only 6% said that of the newspapers.

³⁴ Adie, K, *Op cit* p. 52 [It also reflects a BBC decision in 1992 to expend resources on a permanent presence in the Balkans, and hence to use them for regular reports.] Williamson suggested twenty years earlier that the priorities for the television news were those of the minority press, reinforcing Adie's point. Williamson *Op cit* p. 41

³⁵ Davies *Op cit* p. 94

³⁶ Smith R *Op cit* p. 340

³⁷ Williamson *Op cit* p. 100

³⁸ Also known as the Glasgow Media Group and the Glasgow Media Research Unit over time, here used interchangeably.

³⁹ Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News*, (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul 1976) p. 1

In 1982, it was estimated that the two main evening news programmes had an audience of around 16 million people⁴⁰. Gunter's study of 1993 showed that the news was the single top item of television output creating the most interest⁴¹. A study by the Independent Television Commission on television viewing habits in 2002 showed that 79% of the population regarded the television news as their main source of world news⁴². This was quite closely replicated by the student groups used by the Glasgow Media Group in their audience studies on Israeli/Palestinian conflicts in 2001 and 2002, where 82 and 85% of students cited the news as their main source of information⁴³. That said, the broadcaster George Alagiah said in a focus group that

In depth it takes a long time, but we're constantly being told that the attention span of our average viewer is about 20 seconds and if we don't grab people – and we've looked at the figures – the number of people who shift channels around in my programme now at six o'clock, there's a movement of about 3 million people in the first minute, coming in and out⁴⁴.

This starts to raise doubts about the level of the audience's understanding – even when the apparent audience figures are high and when people respond in surveys that they derive their world view from the television news. Furthermore, Wright-Mills argued that, even in 1956, the tendency was for people not to take things from first-hand experience, but to not believe them until they read about it in newspapers or heard it on the radio (and by modern extension, saw it on television)⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Glasgow University Media Group *Really Bad News* (London: Writers and Readers 1982) p. 1

⁴¹ Gunter *Op cit* p. 34 Table 3.3

⁴² Hargreaves and Thomas *Op cit*

⁴³ Philo, G, and Berry, M, *Bad News from Israel* (London: Pluto Press 2004) p. 210

⁴⁴ *Bad News from Israel Op cit* p. 211

⁴⁵ Wright-Mills *Op cit* p. 311

Leaving aside dedicated programmes such as *Panorama*, *This Week* and *Despatches*, it is reasonable to suppose that most people draw on the television news programmes for most of their information on war and conflict⁴⁶, and will make their personal assessments based on this information. It is therefore worth considering who watches the news, before looking at the content of the news. The 1975 work by the Glasgow Media Group quotes the *Annual Review of BBC Audience Research Findings of 1973/4*⁴⁷. It showed that most families in UK in the early-1970s watched four or five hours television per day, and 60% watched at least one news broadcast. From 1965 to 1974, figures for the main evening news were fairly constant at 17% of the population watching each of the main BBC1 and ITV broadcasts. Both in 1962 and in 1970, those surveyed said that the television news was the more accurate and trustworthy, even amongst those who favoured newspapers as their main source of information. But even then, only 62% of those interviewed in 1962 thought the BBC to be always impartial, and that had reduced to 47% by 1970⁴⁸. What all this data tells us is that with greater affluence, more people bought televisions and relied on the television news for their information on the world. In general, the lower classes favoured ITV. As society changed, and people were more inclined to question societal norms, so the doubts over impartiality increased – and the questions over later programmes from both broadcasters reinforces this point.

⁴⁶ The audience for current affairs programming reduced by 32% between 1994 and 2001. Hargreaves and Thomas *Op cit* p. 6

⁴⁷ Glasgow Media Group *Op cit* pp. 2-4

⁴⁸ *Ibid* p. 5

The really difficult question is how the news is received, and what people make of it.

Interestingly, a Finnish study in 1971 said that, even with help from an interviewer, 48% of people questioned immediately after the news could remember nothing of its content⁴⁹.

The next question is how the news is portrayed, and how impartial it really is.

Impartiality in news presentation on television has been an on-going research topic for the Glasgow Media Group⁵⁰. Since 1975, they have looked at industrial disputes, the Falklands War, the Gulf War, Rwanda, Ethiopia and the Israel/Palestine dispute. Using empirical methods, they have used a common methodology for each event. They have recorded television news from all stations (and the availability of affordable and reliable VCRs really marked the start of this type of work), and then categorised it by topic area, length of time, style of presentation and so on. They have looked at presenters and linguistics in each case. To look at the audience reaction they have, uniquely, used a series of focus groups of varying age groups and socio-economic groups, and in particular employed a news game system of inviting individuals and groups to look at a series of stills from the news, in order to build a commentary around that issue. This not only allows the researchers to look at the consistency of the story with the original text, but also whether common phrases have been recalled. There are two potential difficulties in this approach. The first is that the Glasgow Media Group was built mainly of

⁴⁹ Cited in Eldridge, J, and Philo, G, *Glasgow Media Group Reader Vol 1: News content, language and visuals* (Abingdon: Routledge 1995) p. 41

⁵⁰ Also relevant is the propaganda model put forward by Herman and Chomsky, which says that the model 'suggests that the "societal purpose" of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state'. Herman, E S, and Chomsky, N, *Manufacturing Consent* (London: Vintage 1994) p. 298. It is not the purpose of this work to debate the Chomsky theory, but the evidence put forward in this thesis does suggest that the media will generally support a strong governmental line, where there are no internal divisions at elite level, partly reflecting availability of information, and in part reflecting what they perceive their readers/listeners/viewers want to see and hear.

sociologists, with generally a left-leaning political stance⁵¹. The other issue is that of focus groups, where discussion can not only bring out memories from the subconscious of topics seen on television, but just as easily provide reinforcement of things that might not have been there – the modern expression being ‘groupthink’. Arguably, the BBC is bound by its Charter, is state-funded, regulated by Parliament and is ultimately constrained to support the state in time of war⁵². That said, it retains a considerable standing as an impartial and unbiased broadcaster, achieved by journalists ‘balancing a story’ – i.e. looking at all sides of the argument⁵³. O’Neill is amongst many who argue that the ‘market-place’ drives broadcasters to ‘present news in a way which is congruent with the pre-existing values and beliefs of its audience’⁵⁴. In other words, you get what you want and expect to hear⁵⁵.

One of the questions in presenting news is ‘Who says so?’ At the political level, most broadcasters tend towards use of a minister or senior civil servant for information. This has some problems in that the media are then reliant on the accuracy of what that individual says. Governments will attempt to manipulate the news by only giving certain information at a particular time. The Wakeham attempt to ensure that all Government

⁵¹ Certainly the early work on industrial relations shows a greater concern for particular interpretations of ‘the facts’, and the letter sent by the Glasgow Group to the BBC and the IBA pointing formally to the existence of bias in television, signed by over 100 people, included the General Secretaries of twenty-two Trades Unions and seventy-three MPs including Tony Benn, Ian Mikardo, Michael Meacher and Joan Maynard, demonstrates a particular concern from the left-wing in politics.

⁵² Lloyd (editor *Financial Times*) argues that the state always has ultimate power over the media, because of legal controls, but equally that politicians need the media to provide access to the people. Lloyd, J, *What the Media are doing to our Politics* (London: Constable 2004) p. 13

⁵³ Adie, K, *Op cit* p. 68

⁵⁴ O’Neill, J, in Belsey, A, and Chadwick, R, (ed) *Ethical Issues in Journalism and the Media* (Abingdon: Routledge 1992) p. 22

⁵⁵ This is not to say that you always get what you ask for. Newspaper condemnation over Suez led to a fall in circulation and an angry response at the *News Chronicle*, and significantly at the *Daily Mirror*. The *Observer* lost advertisers, but not readers. As Cudlipp recognised, the populace want to support their troops in combat. Greenslade, *Press Gang Op cit* p. 136

departments spoke ‘from the same hymn sheet’ during the Gulf War was an example of how this can be used⁵⁶. One of the changes over the four decades has been the increasing political commentary as opposed to simply news presentation⁵⁷. Hence the change from the style of the 1950s and early 1960s: ‘Have you anything to say to us Prime Minister?’ to the reported style of Harold Evans - ‘Always ask yourself, when you interview a politician – why is this bastard lying to me?’⁵⁸ - which reflects the cultural change in diminishing respect for authority. We know from the Glasgow Group’s work that the initial framework set for a topic is the frame of reference generally picked up and retained by the public, even if events subsequently move on, or if explanations change. An example of this would be the explanations surrounding the shooting of three IRA personnel on Gibraltar. Work by the Glasgow Group showed that the public were quite convinced of a number of elements: that the individuals were armed; that there was a bomb; and that a key witness was a prostitute. All of these elements subsequently proved to be false, but they were part of the early broadcasts and were retained by the public as the key framework against which to judge the actions of British Servicemen⁵⁹.

Another example of selective release of information is the lobby correspondent scheme.

The Parliamentary lobby correspondent system is self-policed by the lobby

⁵⁶ It also reflects Chomsky’s assertion that ‘It is necessary to whip up the population in support of foreign adventures. Usually the population is pacifist, just like they [the US public] were during the First World War. The public sees no reason to get involved in foreign adventures, killing and torture. So you *have* to whip them up. And to whip them up you have to frighten them.’ Chomsky *N Media Control* (New York: Seven Stories 2002 2nd Edn) p30. This plays to the demonization of enemy leaders to support war eg Hussein, Galtieri, Milosevic etc.

⁵⁷ Lloyd *Op cit* p16 states that there were no political columnists in the 1950s, but Hugo Young listed at least 221 in the early 2000s.

⁵⁸ *Ibid* p17

⁵⁹ Eldridge, J, Kitzinger, J, and Williams, K, *The Mass Media & Power in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997) p. 161

correspondents but allows advanced access to white papers and off the record conversations with parliamentarians provided they are not quoted. This provides a useful outlet for parliamentarians, and offers exclusive information to the media, but it does allow for claims that it prevents proper journalistic analysis and challenge in a balanced way. Arguably, the process of embedding journalists with designated units in the Gulf War, as described in the MOD rules mentioned in the Campaigns chapter had a similar effect. The access to the military allowed unprecedented coverage of what was happening in that particular segment of the battlefield, but the press were confined to whatever they were fed by their minders. A significant change between 1960-2000 is the reduction in the number of journalists with military experience, which inevitably has an effect on the level of understanding between military and media, and the way news is subsequently portrayed⁶⁰.

In an industrial example of dustmen's strikes, the Glasgow Group determined that the source of 'facts' tended to be management, whereas the labour side provided detail on 'events' such as picket lines or demonstrations. The parallel with the Armed Forces is the tendency in both television and newspapers to rely on senior officers for an interpretation of the strategy, and on soldiers for their 'feelings' on what was going on – the coverage of the Gulf conflict for No 15 Squadron in Dhahran being a good example, where Wing Commander John Broadbent was used to describe the operation, but junior officers and other ranks provided personal feelings on their deployment⁶¹. In the

⁶⁰ Taylor, P, 'Myths: Military ,Media and IRA' in Badsey *Op cit* p. 182a

⁶¹ *The Times* 4 February 1991 for example.

Falklands, the UK side was presented by civil servant Ian MacDonald, with comments from deployed commanders such as Julian Thompson and Sandy Woodward.

The next part of the question is ‘What is said’. Part of the Glasgow Group’s criticism of the television news is that it fails to give the context to allow the public a greater understanding of the issues. They use the example of Israel and Palestine to illustrate this point⁶². There is not space here to rehearse the historical background to the dispute, but the coverage of the intifada in September 2000 to the Egyptian peace talks in October 2000 included some 91 news broadcasts⁶³. The effectiveness of that coverage, and the understanding it brought, might have been greater had there been greater reference to the war of 1948, the forced displacement of Palestinians, the war of 1967 and the borders it produced, and the subsequent policies on settlement expansion and Israeli insistence on road control in and around Palestinian settlements. The demonstration of this lies in the responses of students to the news as measured in 2001⁶⁴. 82% relied on the television news as their main source of information. 66% did not know who occupied the occupied territories. Only 20% recognised the settlers to be Israelis. Only 8% correctly identified that the Palestinians had suffered a lot more casualties than the Israelis. The only conclusion from this group is that the television news either did not provide sufficient

⁶² Philo G and Berry M, *Bad News from Israel* (London: Pluto Press 2004) Chapter 1 pp.1-88. In *More Bad News* by the Glasgow Media Group in 1980 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1980), the team alleges that the news is partial because the only explanation provided in the 1975 wages dispute is that wage increases are responsible for inflation. Other explanations such as material cost increases, lack of capital investment and increasing profits are ignored in favour of the Government (and majority) view. Their contention is that this is mutually reinforcing in the public mind; that as they believe it so broadcasters continue with that message. This may or may not be the case; arguably wage increases must be contributory to price inflation. Nevertheless, the Israeli example makes a similar if less emotive and controversial point.

⁶³ *Bad News from Israel Op cit* p. 100

⁶⁴ *Bad News from Israel Op cit* pp. 261-5

information for the public to recognise the true causes and effects of the conflict, or that the level of interest or recollection was not strong enough for this to have made a significant impression. A good summary was made by a female participant from a low income group in Glasgow. She said that the Israel/Palestinian problem could be solved if the Palestinians would just stop throwing stones. When she was told that the Palestinians had lost their homes, she said that if you knew that, you'd throw bricks yourself⁶⁵.

Philo suggests that, in the possible context of Conservatives and Labour agreeing that the public sector needs to be reduced in size and that taxation should not be increased, the media would reflect and reinforce that consensus⁶⁶. The parallel is that the media will seek to exploit divisions at the political and elite levels⁶⁷. Dixon argues that the fact that politicians recognise this likely outcome causes them to adopt a bi-partisan approach⁶⁸. There are numerous examples in the context of coverage of war and conflict where this can be demonstrated: the political opposition to the Falklands and Gulf Wars by people such as Tony Benn⁶⁹; the divisions over war aims in the Gulf War – whether to seek regime change in 1991; and different explanations for the shooting of IRA terrorists in Gibraltar. Wilton and Clifford make a similar point from the Bosnia campaign, where the proximity of major military and other headquarters allowed journalists to telephone or visit each location quickly and to seek discrepancies or divisions which then became a story⁷⁰. In a reverse way, *Bloody Sunday* was made twenty years after the event;

⁶⁵ *Bad News from Israel Op cit* p. 259

⁶⁶ Philo G ed. *Message Received* (Harlow: Longman 1999) p. xi

⁶⁷ Badsey used the example of the war in Iraq in 2003 to demonstrate the point. Badsey interview *Op cit*.

⁶⁸ Dixon P *Op cit* p. 99

⁶⁹ Adie suggests that the political elites will, by and large, have the strongest voices in any media debate; only rarely are they unlikely to determine the character of media coverage. Adie, K, *Op cit* p. 66

⁷⁰ Clifford and Wilton *Op cit* pp. 16-17

programme-maker Peter Taylor was able to demonstrate that this was ‘an undisciplined cock-up, not a conspiracy’ using interviews with the Company Sergeant-Major and the then commanding officer, Derek Wilford, which dispelled myths of conspiracy in favour of truth⁷¹.

If there is one thing that the period has produced, it is a panoply of dramas regarding war, from films to television dramas to comedy. From *The Great War*⁷² documentary, to the thirty-two different series⁷³ between 1959 and 1974 on the adventures of secret agents of various types (a reflection of the Cold War), to comedies such as *Blackadder*, ‘*Allo ‘Allo*, and *Get Some In!*, war and conflict has been explored in a whole range of ways.

Examples of these types form part of the case studies, so it is worth considering the effect that fiction has on people’s attitudes. Kitzinger draws attention to this in her work on audience reception⁷⁴. She reports on a sexually abused 16 year-old girl’s reaction to the character of Beth Jordache who was abused in *Brookside*:

Before that everything I saw seemed to say that if you were abused you’d be strange, different, keep yourself in a wee corner. Watching Beth has really helped me⁷⁵.

Watching fiction clearly has an impact; Kitzinger also relates that many children when asked had seen the film *Pulp Fiction*, and could relate to the killers Vince and Jules. But

⁷¹ Taylor, P, *Op cit* p. 36

⁷² The biggest documentary made for television by that time and used to launch BBC2. Criticised by the Imperial War Museum for not making clear which scenes were reconstructed as opposed to original material but nevertheless a powerful series. Bond, B, *Op cit* pp. 68-9

⁷³ Sandbrook, D, *White Heat*, (London, Little Brown 2006) p. 377

⁷⁴ Kitzinger, J, ‘A sociology of media power: key issues in audience reception research’, in Philo G, *Message received Op cit* p. 1

⁷⁵ *Ibid*

that did not mean they immediately went out to rob or kill indiscriminately – though Philo points out the cases of a sixteen year-old boy who was convicted for a murder in 1997 using a machete where he had documented a ‘rule-set’ taken from television programmes, and a random murder by two boys in 1994 that had been created by their obsession with the exploits of the SAS and in particular, *Bravo Two-Zero*. But these are exceptions: by and large the public are quite clearly discerning. But they can reproduce with considerable accuracy elements of the dialogue, and certain images evidently leave a lasting impression. Memory recall does not equate to understanding however. The description of a false rape accusation in the film *Disclosure* certainly related to how vulnerable people felt in their own lives⁷⁶, demonstrating the power of fiction to influence real life attitudes. But the other point to make from Kitzinger’s work is that a single message can be received in very different ways by a diverse audience. The final book in Pat Barker’s trilogy, *The Ghost Road* (1995) contains a last scene with a Lieutenant Hallet repeatedly crying out ‘shotvarfet’, a cry taken up by the other soldiers, and assumed by the psychologist Rivers to be ‘It’s not worth it’ – but Bond suggests that this is 1990s ‘whingeing’ transposed to 1918⁷⁷.

Adie’s examination of the BBC news of 1995⁷⁸ shows that, despite the presence of British troops in Bosnia, the media preferred action to inaction. With apparent quiet in Bosnia, five stories appeared in the top three items on particular evenings: a British soldier involved in a fatal car accident in Cyprus; two Scots Guards gaoled for murder in Belfast; disciplining of members of The Parachute Regiment for assault; the enforced

⁷⁶ *Ibid* p. 6

⁷⁷ Bond B *Op cit* pp76-7

⁷⁸ Adie K, *Op cit* p54

retirement of ACM Sir Sandy Wilson; and the case of Private Lee Clegg (The Parachute Regiment) resurfaced. The common theme of all these stories is the exposure of those in whom the media [and by implication society at large] place a higher responsibility and trust, who are perceived to have failed to meet the required standards. Few professions outside politics and the law attract such attention, even in some cases for many years after leaving the Services (the often-termed ‘former soldier’ in news reports). The other side of the coin is the apparent respect by the public for members of the Armed Forces:

Ask British television viewers what they remember of British troops in Bosnia and they will recall not the military manoeuvres, or the negotiations, or the statistics, but the faces and the voices under their blue berets!⁷⁹

This says a lot, albeit from a reporter’s perspective, about the public engagement with junior soldiers, rather than leaders. The comments here also reflect the difference between ‘peace’ and ‘war’: ‘when the nation moves from peace to war, the focus changes from the banal to the dramatic’⁸⁰.

The final part of this section concerns how news is presented. The Glasgow Media Group’s work on industrial relations in 1975 had many examples to show that all is not quite as it seems. For example, an ITN broadcast from 1 May 1975 which said

On a day when nearly 8000 car workers were made idle by a dispute in the Midlands, the president of the motor manufacturers’ society, Sir Raymond Brooks, has said no major British firm is making a profit⁸¹.

⁷⁹ Adie, K, *Op cit* p. 59

⁸⁰ Pickup, Lt Cdr D J, ‘The Media and the Minder: The Royal Navy’s Perspective’ in Badsey *Op cit* p. 147

⁸¹ ITN 1750 1 May 1975 cited in *Bad News*, *Op cit* p. 25

The linkage here is clearly made between disputes and lack of profits – which may or may not be true, but is an implied linkage. Similarly, the news tends to broadcast images from the factory gates during disputes and, if there are going to be any interviews, they are done in the heat of the moment rather than in the calm, more measured environment of the studio, where the management and politicians are usually interviewed. So there are questions here about imagery, frameworks within which the issue is set for public consumption, the choice of language, and subtle messages on who is interviewed and how that is conducted. The relevance of the industrial examples is that by extrapolation, coverage of war and conflict is equally partial, no matter what the intent of the broadcasters. In the length of time available to cover the issues, some will be deemed more newsworthy than others, access to film material will be limited by resources, and there will be choices made about what the public wants to hear and see. As an example, Martin Bell (BBC) was asked by a London newsroom editor ‘Is there blood? We don’t want to see any blood, at least not before the nine pm watershed⁸².’ To that extent, the message coming from the television news is different from the newspapers with a slightly less tight timeline for production, and more space for analysis.

We know that pictures are very effective and well-remembered – Eddie Adams’ image of a Vietcong suspect being shot in the head by General Loan, chief of South Vietnamese police, and that of a girl running burning from a napalm attack are some of the best known images of the Vietnam War⁸³. Equally, Sontag’s syndrome of the 1970s, later

⁸² Cited in Stewart, I, ‘Reporting Conflicts: Who calls the Shots?’ in Badsey *Op cit* p. 70

⁸³ McLaughlin, G, *The War Correspondent* (London: Pluto 2002) p. 32. The debate between Hallin and Culbert over whether public opinion really led to the US exit from Vietnam and the power of the media uses the 1968 Loan shooting as a key factor. Robinson reflects that the image of the shooting at least gave

dubbed ‘compassion fatigue’ of reducing public sympathy through prolonged exposure to such images is also a factor⁸⁴. That said, a Harris poll from 1967 said that, contrary to the conventional wisdom that the war was terminated for lack of public support caused by the media coverage, 64% of people in the US said that the coverage had made them more supportive of the war effort, and only 26% said it had intensified their opposition⁸⁵. This is supported by analysis by Hallin and Lichty looking at coverage of combat in Vietnam which showed a very small proportion actually included US casualties.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Knightley quotes Robin Day as having questioned at RUSI whether a democracy with televisions at home would ever be able to fight a war again, no matter how just⁸⁷. War imagery certainly affected photographers such as George Rodgers, photographer for *Life* magazine:

I lived with the horrors of war for a very long time. It’s one of those sorts of things that does eventually fade with the seasons because the memory’s like an herbaceous border. But I couldn’t look at the Belsen pictures for a good 45 years. They lay in a box and did nothing. I think, at last, they no longer have the power to affect me⁸⁸.

people who were already concerned about the Vietnam War some evidence to support a policy change. Robinson *Op cit* p. 15. See also Knightley *Op cit* p. 451

⁸⁴ Carruthers *Op cit* p. 26. Also relevant is Chomsky’s comment that to ensure the public support war, you have to instill in them a form of ‘martial pride’ to get over what Podhoretz described as part of the Vietnam Syndrome ‘the sickly inhibitions against the use of military force’. Chomsky *Media Control Op cit* pp. 33-34.

⁸⁵ Williams, K, in Eldridge, J, (ed) *Getting the Message Op cit* p. 308. Herman and Chomsky said that the coverage of Vietnam was defined by what it excluded: the anti-war sentiment in the US, the views of the Vietnamese, and the possibility of the US being seen as the aggressor. In *War and the Media* (ed) Daya Kishan Thussu and Freedman, D, (London: Sage 2003) p. 6. Original book by Herman, E S, and Chomsky, N, *Manufacturing Consent* (London: Vintage 1994). Should be noted that opposition to Chomsky’s sometimes extreme political beliefs are strong: Horowitz and Radosh describe Chomsky’s book *Manufacturing Consent* as ‘a vulgar Marxist tract’. In *The Anti Chomsky Reader* Collier, P, and Horowitz, D, (ed) (New York: Encounter 2004) p. 167

⁸⁶ Cited in McLaughlin *Op cit* p. 39. Hallin’s general theory that opposition in Government over Vietnam led to critical coverage was taken forward by Bennett in 1990, and latterly Mermin, terming the media coverage of internal government debate as ‘indexing’ (ie the more debate, the more coverage). Mermin, J, *Debating War and Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999) p. 4

⁸⁷ Knightley *Op cit* p. 452

⁸⁸ *Observer* 4 June 1995

The Falklands coverage was tightly controlled for ‘operational’ reasons. Not least was the need for reporters to use scant military communications systems to get stories back to the UK. Pictures of casualties from the land fighting were not broadcast until the fighting was over. The BBC ‘complained of being told not to use a picture of a body bag and to remove the phrase: “horribly burned”⁸⁹.’ Michael Nicholson was allegedly told by Captain Middleton of HMS *Hermes* that the ITN crew were ‘an embarrassment to him’⁹⁰. Brian Hanrahan’s report of the Argentine bombing at Bluff Cove was delayed while the sentence was removed: ‘Other survivors came off unhurt but badly shaken after hearing the cries of the men trapped below’⁹¹. These and many other examples led to the criticism of the MOD for its close control of the media⁹², and reveal an attempt to maintain public morale by manipulation of the media. Media coordination under Ian MacDonald at the MOD was based on official formal briefings, with no off-the-record debate, and a very formalised distance between the media and the MOD. The BBC’s reaction to the adverse criticism in the House of Commons after the *Panorama* programme described in Chapter 6 and the subsequent mauling received by the Director-General at the House of Commons Select Committee was to be even more sensitive to topics to be covered. For both ITN and BBC were already applying their own censorship of what they perceived the public might not or should not hear and see⁹³. But the BBC

⁸⁹ Glasgow University Media Group, *War and Peace News*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press 1985) p. 9

⁹⁰ Pickup, Lt Cdr D J, ‘The Media and the Minder: The Royal Navy’s Perspective in Badsey’ *Op cit* p. 151

⁹¹ *War and Peace News Op cit* p. 9

⁹² Harris quotes Brian Hitchen of the *Daily Star* as saying ‘Had anyone deliberately set out to confuse the issue they could hardly have been expected to do a better job than the Press Office at the Ministry of Defence on 4 April 1982.’ Harris R *Gotcha!* (London: Faber and Faber 1983) p. 18

⁹³ Knightley reports Nicholson of ITN to have said after the Falklands War that it was different from the other fourteen wars he had covered because: ‘It was Britain’s war. It was *my* war.’ Knightley *Op cit* p. 482

then specifically ruled out (with some subsequent exceptions) interviews with the bereaved, and positive interviews with Argentine diplomats⁹⁴. Coverage was also affected by inter-Service rivalries, each one keen to ensure their own activities were at least proportionately broadcast⁹⁵. The Royal Navy, in particular, felt that they had come off ‘worst’, in that they perceived that the public should have focused on the need for surface ships for such operations (post the Nott Review of 1981) yet the media had led them to focus on Argentinean bombs and the loss of HMS *Sheffield* and HMS *Antelope* (amongst others)⁹⁶.

The Glasgow Media Group looked at the coverage⁹⁷ of two specific incidents – the sinking of the *Belgrano* and the bombing of Port Stanley airfield. In the former case, they found a reluctance to report any suggestion that the vessel was well outside the Exclusion Zone, and still less any proposition that it was heading in another direction. Instead, they found most references to survivors, rather than a debate about casualties. In contrast, the subsequent sinking of HMS *Sheffield* was marked by stories of casualties, rather than survivors – demonstrating the different focus for ‘us’ and ‘them’. In general, this story was portrayed in a pro-Government manner, which thus fixed the story in the public mind. Interestingly, the overly jingoistic approach of the *Sun* led to a fall in circulation⁹⁸. In a Gallup poll in September 1984⁹⁹, 91% of those interviewed said they had read or heard something of the sinking of the *Belgrano*. Of those, 49% believed it

⁹⁴ *Ibid* p. 15

⁹⁵ *Ibid* p. 23

⁹⁶ Pickup, D J, *Op cit* p. 153

⁹⁷ *War and Peace News Op cit* pp. 29-92

⁹⁸ Taylor, Phillip M, *The Military and the Media* in Badsey *Op cit* p. 179

⁹⁹ King, A, (ed) *British Political Opinion 1937-2000 The Gallup Polls* (London: Politico’s 2001) p. 336

had been right to sink the ship, with 31% being against. This suggests that the media had been effective in getting coverage of the event across, but the justification for the case in the intervening two years to the time of the poll had been undermined through subsequent analysis or rejection of the initial media message. Tellingly, 65% felt that Mrs Thatcher had not told the whole truth about the *Belgrano* affair. In the latter case, the efforts of the Vulcan bomber aircraft to close the runway using dumb bombs, followed up by Sea Harrier attacks were depicted by the Government as successful. This was the flavour of all subsequent reporting, even when it became apparent that the islands were indeed being resupplied from the mainland and that reinforcements were being flown in; Argentine film of a Hercules transport using the runway and of a crashed Harrier was dismissed as fake. The airfield simply was not closed. The Glasgow Media Group's analysis concludes that the opinion poll evidence of vast majority support for the Government's actions was swayed by the framing of the questions which did not allow for viable alternatives. They suggest that the media coverage was limited by MoD control, yet set its own editorial rules according to what it saw as the public's needs for information. It is not evident, from the analysis of the opinion poll data in Chapter 6 that the framing of questions was consistently swayed, and so it is hard to justify a conclusion that the public did not necessarily support the Government's actions and might not have done had they known all the facts. But it is certainly true to say that the media coverage was filtered in time and content. What is less clear, given a lack of contemporary audience research, is what the public actually made of what they were told.

The Gulf War was covered by 1500 journalists in the region, and many more at home. Keeble suggests that all the Fleet Street newspapers supported the military response together with 95% of columnists¹⁰⁰. At one end of the scale were the semi-humorous pictures from 7th Armoured Brigade of two soldiers in vests, underpants and gas masks under a caption 'On patrol in the Gulf' which initiated a request from the Prime Minister through the Defence Secretary for information to the Brigade Commander¹⁰¹. On the other end of the scale, the first night of bombing, including reports from Baghdad, was watched by the largest television audience in history¹⁰².

Media coverage included numerous sequences from aircraft camera pods, showing the precision of guided weapons, with the intended effect of demonstrating a highly technological conflict, with high precision (implying low casualty rates), despite the fact that only 7-8% of weapons used in the conflict were guided munitions. In contrast to Vietnam, the fact that 489 napalm bombs were used on the trenches in the Gulf War did not receive much coverage¹⁰³. The extensive coverage of guided weapons had an unexpected effect in that it made the attack on a Baghdad air raid shelter at Al-Amiriya on 13 February 1991 (thought to be a military target) more surprising. The heavy loss of civilian lives¹⁰⁴ did not fit with the framework of imagery of precision bombing. Perhaps this explains in part why the coverage was cut by ITN and carefully framed by Peter Sissons talking to Jeremy Bowen for the BBC at the site to suggest that it *could* have

¹⁰⁰ Keeble, R, 'Information warfare in an age of hyper-militarism' in Allan, S, and Zelizer, B *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (Abingdon: Routledge 2004) p. 51

¹⁰¹ Cordingley, Major-General P, 'Future Commanders Be Warned!' In Badsey *Op cit* p. 172

¹⁰² Eldridge, *The Mass Media and Power in Modern Britain Op cit* p. 118 [This is typical of war: circulation of newspapers and TV audiences increase in time of conflict – Taylor, P, in Badsey *Op cit* p. 163]

¹⁰³ *Guardian* 16 December 1995

¹⁰⁴ Petley alleges 1600. In Miller, D, (ed) *Tell me lies* (London: Pluto 2004) p. 164

been a military facility¹⁰⁵. The shots at the end of the conflict of the bombed convoy to Basra (the so-called ‘highway of death’) again did not fit the image of a technological war of few casualties, and had to be framed as a military necessity to prevent further use of the troops on offensive operations. Veteran reporter John Pilger was amongst those critical of the lack of reporting of casualties of the war as not being newsworthy¹⁰⁶.

The big difference between the Falklands coverage and that of the Gulf War was that in the former only British journalists were allowed with the Task Force, and under heavy censorship and limited access to satellite links, their reports were delayed and neutered. In contrast, the Gulf War will be remembered more for the omni-present CNN, especially in Baghdad, and the constant feed of information. Though many journalists were embedded, others were free to roam, giving a rather different picture of the war, less managed by Governments. The speed of response led to errors; for example, allegations of the use of chemical weapons by a NBC reporter in Israel took time to be corrected, leaving an impression of the use of Scuds with chemical in-fills. Because access to the front line was limited, reports had to be made from further back in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. Reports were therefore framed as ‘I have been informed that’; in fact, the information had been passed by London offices to reporters in theatre and was played back to give added authenticity¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ McLaughlin *Op cit* pp. 96-97. Abdul Hadi Jiad (BBC newsreader) describes reading Bowen’s description ‘as dispassionately as we could, through eyes filled with tears’. In *Tell me lies Op cit* p. 205

¹⁰⁶ Pilger, J, in *Tell me lies Op cit* p. 19. Pilger joined Paul Foot in forming Media Workers Against the War in response to the first Gulf War, which was relaunched in 1999 to oppose the bombing of Serbia. It reflects lack of objectivity of some in the media industry; a global email was sent around the *Guardian* by a journalist who was part of the Stop the War Coalition. Crouch, D, in *Tell me lies Op cit* pp. 269-270

¹⁰⁷ Alex Thomson, ITN, in *Tales from the Gulf*, BBC2 19 July 1991 cited in Eldridge, J (ed), *Getting the Message*, (London: Routledge 1993) p. 12

At the political and elite level, Philo¹⁰⁸ suggests that there were attempts by US, UK and French politicians to shape opinion on the decision to go to war, the conduct of the war, the attitudes to casualties and expectations for success. For example, the French last minute peace initiative is viewed as a cynical attempt by the French government to show that they had done all they could and were therefore now justified in going to war. Sean McKnight also points out the over-estimation of Iraqi forces by the *Sunday Times* Insight team and Professor Paul Rogers at Bradford University when he wrote in the *Guardian* and *Newsweek* on the conduct of the air war¹⁰⁹. And the evidence of the massive coverage of precision bombing shows tight media control and an attempt to demonstrate both technological prowess and concern for casualties.

Did it work for the public? Certainly support for the Government was high and remained high. But the media turned at the end of the war, showing shots of the 'Highway of Death' and the plight of the Kurds, which led to the concept of Safe Havens under Operation Provide Comfort, although no protection was provided to the Shias in the south, perhaps due to the lack of television coverage¹¹⁰. All this shows the difficulty for politicians in managing the press, and the ability of the public and elites to question what they see, forcing reaction by politicians as the Kurdish example shows. McKnight argues that there was a greater role for academia to play in producing accurate data for public

¹⁰⁸ Philo, G, in Eldridge, J, (ed) *Getting the Message* *Op cit* p. 256

¹⁰⁹ McKnight, S, 'Media Perceptions of Other Forces: Iraq and the 1991 Gulf War' in Badsey *Op cit* p. 96

¹¹⁰ Robinson uses the case of the Kurds to theorise that media coverage is most effective when framed to criticise Government policy and to empathise with the plight of poor victims; equally, it is least effective when framed to put an emotional distance from the victims, when governments are then less inclined to intervene. Robinson *Op cit* p. 25. Carruthers also suggests that the Shias were cast as Muslim fundamentalists, whereas the Kurds were better cast as pitiable refugees. Carruthers *Op cit* p. 211

(and political) assessment, but that most US and UK sources were grossly in error¹¹¹.

Rupert Smith recalls looking at all the BBC and ITV news coverage from the deployment of his force during the Gulf War to the ceasefire, and in particular ‘how the word pictures were appealing to memories of the pictures of the trenches of the First World War or the bombing of the Second’¹¹². It is not quite clear how these images relate to the First World War; on the face it these would appear totally dissimilar conflicts, but the fact that these images evoke thoughts of the First World War in particular is significant and supports the theme expressed elsewhere in this thesis.

The power of the media to influence public opinion and galvanise a campaign is put succinctly by Andrew Marr:

When a civil conflict is relayed in all its horror to tens of millions of voters every night by television, the pressure to do something, to separate the sides and succour the suffering, is intense. But mostly this requires not air attacks but a full-scale ground force, which will be drawn into the war, and must be followed by years of aid and rebuilding. Will the same voters be happy to keep paying, and keep accepting the casualties that follow?¹¹³

And the answer that emerges from the opinion polls on Bosnia and Kosovo¹¹⁴ as highlighted in Chapter 6 is that on the whole for such small wars of an interventionist and moralist nature with national survival not at stake, then no, the public would not.

Case Study 1. The *Mayaguez* – ‘We got them all out, thank God. It went perfectly’¹¹⁵.

¹¹¹ McKnight *Op cit* p. 108

¹¹² Smith R *Op cit* p. 393

¹¹³ Marr, A, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Macmillan 2007) p. 501

¹¹⁴ In contrast to the Gulf, Keeble’s survey of columnists showed 33 out of 99 opposed military action against Serbia. Keeble *Op cit* p. 51

The *Mayaguez* was an American vessel seized off the coast of Cambodia on 12 May 1975, at the end of the Vietnam War. We know a great deal about broadcast news coverage of the incident because it occurred during part of the period covered by the Glasgow Media Group in looking at industrial relations. The basic synopsis can be drawn from Christopher Wain's coverage for the BBC 2200 hrs news on 15 May 1975:

The *Mayaguez* incident had started on Monday when the ...ship was seized by a Cambodian gunboat while steaming through the Gulf of Thailand en route to Settapao. It was an act of piracy said President Ford. He ordered a task force from the Seventh Fleet to go in and get the prisoners out. It all took time. On Tuesday, two battalions of US marines, 1,100 men, arrived at U Tapao airbase in southern Thailand. Meanwhile the aircraft carrier *Coral Sea* ... was moving to a point mid-way between U Tapao and the island of Koh Tang, where the *Mayaguez* was lying. By Wednesday the battle plan was ready. A US Navy Corsair fighter bomber sank three Cambodian gunboats and immobilised four others. And as darkness fell, the aircraft direction destroyer, *Holt*, moved into the area. Her task was to guide the marine assault helicopters into Koh Tang. According to some reports the first wave of 135 marines flew into the attack direct from Thailand, but that's not likely. The aircraft almost certainly stopped to refuel on board the *Coral Sea* before the dawn attack. They went in at midnight our time last night. They were flying in on CH53-D heavy assault helicopters, each one carrying 37 marines and 3 crew. One helicopter apparently landed on the *Mayaguez*. The marines hurriedly searched the ship but found she was empty, the others stormed ashore and it was here that they started taking casualties. According to the reports from Washington, three helicopters were lost. One was shot down, the others crashed into the sea just offshore. The marines were pinned down by gunfire from the waiting Cambodians, but those ordered to search for the missing sailors couldn't find a sign of them. ...At 10 in the morning ... a Thai fishing boat came out from the Cambodian mainland flying a white flag and according to the reports from Washington all 39 of the missing crewmembers were on board the ship. They were transferred to the destroyer *Wilson* and President Ford announced that the operation was over and was a success¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁵ Ford, President Gerald R, after the Mayaguez incident. Cited in Johnson, DDP, & Tierney, D, 'In the eye of the beholder: victory and defeat in U.S. military operations', p. 46 in: *Understanding Victory and Defeat in Contemporary War*, edited by Angstrom, J, and Duyvesteyn, I, (London: Routledge, 2007)

¹¹⁶ ITN 2200hrs 15 May 1975 cited in *More Bad News Op cit* pp. 282-285

In fact, subsequent analysis showed that intelligence had failed, and that the marines attacking Koh Tang faced not a small bunch of captors, but an elite unit of Khmer Rouge troops. The 39 crewmembers were actually released before the start of the US bombing of the mainland. The use of a Thai base for the US operation created a severe diplomatic row between Bangkok and Washington. The final figures, according to Johnson and Tierney, showed 41 marines dead, many injured, several helicopters lost and the marines position on Koh Tang nearly overrun¹¹⁷. Three marines who were left behind by accident were captured and subsequently executed. The reason for the additional deaths quoted by Johnson stemmed from his research in the Gerald Ford Presidential Library, which showed that another 23 servicemen were killed in a helicopter crash as part of the rescue mission¹¹⁸. This news was kept from the press for a week, and when finally released, the Pentagon said these men were not part of the operation. The only significance here is that if the public had linked the additional 23 deaths to the first group, they might have been less inclined to view this as a success for the country and the President.

The seizure was the top news item for all news programmes on 12 May 1975, pushing out a report on the disaster at the chemicals plant at Flixborough. On 13 May 1975, both BBC and ITV showed coverage, again as the first main news item, of the vessel anchored at Koh Tang. ITN was the first to break the news of the deployment of US marines to U Tapao to undertake the rescue mission. All the news stations covered the destruction of Cambodian gunboats around the *Mayaguez* on 14 May 1975 as their main item, with later news editions covering the protests from the Thai government over the US action.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, D, and Tierney, D, *Failing to Win*, (London, Harvard University Press 2006) p. 2

¹¹⁸ Email Johnson/Lamonte 21 January 2009 1809hrs

Coverage that evening in the BBC1 and ITN main news slots swamped any other item by their duration (5:27 for BBC1 2100 hrs and 7:43 for ITN 2200 hrs). The news on 15 May 1975, with the exception of the BBC1 news at 1745 hrs, all had the recovery of the *Mayaguez* as the lead item, with over 8 and 9 minutes coverage by the BBC1 and ITN 2100 and 2200 hrs editions respectively. The following day, the news item only reached around the seventh highest item in each news programme, falling behind cost of living increases and the Armed Forces pay rise. The final day of coverage of the issue was 17 May 1975 when the vessel arrived in Singapore amidst considerable Thai protests and demonstrations. Apart from the 2320 hrs late BBC2 news, the *Mayaguez* again was the main headline for each broadcast. For much of the week, only library pictures of the *Mayaguez* were available (and then only black and white images). In fact, that black-and-white image was used 25 times during the week¹¹⁹. The only ‘current’ pictures were of the vessel in Singapore¹²⁰; the marines at U Tapao; and the most relevant – the marines landing at Koh Tang¹²¹.

The UK public’s view of the incident is hard to gauge. The opinion polls taken by Gallup on the conduct of the Vietnam War in May 1975 show the biggest rise in % of people who sought the beginning of US troop withdrawals through the conflict – from 41% in March 1975 to 47% in May 1975¹²². It also showed a 5% increase (to 42%) in the numbers of people who thought that the British support for US policy in Vietnam was wrong. It is not possible to link these changes in views to the *Mayaguez* incident

¹¹⁹ *More Bad News Op cit* p. 300

¹²⁰ *More Bad News Op cit* p. 242

¹²¹ *More Bad News Op cit* pp. 311-312

¹²² *British Political Opinion Op cit* pp. 328-330

definitively, both because of a lack of clarity over the precise dates but also because specific questions were not asked about this incident.

The Times commenced its coverage on 13 May 1975 with a front page article (though not the main item) entitled ‘US warships sail for seas of Cambodia after “act of piracy”’¹²³.

At that early stage, even *The Times* incorrectly named the vessel as the *Mayaguez*. The paper reported that

there was an immediate and outraged reaction amongst conservatives in Congress. Senator James Buckley of New York said that the President should order immediate and punitive air and naval attacks in Cambodia¹²⁴.

But the newspaper went on to question the legality of attacks under the War Powers Act. On the following day, the paper reported the first gunfire damage to an aircraft which had been watching the vessel. In its front page report, the paper said that ‘The *Mayaguez* is a powerful merchantman, seized on the high seas, and can be rescued at once with a minimum of force¹²⁵.’ It is not clear from where they gained this impression.

The story became the lead item on 15 May 1975, under the banner ‘US Marines seize captured ship off Cambodia after gunboats are sunk¹²⁶.’ As the paper went on to report the President’s order to land on Koh Tang, it was suggested that US bases on Thailand might be being used for the attack, in which case ‘Thailand has no longer any strategic importance whatever to the Americans, and Thai threats to expel them carry very little

¹²³ *The Times* 13 May 1975 p. 1

¹²⁴ *Ibid*

¹²⁵ *The Times* 14 May 1975 p. 1

¹²⁶ *The Times* 15 May 1975 p. 1

weight¹²⁷.’ This report seems not to have fully captured the international significance and to have misread the situation. For the first time the editorial commented on the incident, giving qualified support to the US policy:

That United States forces should have again been involved in Indo-China is of course a matter of regret. But this time it would be difficult to blame the administration for what occurred¹²⁸.

It went on to say that the incident represents a series of unfortunate circumstances, including the apparent (at that stage) use of Thai bases. From 16 May 1975, the flavour of reporting moved to casualties – the main headline being ‘14 US Marines feared dead after battle on island¹²⁹.’ The article reported 14 men missing, 3 helicopters lost and several hit. It recognised the intelligence error that the crew were not still on the island of Koh Tang, and that, just as the marines were landing, a transcript of a broadcast from Phnom Penh was received in the White House to say that the crew were being released immediately and unconditionally, but that this was too late to stop the air strike on a Cambodian air base. The tone from the US was still belligerent:

“I think other nations are going to leave us alone”, he [Senator Barry Goldwater] said, “Had he [the President] not done what he did, every little half-assed nation in this world would be taking shots at us¹³⁰.’

The editorial that day stuck to a supportive line, describing it as ‘A well-handled affair’, ‘good for American morale’, ‘He [the President] seems to have managed well’ and ‘What

¹²⁷ *Ibid*

¹²⁸ *The Times* 15 May 1975 p. 19

¹²⁹ *The Times* 16 May 1975 p. 1

¹³⁰ *Ibid*

ever the explanation [of the Cambodian action] the reaction of the United States appears on present evidence to have been both right and effectively executed.’¹³¹ This seems to be more positive than the emerging picture of intelligence failure and rising casualties seemed to imply.

Despite all the media coverage over several days, the only letter published on the incident was from a Mr Christopher Wood (no apparent authority), who is unconvinced by the US explanations of the incident, but views it as an example of the superpowers’ unwillingness to abide by international territorial waters. The UK coverage in this particular paper seems surprisingly uncritical overall, despite the emerging evidence.

Coverage in other newspapers varied. The *Daily Mail* carried the story as its main front page article on 13 May 1975¹³², and again on 15 May 1975¹³³, with a slightly smaller front page article on 14 May 1975¹³⁴. Further analysis was provided inside the paper, with comments on 15 May 1975¹³⁵ that the American action was justified against an act of piracy, and that the ‘successful’ action represented a ‘much-needed shot in the arm’ on 16 May 1975¹³⁶. That day’s coverage included a double-page spread entitled ‘Moment of triumph – how Ford took the news that a gamble had paid off’. But despite the extensive coverage, no letters were published from the public on the incident. The *Daily Mirror* had somewhat less front page coverage on 13 May 1975¹³⁷, and indeed nothing on 14

¹³¹ *Ibid* p. 17

¹³² *Daily Mail* 13 May 1975 p. 1

¹³³ *Daily Mail* 15 May 1975 p. 1

¹³⁴ *Daily Mail* 14 May 1975 p. 1

¹³⁵ *Daily Mail* 15 May 1975 p. 6

¹³⁶ *Daily Mail* 16 May 1975 p. 6

¹³⁷ *Daily Mirror* 13 May 1975 p. 1

May 1975¹³⁸ – suggesting that this was not a significant issue for Mirror readers; coverage being more extensive on the economy and Europe. But the story returned to front page on 15 May 1975¹³⁹, and again on 16 May 1975¹⁴⁰ under the headline ‘Whoopee in the White House’ with the article going on to describe the action as a ‘display of strength’. But again, there are no letters that week or subsequently on the incident.

The lack of a great public response, at least demonstrated by the single letter in just one paper, suggests that the public were either not particularly interested in the event, as it did not involve UK forces or national interests, or it may suggest that the public were essentially supportive of the line as framed in the news coverage of an appropriate response to an act of piracy, well-led and well-executed. Subsequent evidence did not affect public attitudes sufficiently to provoke a response. That is not to say that foreign wars do not capture public attention on all occasions; the anti-Vietnam campaign drew large numbers of supporters for their march on 27 October 1968, bringing together a spread of left-wing groups¹⁴¹.

From a US perspective, the public viewed the incident rather differently. In a poll, 79% of the respondents viewed the President’s handling of the incident positively¹⁴². Indeed, Ford used the *Mayaguez* incident in his re-election campaign in 1976, when he could

¹³⁸ *Daily Mirror* 14 May 1975 p. 1

¹³⁹ *Daily Mirror* 15 May 1975 p. 1

¹⁴⁰ *Daily Mirror* 16 May 1975 p. 1

¹⁴¹ *Daily Telegraph* 3 October 1968 p. 19 Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, Young Communist League, Young Liberals, Australians and New Zealanders against the war, National Socialist Group, Radical Students Alliance, Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation

¹⁴² *Failing to Win Op cit* p. 2

easily have been apologising for what might appear a blunder. In a Harris poll taken on 23-25 May 1975, 76% of Americans agreed that ‘after losing Vietnam and Cambodia, the United States had no choice but to take decisive action, even risking a bigger war, to get back the ship and crew’¹⁴³.

There are some interesting lessons to be drawn from this perception. First, it was apparent that the US public were far more interested in success, than the possibility of taking casualties (which in fact did occur). From this, Johnson and Tierney draw their conclusion that the public are not inherently casualty-averse, but they are very failure-averse. This reflects the findings of Feaver and Gelpi, which supported their presumption that ‘success trumps casualties’¹⁴⁴. And so the job of the Government is to manage expectations carefully and to portray the incident as a success. This explains why the Tet offensive, which arguably was well fought by American and South Vietnamese forces to turn around the North Vietnamese at great costs to the latter, was seen as a failure by the US public. Previous positive speeches by President Lyndon Johnson and General Westmorland claiming success was close at hand were instantly disproved as the Vietcong and North Vietnamese attacked. Thereafter, no matter what they said, they would not be believed. Interestingly, Gaddis noted that Johnson had previously said in 1964 that ‘I don’t think the people...know much about Vietnam and I think they care a

¹⁴³ *Ibid* p. 53

¹⁴⁴ Feaver, P D, and Gelpi, C, *Choosing your battles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004) p. 142. Challenged in part by Mueller’s research from 1966 that as casualties in Vietnam rose by a factor of 10, public support reduced by 15%, a similar figure to that in Korea. Carruthers *Op cit* p. 152. Badsey also says that this simple formula also applied in the 1991 Gulf War. Badsey interview *Op cit*. Bond considers the effects of casualties in the First World War. The figures were not censored; casualty lists appeared regularly in the newspapers until the later stages of the war. Yet despite the size of the casualty list, there does not appear to have been an adverse public reaction, more a ‘stoic endurance’. Bond, B, *Op cit* p. 24

hell of a lot less¹⁴⁵. But four years later, Johnson decided against seeking re-election and Westmorland was replaced¹⁴⁶. In contrast, Dixon points to the negative effects of Jewish terrorism on British forces in Palestine after the Second World War to suggest that public revulsion¹⁴⁷ at the atrocities and casualties contributed to a strong 'bring the boys home' movement¹⁴⁸, which is particularly significant in an age before the spread of television. He goes on to say that for a government to admit the effect on public opinion of casualties is to show weakness to an adversary (in this context insurgents) which they might choose to exploit tactically¹⁴⁹.

Second, it shows that despite factual reporting which showed that more marines were lost than their were captives; that the intelligence, planning and preparation were all poor; and that the execution was fatally flawed with little consideration of the possible political consequences; the public disregarded all the facts for the more emotional reaction to the event that this was a demonstration of strong resolve. A Harris poll of US opinion reported the support for the President as being 60% negative, which 'indicated his jump in popularity at the time ofthe *Mayaguez*...from the Cambodians, had been fleeting'¹⁵⁰. A small incident, costly in lost manpower and equipment, created a very short term political gain for the President, longer-term political difficulties with the Thai Government, yet had little longer term effect with the US populace.

¹⁴⁵ Gaddis, John Lewis, *The Cold War* (London: Penguin 2007 orig 2005) p. 168

¹⁴⁶ Though some would argue the Cronkite report of 27 February 1968 was crucial in swaying elite opinion. Carruthers *Op cit* p. 117

¹⁴⁷ Dixon, P, *Op cit* p. 104. Mentions riots and anti-Semitic demonstrations in London, Manchester, Newcastle, Gateshead, Holyhead and Eccles. The extent to which this was due to the casualties themselves or more to a feeling of anti-Semitism (which had long been present as an undercurrent in society) is not clear. See also *The Times* 4 August 1947

¹⁴⁸ Dixon *Op cit* p. 99

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid* p. 101

¹⁵⁰ *The Times* 19 August 1975 p.4

The next few case studies look at particular television programmes over the period, including a comedy (*Blackadder*), a fictional drama (*Soldier, Soldier*), the *Festival of Remembrance* and *Trooping the Colour*. To set these in context, it is worth recalling that *Coronation Street* has been running since 9 December 1960 and is one of the longest running programmes on television. Although audience research was limited before 1989, Granada estimated the viewing figures in the early years to be around 25 million people¹⁵¹; over half as many again as watched the news on BBC and ITV combined. In 1991, the first year of reliable figures from British Audience Research Bureau (BARB), the average audience was 17.23 million people¹⁵², still larger than the total audience for the news. The point here is that people's interests generally do not lie in current affairs or programmes on defence issues, but on contemporary drama, and the viewing figures in case studies need to be seen in that context.

Despite the limited data, we do have lists of top programmes from each year from 1960¹⁵³ onwards, though there has to be some scepticism over the accuracy of the figures as these precede BARB and set-top boxes provided in each home to automatically record choices, and so it is in response to audience questionnaires and so is less likely to be as valid when extrapolated. Nevertheless, the 1960s are conspicuous by the absence of any much-viewed defence-related programmes with only a few exceptions: *The Army Game* was 11th in 1960 and 1961 for ITV; the *Festival of Remembrance* made its only appearance in 1962 at 23rd for the BBC with an audience of 14.6 million people; and *Dad's Army*

¹⁵¹ Telephone call Lamonte/Nugent Granada TV 25 June 2008

¹⁵² BARB audience research data, 1991 from BARB website www.barb.co.uk accessed 9 November 2008

¹⁵³ BBC audience research data accessed 9 November 2008

started appearing in 1969 at 31st top for the BBC; by 1972 it had reached 8th highest viewing for the BBC.

Case Study 3. *Blackadder Goes Forth*. *Blackadder Goes Forth* was screened in 1989, the fourth series of a very successful BBC comedy tracing the fictional lineage of the Blackadder family up to the First World War. The final sequence of the series shows Blackadder going over the top in the trenches to a sound of machine-gun fire and then a sequence of falling poppies. The sequence was voted the ninth most memorable moment of all time in a 1999 poll conducted by the *Observer* and Channel 4¹⁵⁴. Jones¹⁵⁵ is amongst those who believe that the use of the *Blackadder* series in secondary schools is one of the reasons for the continuing negative image of the First World War as lions led by donkeys and as futile slaughter¹⁵⁶. Coverage of the 1989 series in the *Radio Times* is extremely limited; there are no letters in the week after the final episode or subsequently¹⁵⁷. Despite the obvious link to Remembrance Day, the *Daily Mail* made no comment on the last episode of the series, and there were no letters published¹⁵⁸. The *Sunday Times*, previewing the end of the series, said it ‘will be sorely missed by millions, but the entire venture will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the finest comedies of

¹⁵⁴ *Observer*/Channel 4 poll 1999

¹⁵⁵ Jones, M, ‘War and national identity since 1914’ in Carnevali, F. Strange, J-M, ed. *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 2nd Edn. (Harlow: Pearson Education 2007) pp. 90-91

¹⁵⁶ This image was not confined to the First World War. The *Daily Mirror* referred to Second World War officers as ‘brass buttoned boneheads, socially prejudiced, arrogant and fussy’ – according to Curran, J, & Seaton, J, *Power without Responsibility* (Abingdon: Routledge 2003 6th Edn) p. 59. See also Bond, B, *Op cit* pp. 86-7; Sheffield, G, in Stewart, I, and Caruthers, S L, *War, Culture and the Media* (London: Flicks Books 1996); and Badsey, S, (Leeds conference 1994)

¹⁵⁷ *Radio Times* British Library 534 [1989]

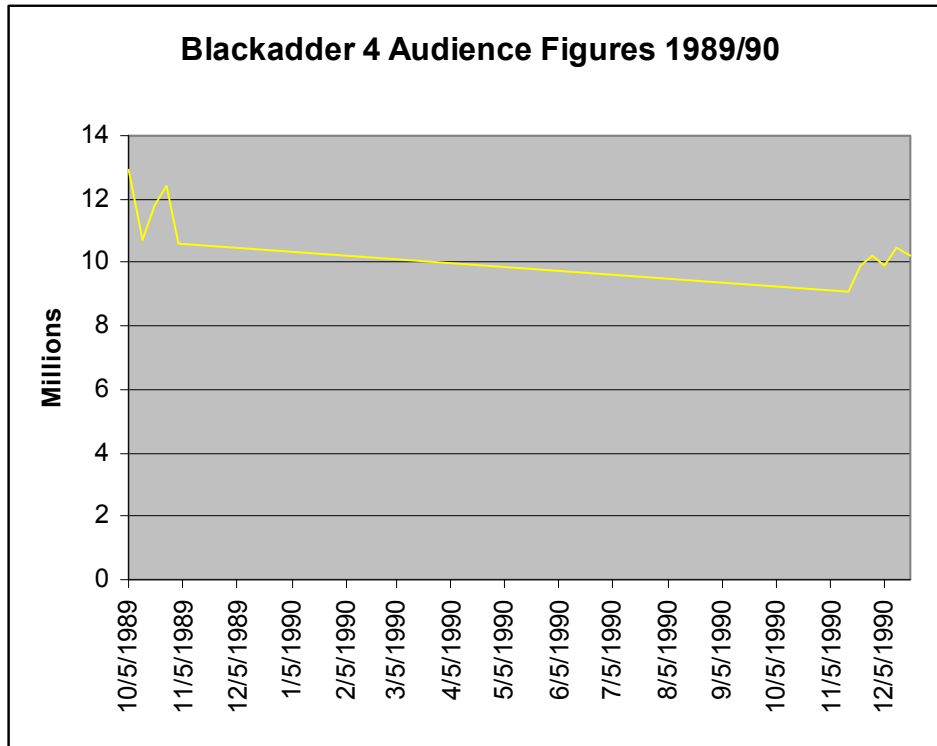
¹⁵⁸ *Daily Mail* 3-6 November 1989

this decade¹⁵⁹.’ This reflects in part both the affection of many and the high proportion of middle class viewers who also read this Sunday newspaper – often opinion-formers in society as well.

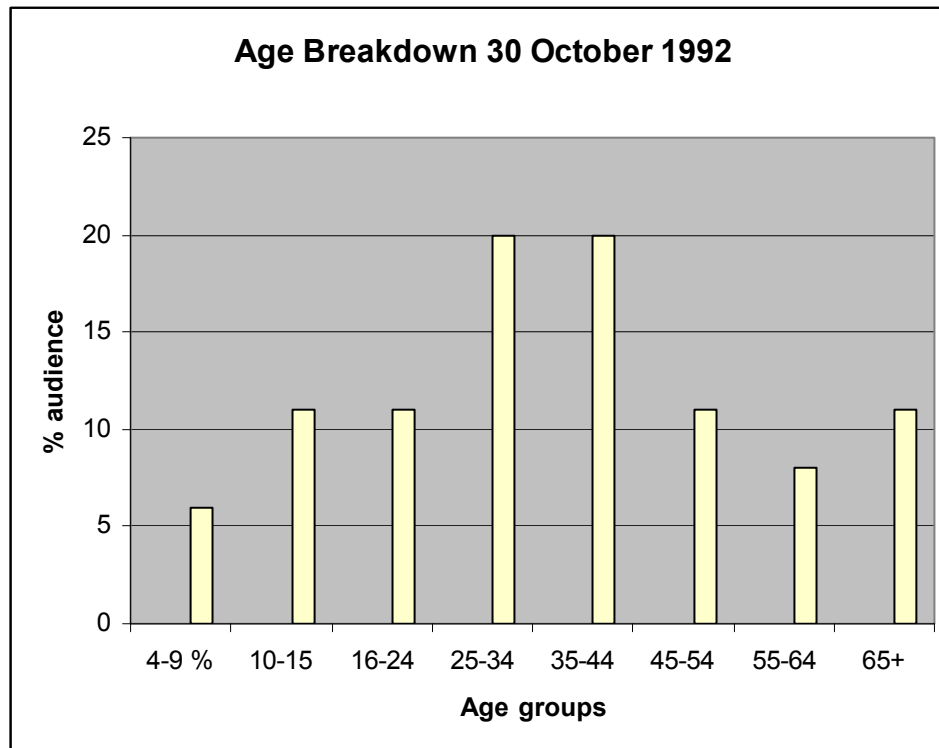
The figures below¹⁶⁰ show the audience figures for the first showing of the programme in 1989/90. After an initial peak close to 13million people, the audience figures steadily declined over the series, with the exception of the last two episodes; the penultimate episode received 10.5million viewers and the final episode, arguably the most memorable, received 10.2million viewers. When it was re-shown in 1992 on BBC2, the audience figures were around 6million, with the peak audience for the penultimate episode. Again repeated in 1995, this time on BBC1, the peak audience was for the last episode at 6.59 million people. Shown again in 1998 on BBC2, audiences averaged 4 million people, with no discernable peaks for particular episodes.

¹⁵⁹ *Sunday Times* 29 October 1989 p. C15

¹⁶⁰ BBC audience research data accessed 9 November 2008

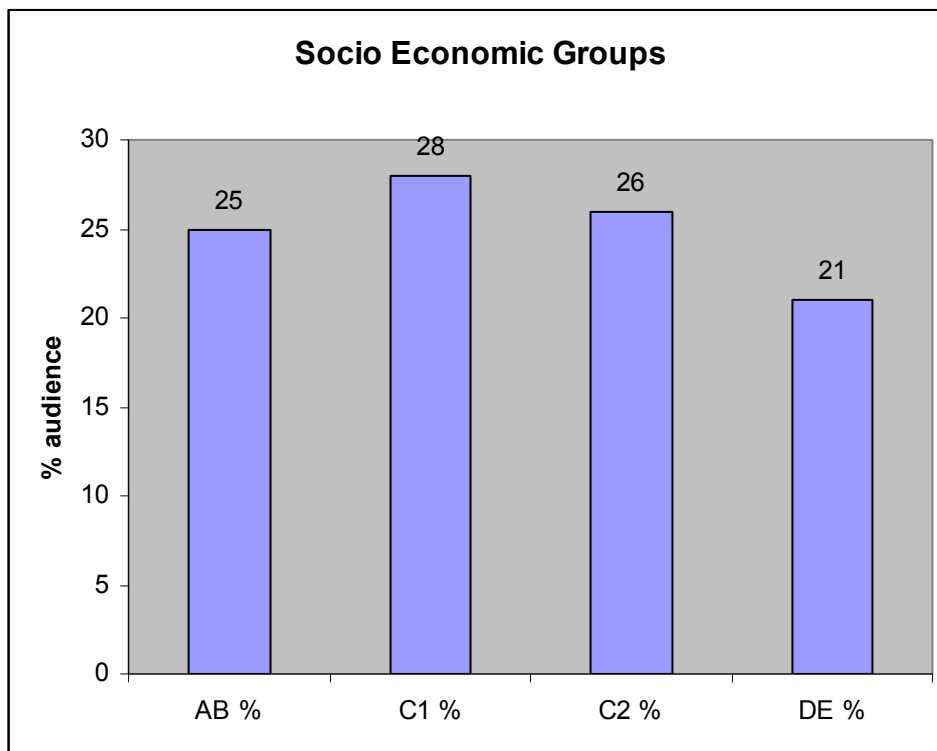


Looking at the breakdown of the audience by age group for the 1992 series (information is not available for the 1989 series but the expectation is that it would be broadly similar), and using the fourth episode as a mid-series representative sample, the age breakdown is shown below. The predominant age groups are 25-34 and 35-44, with 39% of the audience between them. Arguably, this reflects the generation that had grown up with the *Blackadder* series, and is similar in age group to the actors taking part. It does not reflect in any sense the period that the series covered, although interestingly the over-65 age group does have 11% of the viewers. This may mean that the oldest viewers took a greater interest in this programme because of the period it covered, or simply that that group watches proportionately more television than younger groups.



Taking the audience by socio-economic groups, and noting the risks in being too specific when using BARB data on how people relate to particular groups, the figures are shown below. 53% of the audience falls into the ABC1 bracket – broadly the upper and professional classes. The size of the C2 or broadly lower middle-class group is significant at 26%. But the real point here is that the majority (albeit not by much) of the audience is in the opinion-forming or opinion-creating group. The fact that we know that the programme is still used in secondary schools as part of First World War debate demonstrates that this programme, intentionally or unintentionally, created a particular view of the First World War, and the sheer size of the audience shows that this was a major influence on public perceptions of war. The sayings from *Blackadder* that have crept into modern use, such as Baldrick's 'cunning plan' or notorious methods for making coffee, or General Melchett's 'Baaah', give instant images of the ordinary soldier

and the bungling generals divorced from the real life at the front. Without objective measures of audience responses, it is hard to judge precisely how people translated the fictional comedy of the *Blackadder* series into reality, but the number of repeats and the use in schools suggests this was a powerful image which will have coloured people's attitudes to the First World War, and thus to Remembrance, and potentially to wars and how they are conducted today.



Case Study 4. *Soldier Soldier*. *Soldier Soldier* was a drama series based on the lives of a group of soldiers in the fictional 'A' Company, 1st Battalion The King's Fusiliers. Produced by Central Television for the ITV network, it ran for seven series of 82

episodes from 10 September 1991 to 8 December 1997¹⁶¹. It made stars of Robson Green and Jerome Flynn; when they left the series in 1995, audience figures declined rapidly until it was withdrawn in 1997. Set in the aftermath of the Cold War, and at a time when the British Army was going considerable reorganisation, the series was viewed¹⁶² as an accurate portrayal of Army life, including the forced amalgamation of the fictional King's Fusiliers with the equally fictitious King's Own Fusiliers, reflecting the amalgamation of a number of regiments in the real British Army. The perception is that the series put the Army in a positive light, in a period when relatively small numbers were engaged in Bosnia, which was one of the topics covered in the series as a posting for the Company, along with Northern Ireland, Germany, and ceremonial duties at Buckingham Palace. Braun suggests that the success of *Soldier, Soldier* in holding the key 9 o'clock slot on ITV is proof of the Army's appeal to a broad viewing public¹⁶³. A review of the *TV Times* for the 1994 series¹⁶⁴ showed no public letters, despite several feature articles on cast members, including the 'marriage' of Lesley Vickerage, the departure of John Bowe and filming of Robson Green at the Tower of London. The absence of letters does not necessarily reflect any lack of interest given the high audience figures. The *Daily Mail* coverage of the last of the series in December 1994 makes no additional mention of the programme, and no comments are published in the letters pages¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶¹ <http://www.tv.com/soldier-soldier/show/5919/summary.html> accessed 9 January 2009

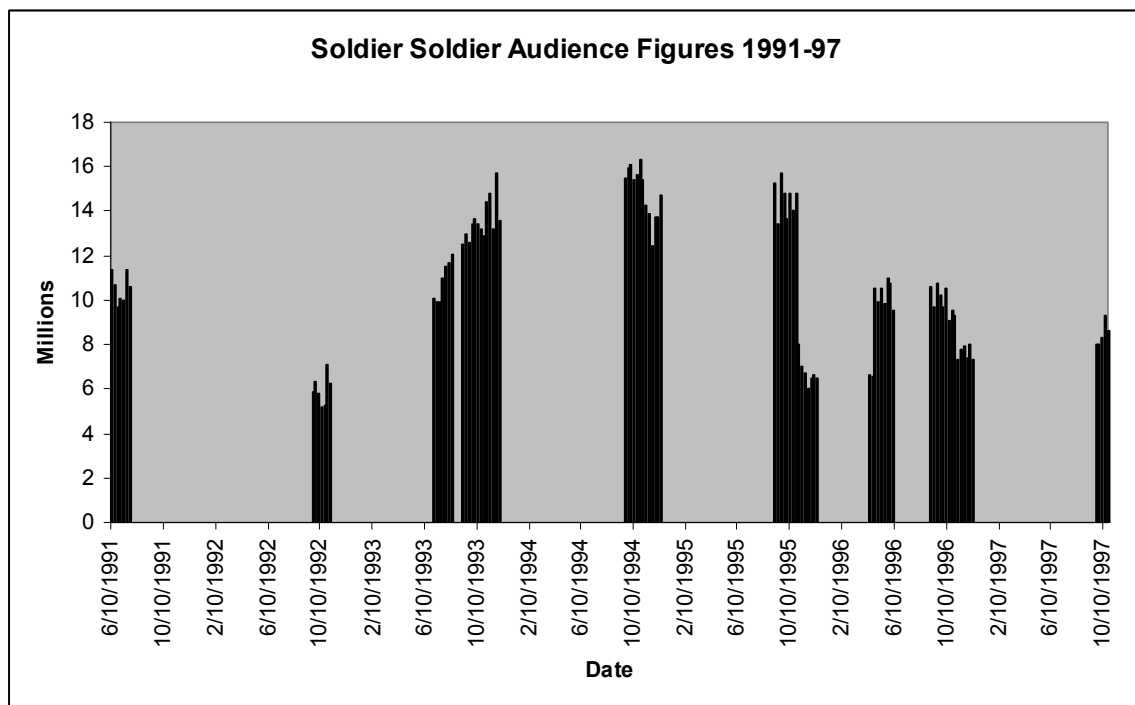
¹⁶² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soldier_Soldier accessed 9 January 2009 [Wikipedia must be viewed with some caution as it is only an amalgam of interested parties' thoughts, nevertheless, personal recollection suggests this particular source is valid.]

¹⁶³ Braun, E, 'Stereotypes and Other Types: The Portrayal of the Army in British Television Drama' in Badsey, S (ed) *The Media and International Security* (London: Frank Cass 2003) p. 77

¹⁶⁴ British Library *TV Times* pp. 616-619 [1994]

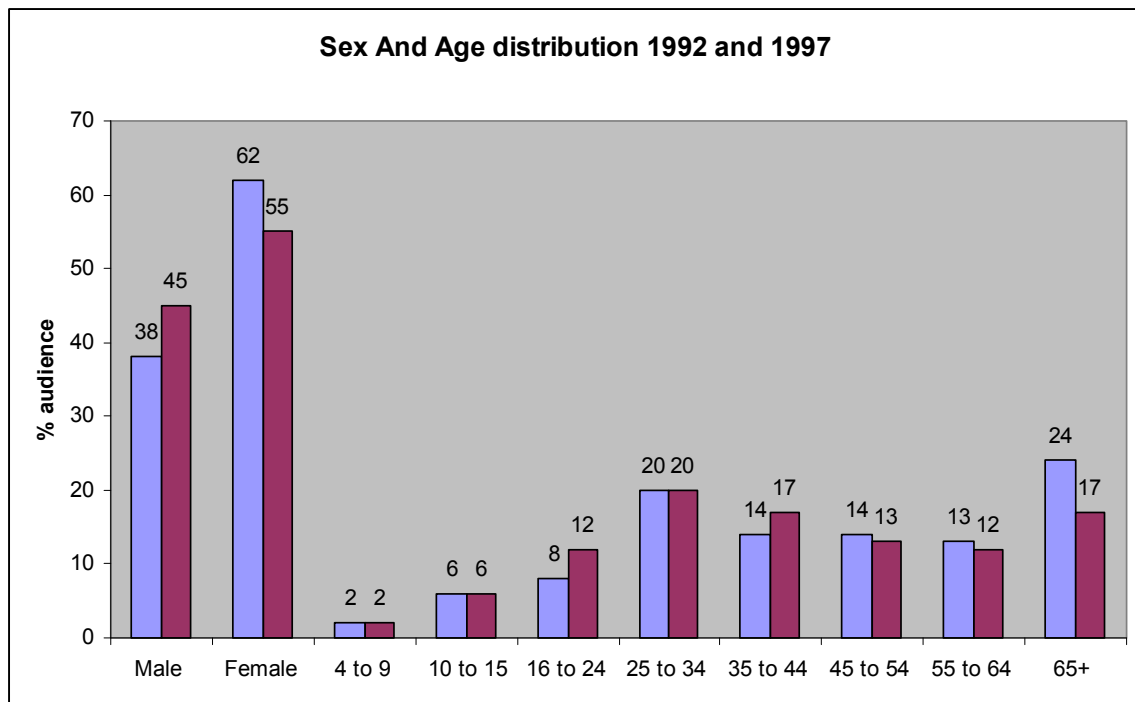
¹⁶⁵ *Daily Mail* 13-16 December 1994

The graph below shows the audience figures from 1991 (when figures became available through BARB)¹⁶⁶ to the last series in 1997. Although the 1992 series looks unusually low, the figures show the great success of Robson Green and Jerome Flynn in leading the series up until 1995. Figures thereafter show a decline, although episodes still attract around 10 million viewers until the series was cancelled in 1997 (notably higher than the viewers for the Festival of Remembrance). Although the programme depicted a deployment to Bosnia on peacekeeping duties, and another to Northern Ireland, there is nothing in the audience figures to show that this created less or more viewers.

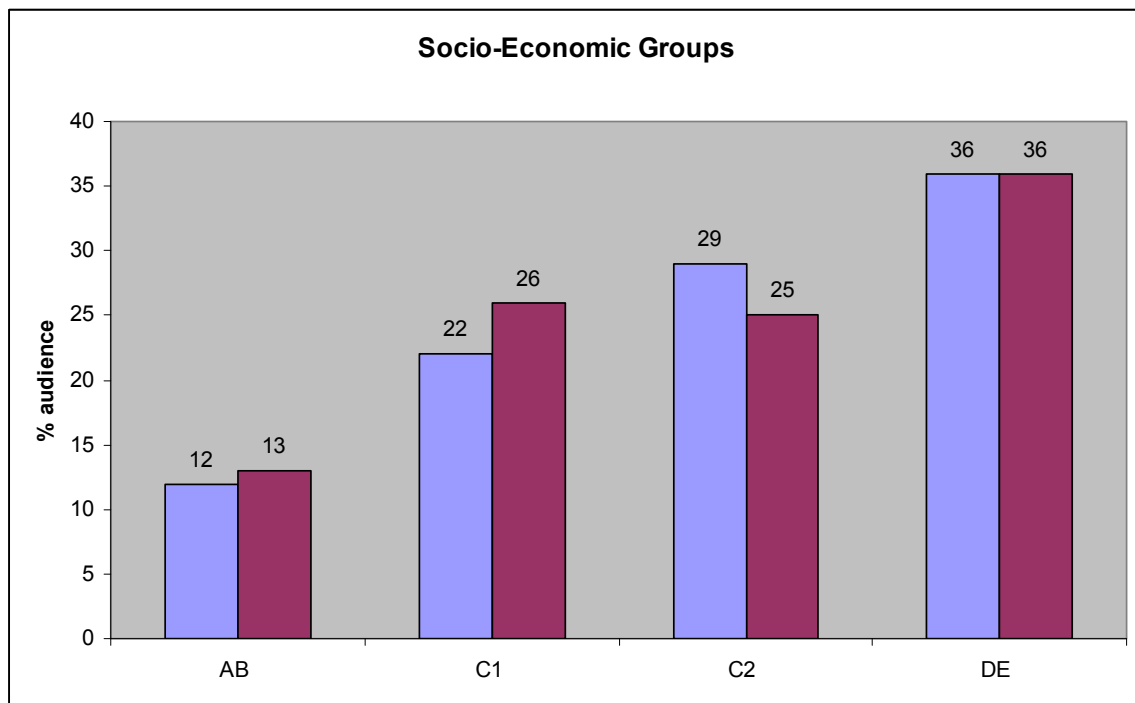


¹⁶⁶ BBC audience research data accessed 9 November 2008

Splitting the audience this time by both age and sex for representative weeks in 1992 and 1997 (5 October and 9 December respectively) shows a number of useful elements. Both audiences are dominated by females, showing a close association with the lead actors. The higher proportion of females in 1992 suggests a strong link to Robson Green and Jerome Flynn. But the consistency in the division by sex shows a good degree of loyalty to the programme over the years. The division by age groups shows a predominance of the 25-44 age groups – i.e. the key opinion-formers. The younger element are less well-represented, which might indicate less interest amongst them and less of a draw to the Army as a recruiting exercise. A significant proportion can be seen to fall in the over-65 age group. Again, this might show a greater interest in defence-related programmes for an age group with memories of the Second World War or National Service, or simply a more homebound group watching more television than others.

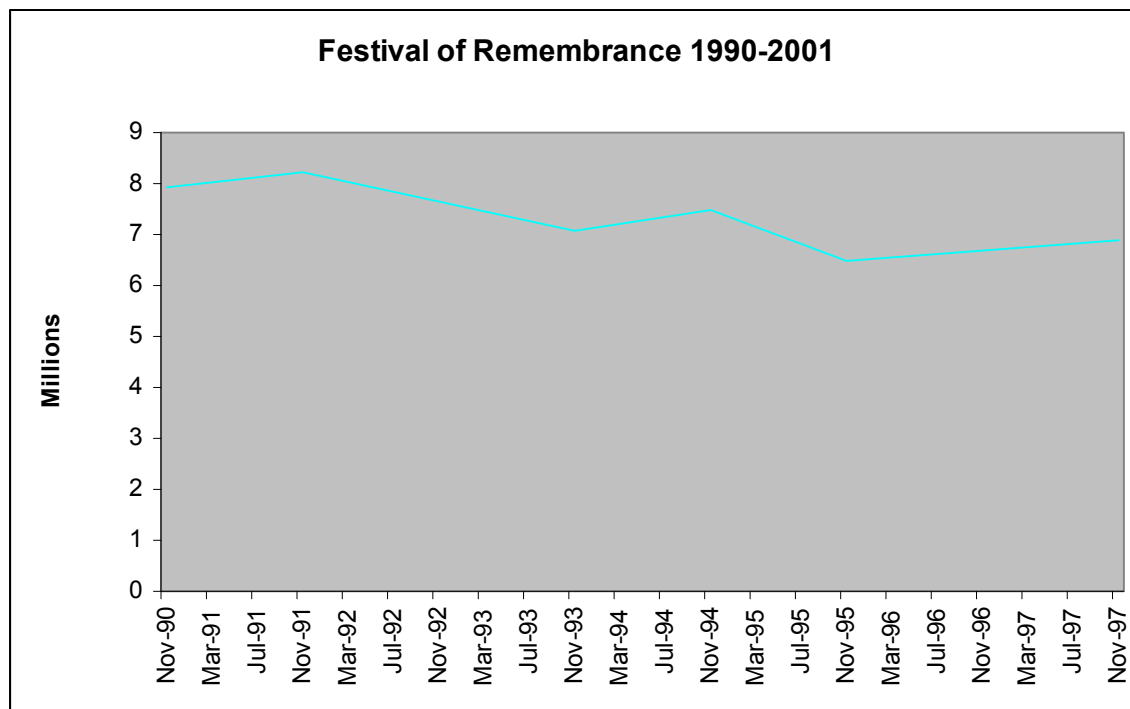


Dividing the audience by socio-economic group shows a marked spread, entirely consistent over the five years chosen. Although the professional C1 group is quite high, this might be being skewed by a high proportion of the over-65 age group. But undoubtedly pre-dominant are the C2 and DE groups – less affluent, and less able to influence opinion. In theory, these would be the groups from which the Army would draw many basic recruits, but the low representation in these age groups suggests this is not likely to have been a particular factor. Instead, this undemanding if effective drama seems to have focused on the lower middle and working class families, with a particular effect on women. It will therefore have conditioned public opinion though the sheer size of the audience, but not greatly at the political and elite levels.



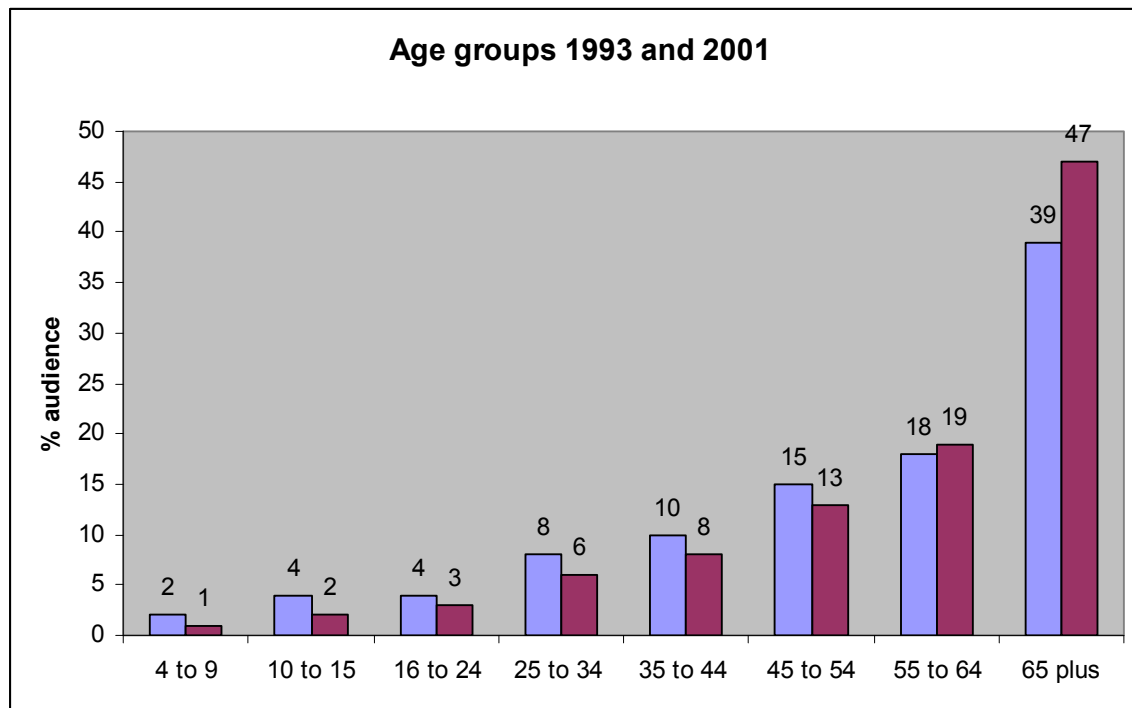
Case Study 5. *Festival of Remembrance*. The *Festival of Remembrance* is shown annually from the Royal Albert Hall on the Saturday evening preceding Remembrance Sunday. The Festival follows a very structured format and, with few exceptions, is always held in the presence of HM The Queen and members of the Royal Family. It is designed to remember the sacrifices of Servicemen and women in all wars, and members of the civilian emergency and support services. The Act of Remembrance forms the final key stage of the festival, with the release of poppies during the two minutes' silence. The audience figures from 1990-1997 are shown below¹⁶⁷ (figures for previous years are unavailable). The figures show a general decline in audience figures over the period. The peak in 1991 would seem to coincide with a post-Gulf War slight surge in support, but this is relatively small. A further small increase against the general trend in 1994 might be aligned with events in Bosnia or celebrations of the 50th anniversary of D Day, but the more surprising figure is that for 1995, which is remarkably low, given the 50th anniversaries of VE and VJ day, and the additional emphasis placed on Remembrance that year by the Royal British Legion. Although not shown here, the figure for 2000 was 0.5 million less than 1995, and 1 million less than 1997. This suggests that, despite the resurgence of interest in Armistice Day in the late 1990s, and the steady support for Remembrance services as we saw earlier, this particular programme had decreasing support. This may be due to a format which some saw as dated, or it may be that other forms of Remembrance (such as two minutes silence on Armistice Day) overtook this particular event. Or it might be that the draw of the Royal Family was less important to people. It is worth noting that the audience figures are 20-25% less than those for *Blackadder*.

¹⁶⁷ BBC audience research data accessed 9 November 2008

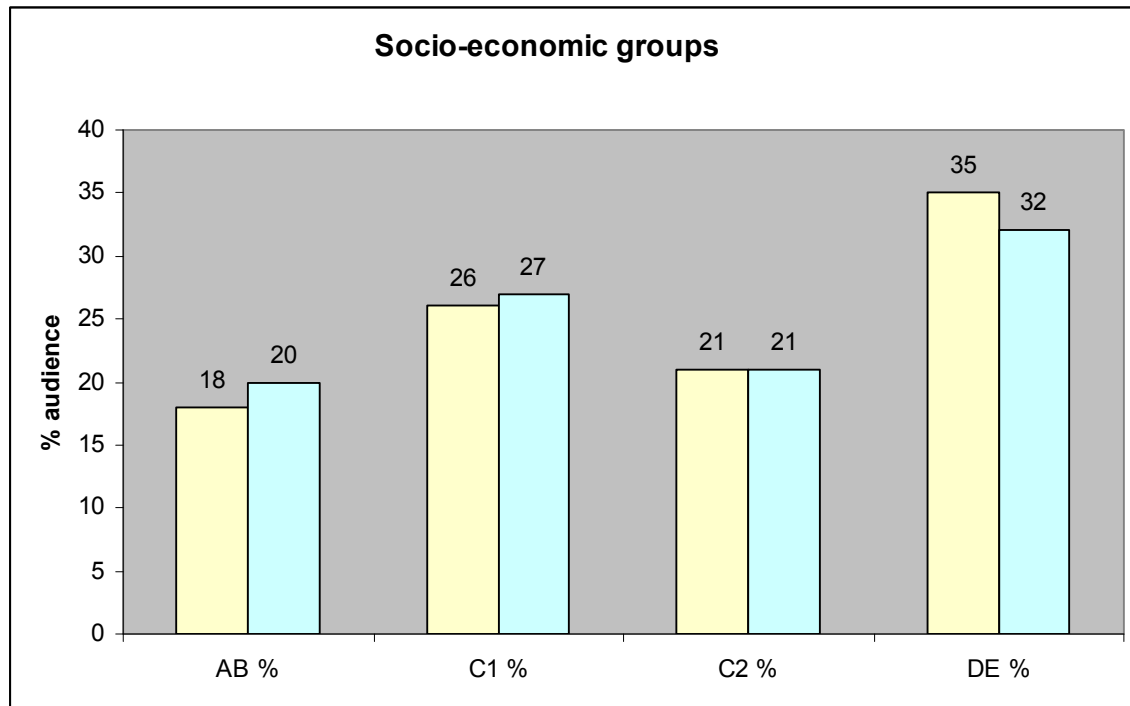


Breaking down the audience by age groups, and in this case comparing the viewing figures for 1993 to 2001 as representative years, there is undoubtedly evidence of an ageing population, particularly in the over-65 age group. But the distribution is actually remarkably similar, showing that the increase in the over-65s is actually made up of reductions across all younger groups ie this is not demonstrating a progressive increase in the audience. Were this to be the case, one would have expected a much larger increase in the 55-64 age group. Significantly with these time slices, those entering the over-65s group between 1993 and 2001 can only have been aged 3-11 at the start of the Second World War, and 9-17 by the end, and so it is unlikely any of them saw active service in the Second World War. It is highly likely, however, that many would have undertaken National Service, and potentially been involved in Korea, Suez, Aden or Malaya. It may

be, although it would be difficult to prove, that one reason for the increase in the over-65s watching the Festival was actual military service, albeit not during the Second World War.



Breaking the audience down by socio-economic groups brings the differences into sharp relief. The largest group by far in both years is the DE group, reflecting the large numbers of relatively less well-off pensioners, though there is apparently greater affluence amongst the over-65s in 2001 than 1993. The next largest group is the middle class C1 group, where presumably a proportion of the over-65s sit. The lowest group is the most affluent and influential AB group. Arguably then, the *Festival of Remembrance* is not terribly influential as a programme by engaging the opinion-formers in society.

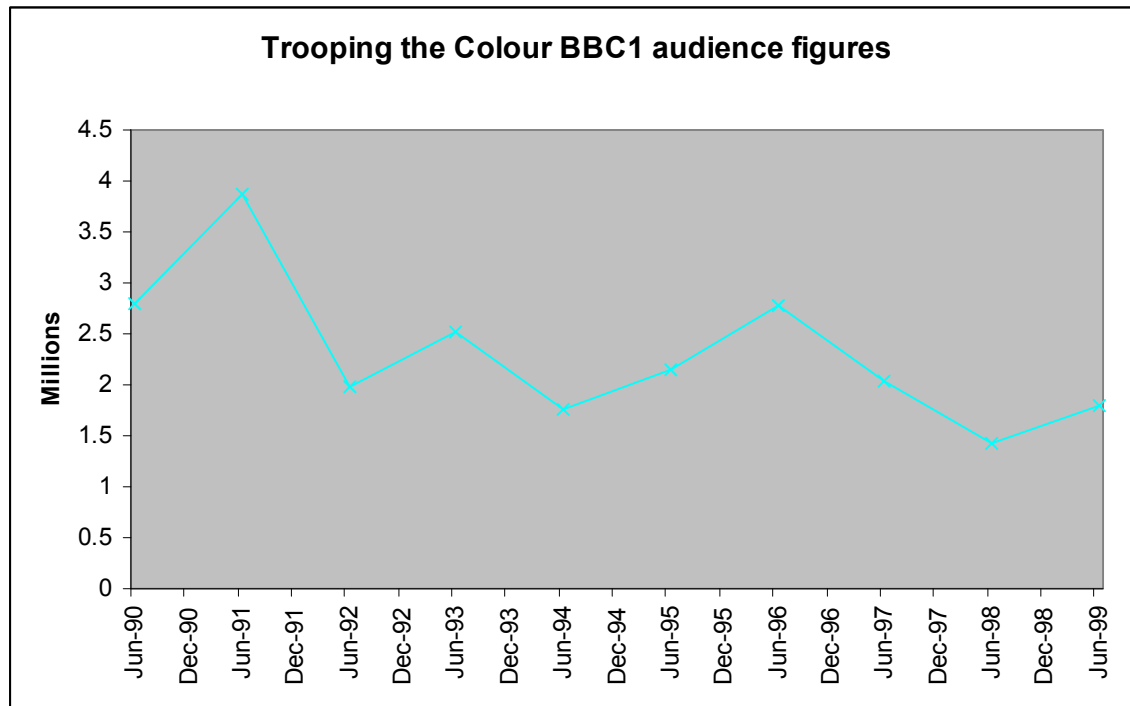


Case Study 6. *Trooping the Colour*. *Trooping the Colour* is the ceremony of parading one of the colours of the Foot Guards in front of the Sovereign and representatives of the other Guards Regiments, which takes place on Horse Guards Parade each summer.

Though the numbers of Guards on parade has declined over the years due to the size of the British Army and operational commitments, it is regarded as one of the Army's most prestigious parades in the calendar, which is completed by a Royal Air Force flypast while the Royal Family appear on the balcony of Buckingham Palace in front of crowds in The Mall. It is traditionally shown on BBC1 live on the Saturday morning, and repeated in the evening on BBC2. For the purpose of this work, the audience figures used have been from the BBC1 live presentation, noting that this may be artificially low as many people are at work for the morning show, but simply adding the two audiences together risks duplication as some watch both editions.

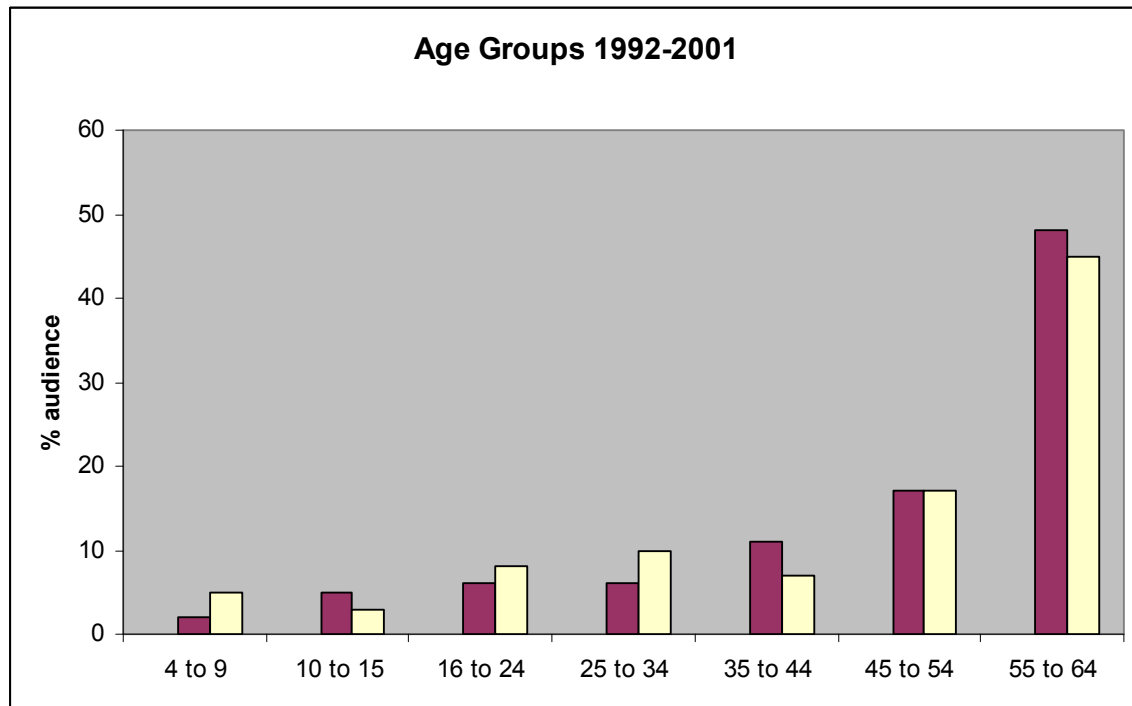
The audience figures below¹⁶⁸ show a continual decline over the period 1990 to 1999, with a peak after the Gulf War in 1991, and another in 1996. The reasons for the latter are unclear – it may be a function of the weather that morning that meant people wanted to watch television, or it might be a reaction to the Options for Change programme of the 1990s, where public outcry reduced planned amalgamations of Scottish regiments. But the audience is less than half that of the *Festival of Remembrance*, and around a quarter of that for *Blackadder*. The evening showings on BBC2 mirror the profile of the live showings, sometimes exceeding the live show (e.g. 1999 2.81 million in the evening vice 2.03 million for the live show) and sometimes less (e.g. 1993 3.39 million in the evening but 3.81 million by day). It is significant that the modern day Armed Forces gather rather less attention (in the day or the evening) than the service of Remembrance, suggesting that the public's mind is towards the sacrifice of previous wars (even if they were too young to remember or simply were not alive), rather than today's forces. It also supports the view that people's view of conflict is coloured more by the past than today.

¹⁶⁸ BBC audience research data accessed 9 November 2008

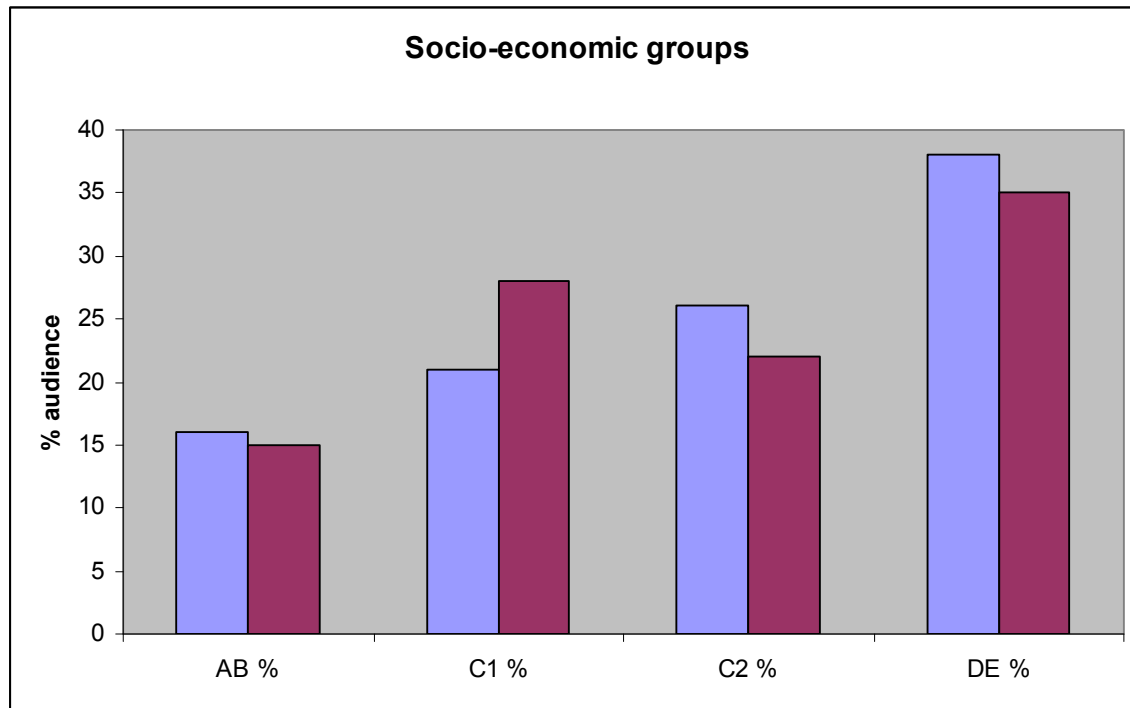


Comparing the age profile for the audiences for 1992 and 2001 as representative years (2000 figures are very similar but 2001 is used to give greatest spread between years) shows the pattern below. The pattern is remarkably similar. Differences in the under-44 groups are extremely small and show no particular pattern with other years; these are not viewed as being significant. The similarity in the figures for 45-54 and 55 to 64 is extraordinary. The figures for over-65s for the two years are 48% and 45% respectively. What is very clear is that this is watched by people over 45, and nearly 2/3 of viewers are aged over 55. The fact that this is the same for both years – and intervening years appear to be the same – shows that this is always a programme for the oldest in British society, and does not appear to have altered over time (i.e. it is one of the things one does as one gets older). From an influence perspective, this suggests that younger opinion-formers

and influencers are not interested in this programme, which reflects on their view of the modern armed forces.



Again, a breakdown of the audience figures by socio-economic groups places the greatest percentage in the DE bracket, reflecting the less well off retired viewers. An increase in the proportion of C1s between the two years says more about the affluence of the over-65 grouping. That aside, there is a relatively even split between the C1 and C2 groups, with ABs trailing by a small amount. In broad terms, political and elite groups dominate the AB and part of the C1 brackets; the evidence suggests they are partly influenced to watch this sort of programme, but the actual total number of people involved means that this is a very small proportion of the whole group in society.



Popular Culture

Although this thesis will not cover films in any detail due to space constraints, the importance of the cinema as a medium was considerable, especially in the early days of television. The peak of cinema visits was in 1946, when people visited 34.19 times per year per head of population (i.e. on average once every 10.6 days). By 1984 the figure had reduced to 1.06 times per head of population per year (or once every 344 days)¹⁶⁹. It is therefore reasonable to expect that films in the 1960s had some impact on the British public (though it is worth noting in passing that the anti-war films of the 1960s – *Oh!*

¹⁶⁹ http://www.terramedia.co.uk/reference/statistics/cinema/cinema_visits.htm accessed 9 January 2009.

What a Lovely War! (1969)¹⁷⁰ and *King and Country* (1964) were not commercial successes¹⁷¹, whereas *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Zulu* (1964) both were¹⁷², but that films after 1970 (when audience attendance proportionate to the population was a third of the 1960 figure) might have considerably less effect.

The atmosphere can be seen in the films of the period – the success of Le Carre’s *The Spy who Came in from the Cold* (1963) and *The Looking-Glass War* (1965) highlight the tensions of the Cold War and the slightly seedy nature of the world of spies. Mainstream political opinion during the 1950s and 60s was very anti-communist, particularly on the Left, with expulsions from the Labour Party and Trades Unions. After the very patriotic films such as *The Dambusters* and *The Cruel Sea* of the 1950s¹⁷³, the 1960s demanded more realism and showed the unglamorous side of war – *The Long and the Short and the Tall* (1960) and *The Valiant* (1962) depicted British troops torturing enemy prisoners in wartime. The anti-war films of the 1960s also started to challenge authority in a way not seen before. Films such as *The Hill*, a 1965 film¹⁷⁴ set in a British Army prison in North Africa during the Second World War shows not only servicemen, usually seen as heroes, as convicted of a range of offences, but an over-zealous prison guard, leading a prisoner to die climbing the artificial hill in the centre of the camp. Similarly, the 1968 film of a

¹⁷⁰ Which drew heavily from Leon Wolff’s *In Flanders Field* and Alan Clark’s *The Donkeys* which were both critical of the war as futile slaughter and particularly critical of Haig’s leadership. Bond, B, *Op cit* p. 60

¹⁷¹ Weight, R, *Patriots* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2002) p. 345

¹⁷² Jones, M, ‘War and National Identity since 1914’ in Carnevali F and Strange J-M (ed) *20th Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson 2007)

¹⁷³ See Ramsden, J, ‘Refocusing the People’s War’ in *Journal of Contemporary History* 1998 Vol 33(1) pp. 35-63.

¹⁷⁴ <http://festival-cannes.com/en/archives/ficheFilm/id/2886/year/1965.html> accessed 24 December 2009

television play, *Bofors Gun*, dealt with a British corporal falling foul of a suicide plot by a sociopathic Irish private¹⁷⁵, surfacing a range of tensions between the two countries.

Most historical films and plays did not seriously challenge national support for the military, but the 1965 pseudo-documentary *The War Game* by Peter Watkins, depicting the effects of a nuclear strike, struck a political nerve. The *Daily Sketch* ran the headline ‘Brilliant – But It Must Stay Banned’¹⁷⁶. *Chips with Everything* in 1962¹⁷⁷ about RAF conscripts undergoing basic training challenged the class system when an aristocrat forms a friendship with a working class boy; the aristocrat is later accepted as a future officer. *Oh! What a Lovely War!* became the best known play and subsequent film from 1963, painting a satirical anti-war message. By the end of the decade, the National Theatre put on plays such as *Dingo*, and ‘*H*’, or *Monologues in front of Burning Cities*, portraying British soldiers as selfish, violent bullies¹⁷⁸. It is worth noting that the theatre was censored by the Lord Chamberlain up until 1968, with the passing of the Theatres Act.¹⁷⁹ Later plays made similar challenges; *Privates on Parade* was about British entertainers to the troops in Malaysia, including a ‘camp old queen, female impersonator’, and a stereotypical Army commanding officer, challenging notions of imperial living¹⁸⁰. *The Romans in Britain* (1980) was commissioned in 1979 by Sir Peter Hall and written by

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.channel4.com/film/reviews/film.jsp?id=101378§ion=review> accessed 24 December 2009.

¹⁷⁶ *Daily Sketch*, 9 February 1966

¹⁷⁷ http://www.arnoldwesker.com/synopses/chips_with_everything.htm accessed 24 December 2009.

¹⁷⁸ Sandbrook, *Op cit* p. 257

¹⁷⁹ The Theatres Act still allowed prosecution for strong language and obscenity by the Attorney General. The passing of the Act was followed a day later by the opening of *Hair* the musical, which offended many for its anti war message during the Vietnam war and desecration of the US flag on stage. http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/27/newsid_3107000/3107815.stm accessed 24 December 2009.

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.curtainup.com/privatesonparade.html> accessed 24 December 2009

Howard Brenton. It was written as a challenge to the dramatist's perception of the ease with which politicians and the public had accepted British troops deploying in Northern Ireland, but will probably be rather better remembered for the simulated male rape scene which led to a prosecution led by Mary Whitehouse¹⁸¹. Plays allowed often a left-wing series of writers to express their anti-war feelings, sometimes covered in a wider story, other times more explicitly. The silence of the audience on the opening night of *Romans in Britain* shows that the public were not always ready to receive the message, but it does demonstrate a progressive increase in challenging the establishment and the historical record.

Gorer, in his work on changes in sexual behaviour from 1950 to 1969, thought the acquittal of the publishers of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960 to have been a turning point, where tabooed issues, previously only meriting titillation, could start to be discussed openly and seriously¹⁸². Certainly the *Daily Telegraph* had two pages devoted the Bishop of Woolwich's testimony, where he agreed that this was a book that Christians should read¹⁸³, although there were no letters published on the trial on 29 or 31 October 1960. Equally the *Daily Mirror* had at least two pages per day¹⁸⁴ covering the trial, but there were no letters on the trial or its outcome. *The Times* covered each day's events in court without making comment¹⁸⁵, and there are no letters during or after the trial to

¹⁸¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2005/oct/28/theatre> accessed 24 December 2009

¹⁸² Gorer *Op cit* p. 3. Perhaps this could be used as the start point for the much over-used term 'The Permissive Society'. See for example Algate, *A Censorship and the Permissive Society, British Cinema and Theatre 1955-1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1995)

¹⁸³ *Daily Telegraph* 28 October 1960 pp. 24-25

¹⁸⁴ *Daily Mirror* 28 and 29 October 1960 pp. 6-7, 23 and 12 and 23 respectively

¹⁸⁵ *The Times* 28 October 1960 p. 6, 29 October 1960 p. 10, 1 November 1960 p. 6, 2 November 1960 p. 8 and 3 November 1960 p. 5 and 12

reflect any public views. The *Daily Mail* made no mention of it at all, nor were there any letters on the trial¹⁸⁶.

Cartoons

Newspaper cartoons offer a different perspective on public opinion. Unfettered by journalistic analysis, and governed only by editorial choice, they have a unique role in displaying an opinion on events, often by poking fun at individuals where the written word might not allow. Proof that cartoons can have a disproportionate effect on opinions can be demonstrated by the effect of Zec's¹⁸⁷ cartoon in the *Daily Mirror* of 5 March 1942, 'The price of petrol has been increased by one penny – Official'¹⁸⁸ which depicted a torpedoed sailor on a raft. The intent was simple – to highlight the heroism of the Battle of the Atlantic and to provide a message – don't waste petrol, but Churchill felt that it could affect the morale of merchant seamen, and it implied that lives were being put at risk to increase the profits of oil bosses. The episode ended in a farce in a debate in the House of Commons on 26 March 1942, where Churchill and Morrison were forced to realise that they had overreacted.

This section reflects a comparison of the cartoons from the *Guardian* (as a left-wing broadsheet) and the *Daily Express* (as a populist right-wing tabloid), drawn from the British Cartoon Archive at the University of Kent. Though this merits a thesis in its own

¹⁸⁶ *Daily Mail* 28-31 October 1960.

¹⁸⁷ Philip Zec tried to get into the RAF but was turned down. He became a leading cartoonist of the Second World War, producing 1529 cartoons, often lampooning Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler et al.

¹⁸⁸ Zec, *Don't Lose it Again* (London: The Political Cartoon Society 2005) pp. 74-81

right, this small collection, measured from a keyword search against ‘war’¹⁸⁹, gives a comparable grouping (297 versus 357 respectively) and demonstrates some trends. The public reaction to cartoons was never on the same scale as that of Zec’s cartoons; war-related cartoons simply did not create the same comment as those related to the Trades Unions or racism¹⁹⁰. This can be shown from Cummings’ biography¹⁹¹, which shows that his cartoon suggesting Britain’s immigration policy would lead to race riots of 3 March 1965 for the *Daily Express* was unsuccessfully referred to the Press Council as an insult to coloured peoples. Indeed, Cummings felt that he was having an impact on the issue because of the ‘angry letters’¹⁹². Similarly, the NUJ members on the *Scottish Daily Express* objected so strongly to a Cummings cartoon on 17 October 1971 planned for the following day entitled ‘Father O’Brezhnev Missionary to Ulster’ that they stopped the presses and over 350 000 copies were lost¹⁹³. Equally, Martin Rowson’s cartoon for the *Guardian* on 13 July 1998 of Peter Mandelson’s platitudes, including ‘The Pope is Catholic...the Blairs shit in the woods’ led to a complaint by a reader to his MP and to the Press Complaints Commission¹⁹⁴. ‘Emmwood’¹⁹⁵, political cartoonist on the *Daily Mail*, thought that Gerald Scarfe’s unusual style had cost the paper 50000 readers – a case of the cartoonist not being in tune with the style of the paper¹⁹⁶.

¹⁸⁹ http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/search/cartoon_item/anytext%3Dwar?year_from=1960&year_to=2000 accessed 24 December 2009. All cartoon references are drawn from this collection

¹⁹⁰ Interview Dr Nick Hiley, Director British Cartoon Archive 2 June 2010

¹⁹¹ <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/arthur-stuart-michaelcummings/biography> accessed 2 June 2010

¹⁹² *Ibid*

¹⁹³ *Ibid*

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/martinrowson/biography> accessed 2 June 2010.

¹⁹⁵ John Musgrave-Wood (1915-1999)

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/geraldscarfe/biography> accessed 2 June 2010.

One reason for the limited number of disputes between cartoonists and editors was the small pool of cartoonists in use over the period. This meant that most had served long apprenticeships before getting to the top of their professions and were more in line with editorial policy¹⁹⁷. A second reason would be that, in the period, most cartoonists produced ‘roughs’ – typically 4-6 draft outline cartoons reflecting the issues of the day, from which editors picked the work to refine into a finished cartoon, thus removing much of the opportunity for friction. Cummings described this process in his biography¹⁹⁸. It can be illustrated in David Austin’s notebooks for July 1995¹⁹⁹ for the *Guardian*, which carried a list of the headlines for the day, a number of roughs, and the final selected cartoon. On 26 July 1995, Austin listed the headlines as including ‘Bosnia – closing in on Bosnian Serbs? US will bomb? Clinton’s interests served by Milosevic deal’ as well as ‘Grade’s pay’ (Grade being the highest paid UK boss and Britain’s ‘chief pornographer’), and ‘Women-only shortlists’ being ‘not well done’²⁰⁰. The nine roughs included a Labour canvasser at a doorstep asking for the ‘man of the house’, and a Bosnian asking ‘Has some idiot discovered oil?’ above a slogan saying ‘US to bomb’, but the selected final cartoon²⁰¹ had a US serviceman pointing to a board titled ‘USAF Operation Restore Bill’, with a subtitle of ‘Newt’s Rabid Reaction Force’, an arrow marking ‘Hillary’s Column’, two circled areas for ‘GOP enclaves’ and ‘Greater Arkansas’ and in the bottom right-hand corner, ‘Bosnia’.

¹⁹⁷ Hiley interview *Op cit*

¹⁹⁸ Cummings biography *Op cit*

¹⁹⁹ Austin archives, British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent, July 1995

²⁰⁰ *Ibid* 26 July 1995

²⁰¹ Not yet digitised in the archives

Only a few cartoonists, such as Steve Bell, became really important for the newspaper (in this case the *Guardian*) and the readers (for example the ‘Maggie’s Farm’ series) which allowed him to submit what he liked²⁰². Sometimes, like Cummings’ cartoon of 6 August 1973 which compared the heat for Richard Nixon of Watergate with a recent fatal fire in which 30 people died, questions were raised over how far satire could be used (although a complaint to the Press Council was rejected)²⁰³. Raymond Jackson (Jak) regarded himself as an impartial observer, because he ‘went for everyone’²⁰⁴.

In many cases during the period, the First World War was used as an image to portray conflicts other than war, as a model for pointless attrition, or an image of waste, and the suffering for any soldier. This can be seen in Steve Bell’s verse covering a copied painting of a soldier in a trench²⁰⁵; Martin Rowson’s cartoon for the *Guardian* showing Tory politicians mired in a trench²⁰⁶;

[PC2290] [not in the digital version of this thesis, see source: <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/PC2290>]

and Cummings cartoons for the *Daily Express*, showing Thatcher and police in one trench, with Scargill in the other, alluding to a four year battle²⁰⁷, and similarly another by the same cartoonist showing Scargill in a Kitchener pose with a hammer and sickle in his hat ‘Your Scargill needs you – to commit suicide for him’²⁰⁸.

²⁰² <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/stevebell/biography> accessed 2 June 2010.

²⁰³ Cummings biography *Op cit*

²⁰⁴ <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/raymondjackson/biography> accessed 2 June 2010.

²⁰⁵ PC4917 11 November 1998 *Guardian*

²⁰⁶ PC2290 10 June 1997 *Guardian*

²⁰⁷ 44259 30 November 1984 *Daily Express*

²⁰⁸ 39409 16 September 1984 *Sunday Express*

One can see a trend in cartoon change over the period 1960-2000 in the way HM The Queen was depicted. In the 1960s, she was generally depicted behind a statue, in silhouette or from behind (e.g. Emmwood for the *Daily Mail* on 28 February 1961)²⁰⁹. Fawkes was the first to depict her face on 12 September 1969²¹⁰ (Fawkes recalled later that even these cartoons brought complaints from readers)²¹¹, coincident with the 1969 documentary on life with the Royal Family and a move to make the Christmas message more informal. With that, the more respectful image declined, to be replaced with more and more critical depictions, such as the large ears of the Prince of Wales²¹² and Prince Philip as 'Lethal Bonehead'²¹³.

The *Guardian* grouping²¹⁴ showed a much larger preoccupation with war up to 1971 (166 of the 297 cartoons are from the period to the end of 1971). Only 32 dated from after 1979, but this may be due to the way these were catalogued. The early themes were drawn from the Second World War, and comparisons with the Soviet threat²¹⁵.

Throughout the period of the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson was depicted as a cowboy²¹⁶. In comparison, Nixon, his successor was depicted first as a soldier with a gun²¹⁷, then was generally seen in a suit²¹⁸, before looking ever more haggard and

²⁰⁹ <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/group/cartoonists-and-royal-family-1953-2003> accessed 2 June 2010.

²¹⁰ *Ibid Daily Mail* Fawkes 12 September 1969

²¹¹ *Ibid*

²¹² Franklin *Sun* 20 October 1987

²¹³ *Ibid* Steve Bell 20 December 1996 *Guardian*

²¹⁴ http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/search/cartoon_item/anytext=war?year_from=1960&year_to=2000&publication=The%20Guardian accessed 24 December 2009

²¹⁵ Note the use of the Nazi swastika in LSE8591 6 January 1960, and the comparison of Prussia, Hitler and Khrushchev in LSE8777 12 September 1961.

²¹⁶ For example 06699 dated 10 February 1965.

²¹⁷ For example 17755 5 May 1970

²¹⁸ Such as the cartoons from 1971 on the US involvement in Laos and Cambodia

arguably crushed in his later years in office²¹⁹. The Arab/Israeli peace post-1967 war was depicted with a strong anti-Arab flavour –e.g. the Wooden Horse from Nasser²²⁰.

[15232] [not in the digital version of this thesis, see source: <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/15232>]

The general flavour of the cartoons was not pro-military – which one can see in the depiction of F-111 as a white elephant²²¹;

[08467] [not in the digital version of this thesis, see source: <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/08467>]

the ghoulish generals post-Mai Lai²²²; and the sympathetic approach to the IRA both in the depiction of IRA snipers²²³ and Heath being bogged down in a tank in Northern Ireland²²⁴. Gibbard's cartoons made several allusions to the Star Wars programme, poking fun at whether it would work and at Reagan in particular.²²⁵ Martin Rowson focused on the conflict in Northern Ireland, especially the darker side of the IRA and Ulster politicians²²⁶, whilst Steve Bell showed his criticism of the ineffectiveness of the UN in Rwanda²²⁷. His later work for Remembrance in 1997 showed a Union Flag, with the words of Binyon's poem on it, with the last line modified to read 'We will remember Tony Blair and bomb Iraq'²²⁸. Much of the 1999 coverage surrounds Kosovo, with the sceptical line of the cartoonist exemplified by a picture of a NATO soldier saying 'Stop or we'll shoot somebody or other'²²⁹.

²¹⁹ For example 22479 10 May 1972.

²²⁰ 15232 12 April 1969

²²¹ 08467 14 February 1966

²²² 20068 dated 2 April 1971

²²³ 21026 dated 4 September 1971

²²⁴ 21202 dated 26 October 1971

²²⁵ See 36815 19 November 1985; 44425 the Cold War village of 5 March 1987 and 43402 2 December 1987.

²²⁶ PC0158

²²⁷ PC0921

²²⁸ *Guardian* 11 November 1998

²²⁹ *Guardian* 22 March 1999

The *Daily Express* grouping²³⁰ was hard to track against the *Guardian* on a day-by-day basis. There were similarities in the 1960 cartoon of schoolchildren asked what to do during a 4-minute warning²³¹, but the style was rather less serious – for example ‘Test Ban Man’ in 1963 was hailed as a positive step for the evolution of man by monkeys²³². Lancaster’s small cartoon took an ironic look at Vietnam ‘When is an incident not an incident’ after a bombing raid by 150 US jets²³³.

[06764] [not in the digital version of this thesis, see source: <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/06764>]

In the 1967 Arab/Israeli War, the cartoons were solidly pro-Israel, both during and after the conflict, including Carl Giles and Michael Cummings work²³⁴ - Giles and Cummings alternated, with Giles favouring the more homely family cartoons, and Cummings making more vicious political attacks. Carl Giles used many of his wartime experiences as the ‘Official’ War Cartoonist for Second Army in 1945 to continue to make references to the Second World War with his ‘Giles family’ cartoons – that of 16 September 1969 is an example, presumably timed to coincide with the Battle of Britain commemoration²³⁵. In a similar way to the *Guardian*, most of the war-referenced cartoons date from before 1971 (185 of the 357), and indeed only one was referenced to war after 1989, but this was probably due to cataloguing preferences. In the 1970s, Cummings set Lt Calley’s Vietnam indictment into the context of the genocide and refugees in Pakistan²³⁶. During

²³⁰ http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/search/cartoon_item/anytext=war?year_from=1960&year_to=2000&publication=Daily%20Express%20 accessed 24 December 2009

²³¹ GA1632 dated 23 June 1960.

²³² 04078 7 August 1963

²³³ 06764 dated 13 February 1965

²³⁴ See GA2462 1 June 1967, 11355 6 June 1967, 11371 8 June 1967 and 16181 1 September 1969 as examples.

²³⁵ 16277 16 September 1969

²³⁶ 20537 14 June 1971

the Northern Ireland campaign, the *Daily Express* took a very pro-British and pro-Army stance. Examples here are on internment²³⁷ and provocation of British troops²³⁸:

[21199] [not in the digital version of this thesis, see source: <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/21199>]

A similarly pro-British stance was taken during the Falklands War, from the cartoons regarding corned beef²³⁹, to the nature of the Argentine fleet²⁴⁰, and to ‘Traitorama’²⁴¹ – referring to the *Panorama* programme which so upset the Conservative Government.

It might be easiest to characterise the *Express* cartoons as having been very pro-Conservative and pro-British, and generally, though not exclusively, less politically satirist and more up-front funny than the *Guardian*. The latter seems to have had more questions to ask over the nuclear debate, the Arab/Israeli peace settlement and Star Wars, whereas the former was far more engaged with supporting the British position in Northern Ireland and the Falklands. In both cases, the cartoons do offer a radical depiction of events, in a funny but challenging way, which send messages beyond that of the simple columnist. The cartoon archive for the period demonstrates: the trend in growing irreverence to authority from the mid-1960s; a clear relationship of individual cartoonists to the editorial policy of their newspapers; a reaction from readers; strong use of the First World War as a metaphor for attrition and pointless waste; and a reduction in interest in war topics from the 1970s onwards. Public reaction to war cartoons, as measured by letters to cartoonists or editors, was negligible. Cartoonists such as Cummings reported far more concern over issues such as immigration and other topics.

²³⁷ 21183 25 October 1971

²³⁸ 21199 27 October 1971

²³⁹ GA4382 8 April 1982

²⁴⁰ 48688 14 April 1982

²⁴¹ 43817 12 May 1982

Conclusion

The media can be seen to have the potential to affect the population in a way rarely seen in previous years, as demonstrated by the reaction to the mid-1980s crisis in Africa. Indeed, the period of this thesis might really be termed the growth of a new age in media, where older forms of the media such as the radio and cinema were replaced by television and at the end of the period, the Internet²⁴². Though newspapers declined in quantity and circulation, they retained an importance in conveying information in a quite different way from television, where immediacy was not quite so vital, and more time could be spent on analysis. But this did not mean that the public's perception of the veracity of their coverage was any better than the television; in fact, quite the reverse is true. But, other than opinion poll evidence, the letters pages of the broadsheets provide one of the few sources of any public reaction to events, which makes them of value in this work.

Aside from some dedicated documentary programmes, most people used television news as their main source on world events. Despite government objections to some coverage during the Falklands and Gulf campaigns, the vast majority of people still believed that television news reporting was impartial and unbiased. In reality, groups like the Glasgow Media Group demonstrated consistently that the news is, by its very nature, partial

²⁴² Robinson reflects a number of pieces of research between 1997 and 2002 that show that the effect of the internet at that time was to act as additional communication, rather than a revolutionary aid to mobilization of action. Robinson, P, in *Reporting War Op cit* p103

because of the nature of the work of the editorial team. Public understanding was set by the frame of reference used by the broadcasters and the chances were that the initial message would be retained, even if subsequent events proved that not to be the case. But retention of the news was not that good, as a Finnish study proved, and the news did seem to be an opportunity for people to channel-hop or do other things.

Not only were choices made about what topics are shown, but the way they were put over (who was interviewed, what images were used) was also important. Limitations of time mean that the context could rarely be put over and so the chances of the public being able to understand the real detail of the stories were small. In general, television broadcasters tended to follow the government line, particularly in wartime, unless they detect division or disagreement at political or organisational level, in which case they were likely to exploit that division as news.

From the public's side, the evidence is that people could construct quite reasonable representations of stories some time after the event, especially from a few images. And from the evidence of the Falklands and Gulf Wars, people were likely to watch much more coverage in war than in peace. But they are just as likely to find resonance with fictional stories and characters as the news – indeed children could often reproduce fictional stories from films verbatim²⁴³. Here the predilection of people to watch fiction rather than fact coloured their judgement of events, particularly in war.

²⁴³ Glasgow University Media Group *Message Received* Op cit p. 1

The five case studies were chosen deliberately not to be exhaustive, but to illustrate a number of specific points. The *Mayaguez* incident demonstrates that no matter how much coverage given to an incident by the media, it may not find resonance with the public. This is probably due to the fact the British forces were not involved. But it also showed that the media was inclined to take a particular line (in this case a positive one on intervention) when the evidence as it emerged actually suggested this had not been a well-planned and executed operation.

Blackadder Goes Forth demonstrated the power of comedy to affect viewers. Shown four times over the period, it attracted many more viewers than some of the serious and factual programmes about war. It showed a capacity for the British public to find humour in a war that had millions of casualties for all sides; something unthinkable in France for example²⁴⁴. Yet the attraction to opinion-formers and makers from 25-44 is evident. And the fact it continued to be used in secondary schools as part of the teaching on the First World War shows the power of fictional comedy to blur fact and fiction. *Soldier*, *Soldier* was equally fictional, but equally powerful. Again appealing to the 25-44 age group, but definitely skewed towards the lower socio-economic groups, this again received more viewers than most factual documentaries on the contemporary British Army.

The final two programmes, covering the *Festival of Remembrance* and the *Trooping the Colour* ceremony, demonstrate both changes in society and television viewing. Both were factual and bridged the gap between the modern Armed Forces and historical

²⁴⁴ Interview with Professor Martin Alexander, specialist in French history, 22 August 2007.

service. Both were much more important in viewing terms in the early-1960s, when the top programmes of the day were usually the *Royal Variety Show* and *The Queen's Christmas message* – quite clearly reflecting strong establishment values. Both reduced markedly – to a point where neither really competed with the fictional alternatives on other channels. And the viewers still watching were clearly older and less influential in society.

The evidence here, and from those watching television films, is that the public tended to trust the television news, but preferred to watch fiction or comedy. Although it would be quite wrong to regard the British public as a single mass group, it is fair to say that their knowledge of defence issues, and indeed interest in them, was limited, and may just as easily have been affected by historical or fictional perspectives as any coverage of contemporary service.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated that British attitudes to war and the Armed Forces underwent considerable change in the period 1960-2000. There is no single measure that captures the change, nor can any basket of measures really encompass the gamut of views represented by British opinion; there are simply too many groups with different perceptions based on their position in society and their emotional reaction to events and the way they are presented. There are no simple models to cover British opinion with certainty; the best that can be achieved is to take insights from campaigns and attitudinal work to draw some conclusions.

The very nature of 'Britishness' changed over the period, and indeed has constantly changed over time. A number of factors have affected the relationships within the country. Some of the mainstays of society have altered dramatically. Religion is no longer a unifying force; secularization has increased dramatically since the Second World War. The economic ties which traditionally kept the United Kingdom together have loosened, notably since the advent of North Sea oil and the decline of the manufacturing sector. This has meant for the Scots in particular, a resurgence of national identity and a feeling of potential development on a European rather than British basis. Class, which some argue started to dissolve as a defining element in society in the First World War, only to re-emerge afterwards in the Twenties and Thirties, has changed in nature from the 1960s, and has partially been replaced by material wealth as a divider – the haves and have-nots. Finally, the steady emigration of white British has been replaced and

supplanted by an increasing immigration of people from Ireland, the former colonies, and latterly Eastern Europe which has brought its own effects on religion, by increasing the size of the Roman Catholic church and that of the evangelical churches, and on class and wealth distribution.

As society changed, so did the norms and mores that define it, and have led people to take particular positions on issues, such as defence. It is very easy to overstate importance of the liberalising decade of the 1960s, but there is no doubt that the effects of austerity in the 1950s when unleashed with the advent of colour in clothes, greater personal wealth and access to goods in the 1960s created a more materialistic and questioning society. The demise of National Service in part reflected society's disillusionment with large standing armies, an increasing rejection of authority, a diminution of the concept of Empire and hence a greater challenge to British intervention. Liberalisation in areas like homosexuality may have been ahead of main societal thinking, but reflected a trend away from conservatism in attitudes from which public support for war was traditionally found. Anti-war demonstrations in 1968 and the importance of CND in the early 1960s and again in the early 1980s illustrated a greater willingness, particularly in the young, to challenge authority and to seek peaceful solutions to world issues.

Any analysis of British attitudes has to attempt at some division of society. Whilst there are a number of models, the most convenient here is that of the political level, the elite level and the populace. This model is itself very fluid, and is issue-dependent. The political level has been fairly constant throughout the period, being Whitehall-based and reflecting

the instruments of Government. In this particular work, the most striking change in the period was the significant reduction in the numbers of parliamentarians with direct military experience, including National Service; the 1991 Major government being the last to have ex-military representation. The elite level is the most fluid. It varies in size and composition depending on the issue. For the purposes of this work, it broadly comprises defence industries, relevant academia, broadsheet elements of the media, retired military personnel and interested members of the public. The remainder comprises the general population, but this disguises the many constituent parts that will respond to issues in different ways. There are regional differences which get accentuated by national views (Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland) and by linkages with local regiments (losses from local regiments are likely to be felt more in those communities). Religion may also play a part (e.g. the National Army Museum of Scotland deliberately excludes the involvement of the Scottish Regiments in Northern Ireland on religious/political grounds). Economics will play a major role – high poverty levels and unemployment will focus attention on those issues to the exclusion of defence. So although the broad model is of three parts, actually the linkages are far more complex than this.

The role of the Church in society is one that demonstrates both a great change over the period and has a direct relationship to the Armed Forces through the act of Remembrance. The dramatic decline in active church membership at a national level, though not clearly reflected in the case studies presented, shows the increasing secularization of society. Attitudes towards Remembrance have not changed in the same

way, however. It is very clear that the public attachment to the Festival of Remembrance on television declined rapidly from its peak in 1962. Yet the support for local Remembrance services, whilst declining in some areas, remained remarkably consistent where services were more civic in nature and less bound to churches. Given that the numbers of ex-Servicemen declined dramatically through death, such that relatively few survived with Second World War or National Service experience by the end of the period, the implication is that they were supplanted by an increase in younger members. The move from personal experience to perception is very evident, in that First World War teaching as history and through poetry became an essential part of the core curriculum (however much one might question the validity of some of the material used) for the post 1960s generation. The implication, therefore, is that thinking on the First World War drove public attitudes towards modern conflicts. Such conflicts were acknowledged in Remembrance services but do not seem to have been emphasised and had little impact on attendance (e.g. post-Falklands and Bosnia). It is striking how the agendas within local churches were driven by individuals. In the 1960s and 1970s, many of the clergy had seen military service and had a strong and vocal position in society, reflected by the media coverage and the tenor of their sermons. Two things seem to have brought a degree of disarray to the clergy: the anti-nuclear debate, encapsulated in the book *Church and the Bomb*; and the approach the church took as British troops engaged in conflict. The rise of CND, with the active involvement of many clergy, and the Church's developing attitude towards nuclear weapons gave many in the Church cause for concern, not only over the morality of nuclear weapons but also the wider question of the justification for any war (the Just War debate). This had two effects. Younger clergy,

especially those without military experience became extremely uncomfortable with the act of Remembrance, as evidenced by anti-war elements in some services or even by ignoring the event altogether. Moreover, it meant that the clergy's attitude to British forces on operations was muted (and chastised by some clergy) during the Falklands, forcing a much stronger and more positive messages by senior clergy in the Gulf War, which in turn drew condemnation from within the church, demonstrating clear disunity. The other change over the period was from a decline in the significance of the Armistice Day celebration in the 1970s, and its re-emergence in the mid-1990s to become at least as important as Remembrance Day and possibly more so. This reinforced the secular message and that in many minds that the First World War was especially important in a time of increasing values and morals (even if actual behaviours did not always match the political intent).

This work has shown that, despite the changes in societal attitudes over the four decades, the political level has been consistent in promoting a strong attitude towards defence and a willingness to employ force in support of national objectives. Objections came from a small but vociferous group whose members were consistent from the Falklands to Kosovo and who were mostly opposed to the use of force in any event. Greater questioning of Governments came over the conduct of conflicts (the loss of the *Belgrano*, the destruction of Al-Amiriya), but the political level was rarely critical of the military itself, although it was critical of the conduct of the government in times of conflict. In a sense, this reluctance to criticise the military once engaged on operations was counter-productive, as the military was allowed to undertake virtually any operation with

impunity given a strong-willed government of the day (e.g. Conservative government with the Gibraltar shooting and the sinking of the *Belgrano*)¹. There is little evidence that the political level was been overly affected by consideration of the views of the populace, except to the extent of perceptions of what they might think, particularly in relation to casualties (Bosnia/Kosovo being good examples). The elite level showed the greatest tendency to debate and challenge. Arguably the elite level increasingly challenged the political level over the period, and influenced and supported the moral interventionism of the decade since 2000. Again, there is evidence that the elite level anticipated that the population would take a certain view, when it is not evident that they did so (e.g. *Mayaguez*). On occasion, the elite level, or elements of it, completely misread public intent, such during the Falklands conflict, where large elements of the elite level perceived that a major military operation for the sake of 1,800 islanders on islands where the UK had already considered transfer of sovereignty did not make sense, yet the populace were strongly in favour. At other times, the elite could be in step with public opinion, such as the reaction to ethnic cleansing in Kosovo where all sides felt action was required, though the elite appears to have led the public in the sense of deployment of ground troops.

Reading public opinion is very difficult. The most obvious method is through opinion polls, but their very nature means that their objectivity must always be questioned. And the results show that in the same poll, people can give entirely contradictory views on the

¹ Although there was a curious reaction to the use of the Armed Forces to backfill the fire services during their strike of 14 November 1977, both a ‘Dunkirk’ spirit to the use of mothballed ‘Green Goddess’ fire engines, and yet a wave of sympathy for the firefighters and uncertainty of this use of the Services. See Turner *Op cit* p. 201

same topic (e.g. as many opposed to military action yet in a separate question were in favour of an invasion (from the Falklands)). So a mosaic must be built of public opinion. The newspaper letters columns give a ready indication of the strength of opinion on issues, but looking at this in a systematic way through the lens of a single paper or across several papers on one issue tends to highlight more about the editorial policy of the letters editor than reveal much about public opinion². However, it is sufficient to demonstrate for example that overseas conflicts, such as the *Mayaguez* incident, despite extensive mass media coverage, are unlikely to excite public opinion. The source of the letters shows that the political level uses the broadsheets to put forward views that might better be expressed in Parliament. The Church used the same broadsheets to conduct debates. The general public used the broadsheets to debate a range of issues, often reflecting on historical parallels to contemporary events, but few used the tabloids for comment at all. The reality of broadsheet circulation was that such debates are largely confined to the elite level, and did not reach the wider population.

One clear change in the culture has been the greater scrutiny of the conduct of British forces at home and abroad. In the early-1960s in Borneo, British forces could operate away from the media gaze, with little fear of public scrutiny. Several events over the period have changed that freedom. One example was the reaction to the publication of stories of a massacre by British troops operating in Malaya in 1949, when soldiers confessed to having machine-gunned villagers. When reported in the *People* in 1970,

² See Evans H, *Good Times, Bad Times* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson 1983) p. 206 for a description by the former editor of *The Times*, of the (arbitrary) process by which letters from the 200 letters or so received every day were selected for publication.

sales fell due to people's dislike of the report³. Individual accountability changed with greater censure of individuals in peacetime incidents such as involvement with civilian accidents/incidents in Cyprus, falsification of travel and entertainment claims and so on. This reflects both greater media interest in individual cases, and a growing moral requirement for individual servicemen to have the same exemplary standards as other public figures in politics and the church, and this continues after their service. The collective responsibility has also increased with greater media access, and has been demonstrated in the sinking of the *Belgrano*, the shooting of IRA members in Gibraltar, Bloody Sunday, discomfort over the 'Highway of Death' in Iraq, and latterly in the debate over civilian casualties during bombing campaigns. There is not great evidence from any one source to demonstrate increasing public disquiet, but the confluence of attitudes to casualties, post-conflict polls on issues such as the *Belgrano*, the number of plays at theatres in the late-1960s and early-1970s which roundly criticised British servicemen as bullies, and the level of media attention to these incidents suggests that the three levels of political, elite and populace share concerns which will impact on the conduct of future conflicts and what the British expect from their service personnel.

Evolution in attitudes towards homosexuality offers more evidence of change in both society and the Armed Forces in the period under discussion. From the review of prostitution and homosexuality by Sir John Wolfenden in 1957 to the ultimate change in Service policy in 2000, few topics have engendered stronger opinions within the Armed Forces or in the media, though wider public perceptions is harder to gauge. It is clear that the Wolfenden Committee were very taken by the experience of National Servicemen in

³. Greenslade *Press Gang Op cit* p. 228

recommending a minimum legal age for homosexual acts of 21. Similarly, evidence from the Brigade of Guards, the Windsor drummer boys, the Second Sea Lord's list, and the return of HMS *Eagle* in 1968 suggests that homosexuality was a major issue in the Armed Forces, however little acknowledged publicly. It does appear that, though the law was changed in 1967 to decriminalise homosexual activity for adults, society at large was less ready to embrace the change. Politicians had viewed liberalisation as a potential vote-loser. The Armed Forces actually intensified their efforts to track and remove suspected homosexuals. A greater public tolerance really only became apparent in the 1990s, when Lustig-Prean *et al* appealed against their dismissal from the Services, and when the Court of Appeal judge wondered how long the MOD could sustain their position against evident societal change. Armed Forces law only changed after the European Court of Human Rights upheld the appeal of Lustig-Prean *et al*, and seemingly this then became a non-event for the Armed Forces, with little internal or external reaction.

However this does beg the question, if the Armed Forces in the 1960s were faced with real problems of blackmail, importuning of minors and other difficulties, why were no such difficulties prevalent after 2000? Is it possible that the same concerns over protecting young people may re-surface in the future? There was another dramatic change over the period related to homosexuality. In the 1960s, gay activists were strongly anti-military because of a perceived inconsistency between pacifist feminine tendencies in gays and strongly masculine warlike-requirements of the military, to the point of joining with other activist groups in anti-war, anti-nuclear and anti-establishment

protests). Yet forty years on, the gay lobby was working for assimilation into the forces on grounds of equality.

The role of the media has been the subject of much academic debate, often around the myth of media coverage undermining US public support for the war in Vietnam, the alleged CNN effect in Iraq and elsewhere (which can be summarised as instant coverage requires instant response), and the partiality and inadequate coverage on television news which fails to provide the requisite information for the populace to make informed judgments. Conventional wisdom says that the media will generally follow the government line – and the evidence considered here tends to support that view, even when it is simply not supported by emerging facts such as the Gibraltar shootings⁴. One of the key questions is whether the press leads, follows or reflects opinion. The evidence presented here is that it can do all of those. In Kosovo, there was a concerted view from the elite and media that something needed to be done in response to apparent ethnic cleansing. In the *Mayaguez* example, the news was presented continually with no public reaction or apparent interest. But the greatest tendency is to exploit divisions within the political and elite levels – particularly reflecting the lack of response from the Church to the Falklands and the Gulf Wars, and the divisions in the Church between those senior figures keen to follow the national line and those below often totally opposed to all wars.

⁴ For the argument, in the context of the alleged CNN effect, that the elite and policy makers are not overly affected by public opinion poll evidence, but more by ‘perceived public opinion’, which is in part framed by the media, see Robinson, P, *The CNN effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and intervention* (London: Routledge 2002) p. 3. Robinson also argues that the media can be very influential where government policy is uncertain, citing Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq as examples (p. 117).

Of all media, television has the greatest power to influence. The vast majority said they used it as their main source of news (which reflects its immediacy, even if newspapers can give greater context and more considered opinion) and the sheer numbers of viewers demonstrate its power against newspapers or any other single source. Selecting a few television programmes can illustrate the scale of change both over time and between genres. The results are necessarily limited by the availability of data, so the figures from before and after 1991 are not directly comparable. Nevertheless, the figures for a comedy series (*Blackadder*) and a fictional Army drama (*Soldier Soldier*) show the numbers of people who watch dramas about the military and war, rather than those who watch it on the news (significantly fewer). Both show the proportion of opinion-formers who watched such programmes – particularly the age group for *Blackadder*. Films, whether seen originally in the cinema or watched on television, show the power to mythologise conflict and to produce both patriotic and anti-war messages. By contrast, the figures for *Festival of Remembrance* and *Trooping the Colour* show the decline in viewing of such programmes over 1960-2000 period. The latter programmes were mainly watched by the oldest age groups from lower socio-economic groups. But the implication is that fiction in war is more powerful than fact in the public mind.

The types of conflict in which UK forces have participated have changed since 1960. Post-colonial policing actions moved to a defence of UK sovereign territory in the Falklands, representing Ceadal's defencist operation. Support to the civil authorities in Northern Ireland would ultimately last 38 years, and despite not being called a war, involved a substantial part of the UK Armed Forces and led to the use of armed troops

out of uniform not only in UK but in Gibraltar. The public just do not seem to have understood why the two sides were fighting – not helped by the determination by successive Governments since the 1920s not to discuss Northern Ireland in Parliament but to allow the populace to run their own affairs. The public's response to events was carefully managed by politicians and media framing the IRA's activities as terrorism. The fact that the largest proportion of civilian casualties was caused by security forces actions is largely ignored or overlooked. The campaign also promoted media and public questioning of the actions of the security force (including the RUC), beginning with reactions to the riot of 5 October 1968 that left Gerry Fitt holding his head covered in blood. Growing reports of ill-treatment of detainees by troops were reported by the BBC and led to the Compton inquiry. The Armed Forces were under the microscope in a way not seen before. The campaign also saw a new form of censorship of the media – a ban on publicizing proscribed organisations – so-called starving them of the oxygen of publicity. The public's reaction to all this was mixed. In general, it seems they just did not care. At one extreme was the small group who wanted the troops to pull out in 1987, but programmes like *Busman's Holiday* persuaded others that the troops should stay. For many, it was a problem they simply wished would go away. For all the hype around the shootings of IRA members in Gibraltar, the majority view appeared to be that they deserved what they got. In part, that was due to careful framing of the debate using Government misinformation, but also it reflected the on-going love affair between the public and the SAS that started with the Iranian Embassy siege and continued both in fact and in fictional series on television. To some extent, Special Forces could apparently do little wrong. The bomb attacks on the mainland caused considerable shock and anger, but

then an overwhelming desire to get on with business as usual – something Wesselly reminds us is very normal and was also witnessed during the Blitz. But some events sparked much greater indignation – the Warrington bombing and the attack on a mounted troop in London, reflecting popular concerns over any attacks against children or animals. This is open to manipulation. In 1995 a five-year old child injured in a Serb mortar attack on Sarajevo in 1993 died in Great Ormond Street Hospital. In fact, she had failed to make the list for UN evacuation and doctors used the media (particularly a BBC report from August 1993) to ensure she was evacuated⁵. In 1991 a 15 year-old girl alleged that Iraqis had thrown Kuwaiti babies from their incubators; she was later revealed as the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the USA; the story had been created by the agency providing support to the Kuwait government.

1991 saw a large-scale multi-national operation in Kuwait, where issues of national survival were not present for the UK, but issues of national interests most certainly were. Again, this has the feel of a defencist operation, though the location might tend towards Ceadal's crusading category. The Gulf War saw a rebellion of 55 Labour MPs – something not seen nine years previously in a more consensual Parliament. For the wider public, Faulks summarized their view as one of resigned support, though the polls suggested the highest support in Europe. The clergy were just as divided as in the Falklands – the strongly opposing letter by 100 theologians forced support from senior church leaders after considerable criticism of a lack of a line during the Falklands campaign. The confidence borne of a low-casualty short war (and perhaps an illusory feel of the effectiveness of precision bombing) was clearly a factor in dispatching troops

⁵ Holland, P, in *Tell me lies Op cit* p. 185

to Bosnia and then Kosovo, where the motivation was far more idealistic to protect particular groups from attack by others. Though some would claim that Bosnia/Kosovo had significance as European wars and therefore are part of UK national interests, it is less evident that the broad population saw it that way. Both conflicts are firmly in the crusading category, with high moral overtones. The lack of public support for the Bosnia operation suggests that people are not keen to employ troops on such operations without a clear understanding of the costs and benefits involved, and in this campaign the polls demonstrate a clear lack of understanding by the public. Kosovo showed even more starkly that the public felt there had been insufficient public debate, and less than half felt it was being managed competently (despite solid support for Tony Blair). Regional opposition to the bombing campaign was marked, reinforced by NATO errors in bombing the Chinese Embassy and a civilian train⁶, which gave the lie to claims of great accuracy in weaponry. But the letters columns also demonstrate a waning interest in the campaign over time – it simply was not of interest to the uninvolved populace.

Views on previous wars help to shape public perceptions of contemporary conflicts. The impact of the World Wars was particularly significant in this period. Although interest in the Second World War has regularly occurred is high and receives impetus on anniversaries, the First World War has had a disproportionate effect on public attitudes to modern warfare⁷. This can be seen by the great emphasis on First War studies in schools, through study of poetry and, with easier access to the Continent and greater affluence,

⁶ BBC1 and Channel 4 News 12 April 1999

⁷ For the fortieth anniversary of Hitler's rise to power, which spawned some twenty books in the US, Frank Finlay's performance in *The Death of Adolf Hitler* and Alec Guinness' *Hitler: The Last Ten Days*, see Harris, R, *Selling Hitler* (London: Arrow, 1986) p. 52.

school trips to the battlefields. The whole flavour of the act of Remembrance and the resurgence in support for Armistice Day, long after most of those who fought in the war were long-since dead, has been around the First World War rather than more recent conflicts. If people's perceptions are coloured by the myths of the First World War (generally around the trench warfare of the Somme and Passchendaele, the bravery of individual soldiers and the ineptitude of the generals) then it is likely their view of modern military events will be influenced. A similar point applies to the Second World War. The evidence shows that the major part of the population has, particularly from the 1970s, preferred to watch Second World War fictional films or dramas rather than contemporary television news coverage or any sort of formal programmes on defence. It is simply not possible to quantify the effects that this has had, but we know from parallel work that young people can recite virtually word for word the script of popular films such as *Pulp Fiction* and relate strongly to fictional characters from soap operas. So it can be demonstrated that the dominant exposure to war for most of the population has been through films and fiction, and some historical studies. The contention must be, therefore, that people's attitudes to today's conflicts are affected by misperceptions of the past.

What this thesis has demonstrated is not only the lack of foresight as to the changing relationship between British society and the Armed Forces but also any attempt to shape military doctrine to prepare the Armed Forces for the rise of both liberal Britain and Britain's new role in the world. For all the changes over the four decades considered, nothing can take away the on-going theme of a close relationship between the public and

the individual soldier, preferably framed as a hero (especially if to do with Special Forces) and that has been a constant throughout.

APPENDIX 1. THE CONCEPT OF A MASS GROUPING.

There are those, such as Glasgow Media Group, who would reject the proposition of a 'mass' group, suggesting that this is too broad and fails to reflect society. They would argue that the growth in higher in education, with some 50% of those in the relevant age bracket are now in higher education, compared with some 5% or below in the 1960s, implies that there is a much higher proportion of educated people now than in the past, who are likely to have views on national issues¹. However, their economic status (since many low paid public sector jobs are filled by graduates) are likely to mean that their concerns are rather different, and to relate to pay and housing, than necessarily defence. They would suggest looking at specific interest groups for particular issues, whether unions, or ship workers (relevant to naval shipbuilding) for example, and look at their impact on power and the elite level. Space precludes any further consideration of this theme.

¹ Interview Greg Philo Glasgow Media Group. 14 February 2008

APPENDIX 3. TEXT OF *NATIONWIDE* MAY 1983¹ [\[not available in the digital version of this thesis\]](#)

¹ BBC Archives

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