

NATION, EMPIRE AND THE BIRMINGHAM WORKING CLASS,

1899 - 1914

Michael Dennis Blanch

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Commerce and Social Science (Department of Economic
and Social History), University of Birmingham.

October 1975

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SYNOPSIS

This research looks at the attitudes of Birmingham working people to both Nation and Empire, and the propaganda which attempted to form and change opinions, in the period between the Boer War and the Great War.

The influence of nationalistic and imperialistic values was to be seen in children's education, in both the method and content of the teaching process, in the training of teachers and in the external regulation of schools by government and Local Authorities.

The Unionist party, headed by a leading Imperialist, exercised a monopoly over political power and political information in Birmingham. Its propaganda was deeply rooted in nationalistic myth, and strands of such ideas were to be found in the propaganda of all parties. Support appears to have been strongest in the more destitute areas of the city. Nationalist myth helped to retard the growth of popular radicalism in Birmingham, at least down to 1910, after which, and led by skilled workers, the challenge of radical politics in the municipal elections and labour confrontation in the factory grew fiercer.

The influence of militarist ideas was studied, through an analysis of Regular Army recruitment in peacetime, and then in wartime (World War One, and for comparison, the Boer War); Territorial Force and Militia recruitment, and membership of the National Service League and youth organisations. Recruiting to the Regular Army, especially among unskilled workers, was promoted by nationalistic events in peacetime;

ii.

those same workers were initially the largest group recruited in wartime. Supported and funded by the employers, between them the part-time military and youth movements elicited considerable working class involvement, with different strata being attracted to different organisations.

The thesis also examines the influence of nationalism in working class leisure, suggesting a 'function' and 'place' for nationalism in working class society.

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Introduction.

Historical interest in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Imperialism has been high for many years. More recently, the economic theory of Imperialism has been informed by sophisticated statistical method,¹ and research into public documents has shed light on the role of pressure groups and the influence of personalities in the decision-making processes.² Yet in this wealth of material, few have researched either the attitudes of working class people to this Imperialism, or the propaganda to which they were subjected.

From Hobson through to Schumpeter,³ there has perhaps developed a general notion that working people were, in some sense, psychologically stimulated by Empire. More recently, scepticism has been voiced by, among others, Henry Pelling, Patricia Knight and Bernard Semmel;⁴ but the problem of researching working class attitudes is that working people leave behind few records of their opinions.

As Pelling has indicated, assumptions of working class support for Imperialism tend to be based upon an interpretation of the mass

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1. For theory see D.K. Fieldhouse, Theory of Capitalist Imperialism 1967, and for statistics see A.H. Lmlah Economic Elements of the Pax Britannica (Cambridge, Mass.) 1958, S.B. Saul, Studies in British Overseas Trade 1870-1914, (Liverpool) 1960, and the work of H.J. Habakkuk, and A.G. Ford.
 2. Classically R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, 1961 etc.
 3. J.A. Hobson, Psychology of Jingoism 1901, p.3 and J.A. Schumpeter, Imperialisms and the Social Classes, 1957, p.17.
 4. H. Pelling, Popular Politics and Late Victorian Society, 1968, p.87; P. Knight, British Public Opinion and the Rise of Imperialist Sentiment in Relation to Africa 1880-1900. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Warwick University, 1968, pp.431-445; B. Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform, 1960.

reactions of the Boer War.¹ Men flocked to the Colours, crowds turned out on the streets, a General Election was fought surrounded by imperialistic propaganda. Realising the clear limitations of regarding Labour Movement attitudes as a reflection of working class opinion,² Richard Price recently analysed the working class recruitment patterns, informal discussions in working class non-political clubs, voting patterns and crowd activity during the war.³

Price's book is a work of depth, originality and refreshing methodology, yet three basic criticisms must be made.

First, Price appears to adopt (though it is never explicitly clear), a definition of working class imperialism which requires evidence of continuing support for the policies of conduct of the South African war. Thus the "mafficking" demonstrations which he says were "a time for rejoicing; England had regained her honour",⁴ are later rejected as insignificant "irrational actions induced by crowd mentality".⁵ Similarly, he discovers that many working class clubs celebrated British victories and would tolerate no criticism of

1. H. Pelling, op.cit. p.87.

2. As seen for instance in T.F. Tsiang, Labor and Empire (New York) 1923, and more recently in F. Bealey "Les Travaillistes et la Guerre des Boers", La Mouvement Social Oct - Dec, 1963.

3. R. Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class, 1972.

4. ibid. p.133.

5. ibid. p.177.

British soldiers,¹ yet later concludes that "direct evidence of any kind of working class attitude or opinion is scanty."² The problem with this sort of approach, over a single issue, is that it leaves unanswered the status of a wider range of attitudes normally associated with nationalism and patriotism, of which imperialism is but a part.

This thesis is concerned with that much wider range of attitudes to both nation and empire, and with propaganda which attempted to mould and change ideas. In initial research it was realised that such ideas and values fall into discreet clusters, from for instance aggressive militaristic values, to various forms of racism, through patriotic attachments to symbolic institutions like monarchy, to the many and opposite values which inspire faith in Empire. To attempt though, a more precise definition at this point would both stricture the discussion, and anticipate the conclusions.³

Second, in studying the Boer War as a 'test case', Price needs to relate evidence of working class attitudes to the particular phase of the campaigning. In Dec.1899 for instance, a great deal of criticism appeared at all levels, following the army's chaotic performance at Colenso, Stormberg and Magersfontein in "Black Week." And following the departure of the victorious Field Marshal Lord Roberts from South

1. ibid. pp.82,86,95.

2. ibid. p.96.

3. The very many books on nationalism fail to give any useful working definition, which can be applied to British society. The lengthy discussion. in L.L. Snyder, Meaning of Nationalism (New Brunswick) 1954, for instance, is oriented to emerging nation states in the ex-colonies. And indeed, many historians appear more concerned to discredit nationalism than to define it; see D.M. Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice-Versa" in American Historical Review, April 1962 Vol. LXVII no.3.

Africa in Oct.1900, the war would appear to have grown progressively unpopular.¹ The task left to Kitchener was to involve protracted counter-insurgency operations, the tedious division of South Africa by 17000 miles of barbed wire and blockhouses, and the barbaric resettlement of Boer women and children in unhealthy camps where 20,000 perished. For nearly two years, Kitchener battled with the guerrilla problem which, as others have found to this day, is virtually without military solution. And as 350,000 men struggled on the Veldt, and as soldiers wrote back disgruntled letters to both relatives² and the newspapers, the press, public and politicians alike became increasingly disillusioned. It is therefore important to relate evidence of working class support or disinterest to the particular period in which it is set, and this Price does not do.³

This thesis is not limited to the single event of the Boer War; to collect the sort of evidence implied in the definition above required a longer-term view. The years 1899-1914 are interesting for, amongst other things, the increasing dissemination of ideas to large numbers of enfranchised working people through the new popular cheap press and later the cinema. There occurred, as well, a deterioration of foreign relations with Germany in trading and naval competition.

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1. Roberts departed leaving, in his own words, "but a little work left to do." (30 Sep.1900). R. Kruger, Goodbye Dolly Grey, 1961, E. Holt, The Boer War, 1958.
 2. Letters to Maud (National Army Museum MSS 7209-82) of the Boers, Oct.1899 "...they run away"; Dec.1900 "...they do as they like with us".
 3. e.g. pp.79-80, where he notes pro-Boers addressing working class audiences, who listen with "rapt attention", dated 23 March and 20 April, 1901.

These were years of growing para-military youth club membership, and of reorganisation of the civilian recruited Territorial Force and Militia. The period was climaxed by increasing popular radicalism and labour militancy, yet ended with a clash of arms, and the flocking of men once again to the Colours. It seemed that there could perhaps be some similarity in recruiting to the Boer War and recruiting in the opening weeks of World War One.

Finally, although mentioning Hobsbawm's criteria of "labour aristocracy",¹ Price stresses the impossibility of separating out the attitudes of different strata within the working class. Indeed, he claims, stratification made little difference, for "the essence of working men's class consciousness was a pride in being a member of the working class."²

Research indicates that the social and political attitudes of working men varied with status, in particular between skilled artisans and unskilled labourers.³ Local patterns differed widely too, and the work of John Foster, R.Q. Gray and Gareth Stedman Jones⁴ suggests that attitudes were profoundly influenced by local social subgrouping,

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1. E.J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men. Studies in the History of Labour. 1964, pp.273-5.
 2. R. Price, op.cit. p.10. His definition of 'working class' rests upon whether or not people were involved in manual labour.
 3. Noticed by Mayhew and many since. See E.P. Thompson and E. Yeo, The Unknown Mayhew (Pelican) 1973, pp.95-97.
 4. J. Foster, Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution, 1773, and "Nineteenth Century Towns - A Class Dimension" in H.J. Dyos (ed.) The Study of Urban History 1968; R.Q. Gray, "Styles of Life. The Labour Aristocracy and Class Relations in later nineteenth century Edinburgh" in International Review of Social History XVIII (1973); G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford) 1971 esp. Chap.19.

and the existence of institutions which could crystallise, articulate or even accommodate social protest.

Thus perhaps the methodological difficulties which Price experienced in separating out attitudes could be overcome by a series of local studies. It was felt that this thesis should concentrate on one locality, attempting to more fully understand the role of class and social stratification in the formation and expression of nationalistic ideas. Again, the definition of nationalism adopted, and the subsequent questions it raises, call for intensive searching through local records. London has perhaps received over-much attention from historians.¹ Birmingham was chosen as a major provincial centre and its typicality, or lack of it, is discussed in the following chapters.

To what extent then, were the Birmingham working class subject to various forms of nationalistic and imperialistic propaganda 1899-1914? In what ways was this propaganda the product, of, or actively supported by, local pressure groups and local politically powerful personalities? Is it possible to say what the motives of the propagandists were? How did the various ideas of nationalism weave together?

The following chapters look at nationalism and imperialism in Public Elementary Education, political propaganda and voting, military

1. Earlier historians (and some modern popular authors too) have tended to rely upon London evidence for a 'national' picture, without stressing the peculiarities of the Capital, e.g. E.C. Wingfield-Stratford, Victorian Sunset 1870-1901 1932, and Victorian Aftermath 1901-14 1933; also R. Cecil, Edwardian England 1969. London has been extensively studied, to the exclusion of major provincial centres; recent studies include H. McLeod, Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City, 1974, and G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford), 1971.

and para-military movements, nationalism in leisure and finally in the response to war, August 1914.

The chapters examine working class reactions to the propaganda, and look for evidence of nationalistic ideas in working class cultures. Voting, political society membership and anti-alienism are the first important discussions of attitudes, but the thesis gives particular emphasis to the chapters on military and para-military organisations. This is partly because of the availability of statistical data, indicating the extent of working class involvement; partly because, in the course of research, militarism proved to be a major ideological source of Edwardian nationalism and a major field of working class participation; and partly because it helps lead through to and answer the important questions on wartime recruitment. The influence of nationalism and imperialism in working class leisure - the music hall, cinema and popular literature - is studied for insight into the 'place' and 'function' of nationalism in popular culture.

A point should be made on the nature of working class attitudes themselves. Richard Hoggart, Robert Roberts and Richard Price all note that working people could hold (what would appear to 'educated' people to be) two entirely contradictory opinions at the same time, or at different times about the same event.¹ This apparent ambivalence of attitudes could arise between values expressed about things outside working class direct experience, like nation and empire, and their

1. R. Hoggart, Uses of Literacy (Pelican ed'n), 1971, pp.134-5; R. Roberts, Classic Slum (1971 ed'n), p.69; R. Price, op.cit. p.4. Price also cites R. Blackburn, "A Brief Guide to Bourgeois Ideology" in Student Power, 1969, pp.200-1, and (more obscurely) E.R. Leach, Political Systems in Highland Burma, 1956.

relationship to values concerning areas of life which people knew and understood. Of course, as Hoggart says, there was a consistency in working class culture, but it was not one forged either from 'principles' or 'argument'. To look, then, for enduring and systematised ideological patterns is to search more for bourgeois than working class attitudes.

Besides statistical evidence, this thesis is informed by a very wide span of source material, as listed in the bibliography. In conclusion, two particular groups of sources require comment, - reports by local government bodies and philanthropic and religious societies, and working class autobiographies.

The latter reports were often given to a Smilesian critique which masked or distorted their perception of working class society,¹ restricting their vision to essentially short term causes of poverty, like drink, and leaving them rarely in sympathy with 'frivolous' working class leisure. Early social scientists too, in the tradition of Mayhew,² attempted to fit working people into subjective 'graded' strata, based upon thrift, diligence and industriousness. Inevitably they left at the bottom of the scale "a class of casual labourers,

1. Much as affected Booth's view of London. See "Introduction" to Charles Booth's London by A. Fried and R. Elman (Pelican) 1971 for discussion.

2. Again, see E. Yeo, "Mayhew as a Social Investigator" in E.P. Thompson and E. Yeo, The Unknown Mayhew (Pelican) 1971. Of course, Mayhew endlessly sought "scientific" classifications, but he was a "relentless classifier", searching for biological groupings into "genera and species, orders and varieties", p.77, (from London Labour and London Poor, Vol.III, p.4).

loafers or worse...more or less parasitic on society."¹ A certain sensitivity is required in interpreting their raw evidence, most of which is very fruitful; but much of their analysis about cause and effect can be disregarded. The classic studies of London and York are drawn upon for comparison, and in the absence of equivalent Birmingham studies.²

Similarly, autobiographies are limited in representing an individual's perception and interpretation of significant events in his or her life.³ Again, some politically active authors were given to a certain rosy wish-fulfillment in reviewing society and their contributions to it; the tone and style of writing though, soon suggests their bias. Thus William Collison, son of a policeman and founder of the most powerful strike breaking organisation of the period, despised trade unions and all working class political organisations; he had been privileged to "crush them". Even the working class electorate was a "mob...spoilt and petted, beslavered with kisses and soused in adulation."⁴

This tendency to bias is not usually so extreme in the autobiographies

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1. A. Freeman, Boy Life and Labour, 1914, p.54. See F.G. D'Aeth "Present Tendencies in Class Differentiation", in Sociological Review III 1910, pp.270-1, for a seven standard breakdown of social class - "A - The Loafer...B - Low Skilled Labour...some change clothes and put on a collar... general intelligence rather low, need to be told...C - Artizan...a simple mind, not following a connected argument..."
 2. C. Booth, Life and Labour of the People of London, 1902, B.S. Rowntree, Poverty. A Study of Town Life, 1901.
 3. See "Preface, Autobiographies as history" in J. Burnett, (ed) Useful Toil. Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820's to the 1920's. 1974.
 4. W. Collison, Apostle of Free Labour, (National Free Labour Association), 1913, p.319.

used; not even Tom Mann or Robert Blatchford appear particularly prejudiced in their accounts.¹ Again, biographers being articulate and intelligent, tended also to be socially mobile. By the time a biography was written, their perception of society could have become distinctly bourgeois.

Besides, both Robert's and Hoggart's classic studies,² and a large number of lesser biographies located in other areas, principally five Birmingham working class autobiographies of the period 1890-1914 were used. Of the authors, A.F. Corbett,³ became a Highland soldier and his book is useful for the study of soldiers' attitudes. V.W. Garratt,⁴ whose biography is more heavily drawn upon, was born of drunken parents in a slum area of Birmingham in 1892, and worked in various city factories up to 1913. Although rebelling against school and organised religion in his youth, he appears to have been inspired by a spirit of inquiry and embraced variously socialism and Quakerism, through Adult Schools, then Conservatism and by 1914 (when the book finished) was a Liberal radical, and Y.M.C.A. worker. Occupationally, he finished the book as a brush salesman. The book appears remarkably balanced.⁵ Leslie Halward⁶ was born in 1906 the son of a Selly Oak

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1. R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years, 1921; T. Mann, Tom Mann's Memoirs, 1923.
 2. R. Roberts, Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century (MUP) 1971. R. Hoggart, Uses of Literacy (Pelican edn.) 1958.
 3. A.F. Corbett, Service through Six Reigns, (Norwich: privately printed), 1953.
 4. V.W. Garratt, Man in the Street, 1939.
 5. And perhaps merits republishing as a valuable historical source, on a par with Roberts. The "spirit of inquiry" by which he was impelled, he has no explanation for. He asks why, he, and not others like him, rose intellectually out of the slum, but he says he can think of "nothing special."
 6. L. Halward, Let Me Tell You, 1938.

butcher. He gained admission to a King Edward Foundation school, but beyond the first chapter his book illuminates little. James Spenser¹ was also born in Selly Oak of a wealthy artisan family; he however rebelled, broke school, and at an early age lived rough in woods and stole from shops. He was committed to Borstal, but was sent back to his parents as uncontrollable. Later, too well known to British police, he took up with an American gang. Yet his is an articulate, sometimes cynical but incisive account of his youth and of the people with whom he lived. Finally, Sam Shaw,² like Garratt was born in an Aston slum, and was like Spenser eventually sent to a Reformatory. Unlike Spenser, he became in later years ultra-conformist, pursuing anti-strike and Unionist policies among the Welsh miners. Thus the autobiographies of Birmingham working people are set in a relatively wide cross-section of the local community.

1. J. Spenser, Limey Breaks In, 1946

2. S. Shaw, Guttersnipe, 1946.

Chapter 1

The Birmingham Working Class.

The population of Greater Birmingham in 1911 was 840,202;¹ the County Borough itself housed 525,833, being divided into constituencies, wards and religious parishes as shown on the map and its overlays contained in Appendix I.

Nationally, manual workers accounted for about 80% of the male population.² It is probable that the percentage of middle class in urban areas was slightly above the national average; Rowntree calculated the "servant keeping class" of York at 28.8% (though this could have included foremen and manual supervisors).³ It can be assumed that at least 75% of Birmingham's population were manual workers and their families.

They were employed in a host of different trades - engineering, brass, jewellery, vehicles, electrical, paper, rubber, glass, toys⁴ - organised either into large factories, or into the traditional garrets and workshops of the central city areas.⁵

Larger factories existed in the new and expanding industries,

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1. Census of England and Wales 1911 10 Edw 7 + 1 Geo.5. Chap.27. Vol.X Pt II. This population includes Aston Manor, Erdington, Handsworth, and parts of Northfield, Kings Norton, and Yardley, (incorporated in the Birmingham Extension Order, 1911).
 2. G. Routh Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906-60. (CUP) 1965 pp.5-6.
 3. B.S. Rowntree Poverty. A Study of Town Life. 1913 pp.36-95.
 4. There was little the town did not produce, - even 28.8 million pen-nibs every week. G.H. Wright "General Survey of the Trades" in Handbook for Birmingham ed. G.A. Auden (Birmingham) 1913 pp.373-384.
 5. 3980 "factories" and 4085 "registered workshops" in 1911. J.H. Muirhead Social Conditions in Provincial Towns VII. Birmingham c.1912 (Publication abandoned) BRL K/1 f.3.

like electrical engineering,¹ cars and cycles,² but were also found in more traditional but thriving sectors. Both of the railway works at Saltley,³ and the arms and ammunition works in Bordesley (Small Heath) and St. Mary's were large - unit organised.⁴ So too, were a number of firms in the machine tool industry, which had been profiting from the adoption of machine processes by British industry since about 1865.⁵

Traditionally small-unit organised industries included brass and non-ferrous metals,⁶ where demand for goods was particularly varied and specialised, and the brass bedstead industry which still operated the system of labour subcontract.⁷ The jewel^elry industry too, almost completely monopolising the parishes of St. Paul's and St. George's to the North-West of the city centre, included many hundreds of small-masters and journeymen in workshops and converted houses.⁸

The relationships existing between masters and men were becoming progressively less personal. The more affluent of smallmasters were moving away from the depressed central areas to the suburbs, and no

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1. e.g. G.E.C. works at Witton, 2000 strong.
 2. ... in the production of which the city was second only to Coventry. Large factories like Dunlops Para Mills and Manor Mills (Hay Mills and Aston respectively) existed in the outer areas. G.H. Wright "Survey of the Trades" in Handbook for Birmingham ed. G.A. Auden, 1913 p.373.
 3. Metropolitan Amalgamated Railway Carriage Wagon Co. Ltd., and the Midland Railway Carriage and Wagon Co. Ltd.
 4. G.H. Wright loc. cit. p.381. This must be treated with caution however. The gun industry still used labour subcontract based upon section work by skilled men, and still put out work to garret masters. R.S. Smirke Report of the Birmingham Trades (HMSO) Part C "Sporting Guns and Rifles" 1913 p.1.
 5. R. Tangye Growth of a Great Industry. One and All. 1890 p.103 ff.
 6. Employing 45,000 men and women R.S. Smirke op. cit. Part J "Brass Trade" 1914 p.3.
 7. Bedstead Workmens' Association General Committee Minutes 1906-10 (MSS in BRL) give details of men being summoned for not paying a fair price to their underhands.
 8. One of the most important of Birmingham industries, employing 60-80,000 workers. G.H. Wright loc.cit. p.389. Smirke RS op.cit. Part 'D' Jewellery (1913) p.3.

longer lived among their workers in the city.¹ The "old patriarchal relations were passing away".² Indeed, the association of smallmasters with their men was unlikely to have ever been profoundly paternalistic. Of one in 1893 it was observed:

he has but a poor opinion of men who find it hard to make a living for themselves and their families in a trade where he has been able to raise himself and his family to a good position. The feeling is very general among small employers who have sprung from the working classes, and still in part belong to it. Knowing the right way to succeed, and still faithful to the same mode of life as their men, they pay little attention to their claims, and never willingly pity them. The head of a large concern, even when he too begins as a working man, more easily loses sight of the working class life and adopts different habits, which render him comparatively sympathetic towards the narrow conditions of a working man's life. 3.

Consequently, labour relations in some of the bigger firms were far more harmonious. Inspired by their Quakerism, both the Cadbury and Tangye families introduced educational, welfare, medical and housing schemes at their works. At Bourneville, 2000 (from a total of 6000 employees) under the age of eighteen attended compulsory schooling and twice weekly P.T.⁴; meals, fruit, and even snow shoes were subsidised;⁵ 23 acres of recreation grounds were set aside, including a swimming bath; housing was provided to all classes of worker at reduced rates.⁶ At Tangye's

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1. Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Journal Dec.1909 p.187. Also speech by Bishop of Birmingham - Birmingham Daily Mail Oct.13 1909. Also Kineton Parkes "Hardware" 1914 p.189.
 2. W.J. Ashley "Birmingham Industry and Commerce" in "Handbook for Birmingham" loc. cit. p.363.
 3. P. de Rousiers "Labour Question in Britain", 1896, pp.6/7 on a Birmingham Toolmaker, 1893.
 4. R.G. Ferguson "Educational Scheme connected with the Bournville Works" in "Handbook for Birmingham" loc. cit, p.339.
 5. T.B. Rogers, "Welfare Management. Social Institutions at Bourneville Works" 1906.
 6. See Report of the Special Housing Committee, City of Birmingham 20 Oct.1914, Appendix Evidence p.395 for a breakdown by occupation of Bourneville residents (560) - a very well balanced community including labourers, semi-skilled, skilled, lower middle class (clerks and teachers) and "professional men". One Y.M.C.A. measurement of physical statistics of 13 year old Bourneville children, compared to the slum Floodgate Street children, showed them to be 7" taller, 1st.2lbs. heavier, 11½" more chest expansion. Whether this is an exaggeration or not, it clearly shows the extent of physical deprivation in the centre slum areas. Labour Mail, March 1907.

factory of 3000 workers, similar schemes were supplemented by profit sharing. Being large, Tangye's were able to continually reinvest in new innovations in the machine tool industry, and this insulated their workers from much cyclical unemployment.¹ Both of these firms were free from industrial disputes. So too were the Birmingham Printers and South Metropolitan Gas Company which both operated on a worker co-partnership basis,² and the municipal gas and electricity companies which operated profit sharing schemes.³

In general though, Birmingham employers were uninterested in promoting the education of their employees, or were much concerned with their health and welfare.⁴

Unimaginative schemes by employers to cope with unemployment for instance, included municipal wood-chopping and an ingenious proposal to set up an "indigenous basket ware and local crafts factory....

Mr. Hood would not propose the payment of more than nominal wages, as the idea of the factory would be to stimulate the men to set up for themselves in their own houses or otherwise. 5.

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1. R. Tangye op.cit. p.123.
 2. "Co-partnership and What it Means" (Press of Birmingham Printers) 1911.
 3. Labour Co-partnership Association. Documents B.R.L. 1912.
 4. Workers Educational Association, Birmingham Annual Report 1906 p.4. 500 circulars were sent out to employers, asking questions on their attitudes to worker education, and an attempt was made to set up an Employers' Educational Association. The "smallness of number (of replies - only 18) ... seems to indicate a lack of interest little short of remarkable".
 5. This atavistic venture was inspired by members of the Chamber of Commerce becoming impressed with the output of native basketware in the colonies. B'ham Chamber of Commerce Journal Jan.1905 p.11. Atavistic movements also occasionally flourished among the working class - one patriarchal Scots orator, Alexander Stuart Gray, who at times appeared in Birmingham and advocated a "return to the land" among the unemployed, eventually commanded Salisbury Plain with an army of unemployed and stated a self-supporting Owenite colony there. He died, unnoticed, in 1937 - "burned out of energy": V.W. Garratt "A Man in The Street" 1939 p.90; "Land for Protection" "Birmingham Land Crusade" Sept.1909. (pamphlet in B.R.L. 218761).

Trade Union organisation was, until about 1910 at least, somewhat weak in Birmingham.¹ Perhaps some workers felt a little comforting deference to their employers, as Roberts complained:

Many were genuinely grateful to an employer for being kind enough to use their services at all. Voting Conservative, they felt at one with him. It was their belief, widely expressed at election times, that the middle and upper classes with their better intelligence and education had a natural right to think and act on behalf of the rest, a right that one should not even question. 2.

But the reasons for the failure of active trades unionism and of radical politics in Birmingham, were also due to at least another four causes with roots in Birmingham's industrial and social structure.

First, the existence of a very large number of small firms fractionalised trade union efforts. Indeed, it was also claimed that since workers were closer to, and could comprehend, the whole process of production in small firms, they were better situated to

realise that their wages are settled not by a conflict between capital and labour, but by a third factor, which in the long run decides - the consumer. 3.

This was probably more the case with skilled workers than with casual employees, or those semi-skilled involved solely in single productive processes.

Birmingham acted as a nodal centre for the input of raw materials (especially iron and steel) from Staffordshire and the Black Country. Being so diversified the town was to some extent insulated from the recessions that often beset these primary industries. Labour and

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1. This whole question is discussed in the "Politics" chapters below.
 2. Roberts op. cit. p.133. This raises problems and questions to be considered in Chapter 10.
 3. P de Rousiers op. cit. pp.9-10.

capital were highly mobile. The Birmingham working class thus rarely experienced the hardships of a total depression of an industry, whereas whole areas of the Black Country could become unemployed. Thus the conditions which fired the mercurial socialism of the Clydeside workers for instance, were never present in Birmingham.

Third, large numbers of Birmingham manual workers were accustomed to moving from industry to industry seasonally, for seasonal cycles in the jewellery, brass, glass, electroplating and bicycle industries tended to offset one another.¹ It was thus difficult, if not impossible, to create permanent trade union organisation amongst a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Fourth, the growth of working class-conscious politics was hampered by the social distinctions existing between workers on the shop floor, and the very lack of community these distinctions caused between families outside of the factory or workshop. This point needs considerable amplification.

Between and within the grades of foreman, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers existed differences in wages, housing and general expectations of life.

1. In the slack months of the late summer, firms in the cycle trade dismissed 50-100% of their men, who would then move elsewhere, particularly the watch trade. The brass industry would have 25% unemployed from July to August, but at this point the jewellery and electroplating trades would be reviving again after the post-Christmas slack months. Potentially large numbers of the working class were thus involved in the "dovetailing" of seasonal swings; brass and jewellery alone employed over 25% of the total working population. R.S. Smirke op.cit. (j) Brass (1914) p.7 and (b) Electroplate Trade (1913) p.7; J.H. Muirhead (1912) op. cit. f7; P de Rousiers op. cit. p.282.

		<u>Male & Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
1.	Professional		
	a. Higher	1.00	1.34
	b. Lower	3.05	1.61
2.	Employers, Administrators, Managers		
	a. Employers, Proprietors	6.71	7.74
	b. Managers, Administrators	3.43	3.91
3.	Clerical	4.84	5.48
4.	Foremen, Inspectors, Supervisors (manual)	1.29	1.75
5.	Skilled	30.56	32.99
6.	Semi-skilled	39.48	33.63
7.	Unskilled	9.63	11.55
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		100	100
		<hr/>	<hr/>

Table 1.1 Percentage Distribution of the Employed Population of Great Britain by Social Class, 1911. Source:¹ G. Routh "Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906-60" (CUP) 1965 pp.5/6

Table 1.1 presents an assessment of the social distribution of the national population for 1911. Data is not separately available for Birmingham, but only for selected industries in the N. and W. Midlands. For comparison, Table 1.2 presents a similar analysis of occupational grading in the metal, shipbuilding and engineering industries.

1. Routh has used the Registrar-General's definitions of social classes. "Skilled" includes coal hewers, bakers, carpenters, engine drivers, railway guards, policemen as well as those requiring lengthy training in industry. "Semi-skilled" includes industrial machine minders, packers, storekeepers, platelayers, railway firemen, ticket collectors, other-ranks in the army - all of whom require only a small degree of training. "Unskilled" includes porters and labourers in industry, building and the docks - entirely without training.

	Percentage Employed of adult male manual workers	Equivalent national percentage of manual workers
Inspectors, Foremen	2.3	2.19
Skilled	43.6	41.24
Semi-skilled	35.9	42.04
Unskilled	18.2	14.44

Table 1.2 Occupational distribution of manual adult labour employed in metal, shipbuilding and engineering industries in the N. and W. Midlands 1906, and the equivalent national percentage of all workers adjusted from table 1.1 Source: Cd 5814 (1911) LXXVII i Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into the Earnings and Hours of workpeople in the U.K. pp.77-8

Both of these analyses however, tend to underestimate the lower end of the scale. They ignore casual workers, the unemployed, families supported by widows or poor relief, and the effects of seasonal fluctuations in the regular displacement of labour. Thus Rowntree found that 15.5% of York's working class were in a state of "primary poverty", (below his spartan measure of absolute essentials) and put the total of those at or near the "poverty line" at about 25%.¹ Sidney Webb,² Booth,³ and Chiozza Money⁴ found that about 12% of male manual workers were earning less than the 21/- figure of Rowntree's 'poverty line'. Yet the rate for unskilled workers in the engineering industry varied from 21/7d (brass)

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1. B.S. Rowntree Poverty. A Study of Town Life. 1913 pp.143-4.
 2. S. Webb. "Estimated Earnings of Employed Manual Wage Earners in the U.K., 1912" in New Statesman 10th May, 1913. pp.141-2.
 3. Charles Booth's London ed. A. Fried and R. Elman (Pelican) 1971 p.94.
 4. L.G. Chiozza Money, Riches and Poverty, 1905. Chap.2.

to 25/6d (light engineering¹). Thus it might be justifiable to believe that the unskilled workers, casuals and the very poor accounted (as in York) from about one fifth to one quarter of the working population depending upon the general economic climate.

Birmingham industry increasingly thrived on unskilled and semi-skilled labour; the introduction of new machine tools by the larger firms increased the gap between the skilled man and other manual workers. Thus in engineering, skilled men began to adopt restrictive practices like closed shops and tightened apprenticeship and manning regulations in the early 1890's, to guard against the dilution of their skill. A national lock-out by the employers in 1897 however was successful, and the consequent introduction of semi-skilled labour racked the trade with demarcation disputes right down to the Great War. Where the normal engineering unit had been "one skilled man and one labourer" complained an engineer in 1912, it had become "one skilled man, ten semi-skilled men, and four labourers and the semi-skilled are little better than labourers."² Apprenticeship to a skill in Birmingham would appear by then to have become a rarity in engineering, as indeed it was becoming in many other trades. The drive to recruit semi- and unskilled labour led employers to compete for juvenile labour, driving up juvenile wage rates and providing a powerful disincentive thereby for youths to enter a period of low-pay apprenticeship. One Birmingham study showed less than twelve apprentice plumbers and fifty apprentice bricklayers in the city in 1896; of ironfounders "very few are born here".³

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1. Cd 5814 (1911) LXXVII i Report of an Enquiry ... into wages ... by the Board of Trade .. pp.77-8.
 2. C. Stella Davies North Country Bred; a working class family chronicle London 1963 p.111; in engineering, the non-union unskilled men were separated into areas where "the skilled men can't get at them". E.A. Pratt, "Trade Unionism and British Industry", London 1904. p.43.
 3. J.H. Muirhead op. cit. f15.

In those trades where skilled men had not become somewhat rare, there was a tendency either to operate with subcontract systems, or even for skilled men themselves to become smallmasters. The brass industry still allowed foremen to employ their own workers and pay them time-rate from their own payments by piece - large numbers of juveniles, up to twenty per man, were thus employed.¹ The same was true of the bedstead trade and parts of the gun trade. In jewellery, skilled workers found it possible to set up shop with very little capital; the work of the industry was so specialist that many hundreds of smallmasters flourished - very few firms employed more than 100 people, and these tended to produce the cheap imitation jewellery. Skilled workers refrained from taking apprentices; to do so would be to sow the seeds of future competition.²

Consequently, skilled workers had become in many industries either a definite elite within the factories, or employers of labour themselves. The same situation has been noted of London:

A hierarchy of status appears to have extended down to the very lowest stratum of the London poor... Nevertheless, overriding all these finer distinctions of status, the cardinal distinction remained between the skilled and the unskilled (where)... 'a gulf is fixed'. 3.

Unskilled and semi-skilled workers clearly perceived this; friction could arise over the dislike of the skilled workers' pretensions to status, and the objections of the latter to the dilution of their skill.

1. R.S. Smirke op.cit. (j) Brass (1914) pp.2,5,7.

2. ibid. (d) Jewellery (1913) p.3.

3. G. Stedman Jones Outcast London (Oxford) 1971, p.338

As for the people I work with I do not care for any of them as they are in a better (sic) position than myself and think they are all my superior. 1.

complained one unskilled lad. Another decided instead to actually try and become "one of the elite" (sic); in his job the skilled men had formed a union:

To be a union man was a distinction. Lower paid work might be more arduous and equally important, but as the men in these jobs had no organised status, they were classed as labourers and were definitely in an inferior position. In fact a sort of industrial snobbery arose out of the distinction which graded the workers after the manner of soldiers, of whom the major ranks paraded in bowler hats and ties, and the minors in mufflers and caps. 2.

This reflected a long standing desire by respectable and skilled artisans to be disassociated from the great mass of the working class, as noted by contemporary nineteenth century observers and recently the focus of much research.³

Foremen and overseers were often in an invidious position, standing between the "two fires, the enmity of the men and the cupidity of the masters."⁴ The workers' attitude in one case was

due to a sullen jealousy which saw in him only a workman like themselves, who by favouritism had been placed in a position above them and given three or four times their salary ... He had to explain wage reductions, thus it was him they loathed even more than the master. 5.

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1. A. Freeman Op. Cit. p.118 (a study of B'ham youth)
 2. V.W. Garratt Man in the Street 1939 pp.79-80.
 3. Examples in H. Mayhew London Labour Vol.11 p.338 and Vol.111 p.221 for instance; see G. Stedman Jones Outcast London (Oxford) 1971 esp. Chap.19. For non-London patterns, see R.Q.Gray "Styles of Life. The Labour Aristocracy and Class Relations in later Nineteenth Century Edinburgh" In International Review of Social History XVIII (1973) pp.428-452, and J.O. Foster Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution 1973.
 4. Kineton Parkes Hardware, 1914 p.70.
 5. ibid. p.168.

For skilled workers and foremen, work probably held more interest or challenge than for their semi- and unskilled colleagues. Being closer to the management too, some might well have identified their mutual interest far more.

But industrial work for the semi-skilled and unskilled was dull, monotonous and dirty; autobiographies talk of the oppression of this unexciting environment, and of the erosion of individuality which expressed itself in mores of dress and argot:

To be oneself, courageously and unashamed in matters of dress, talk and action meant running the gauntlet of ridicule and tribal opposition. Much easier was it to fall into the rut and become moulded to mediocrity. The preparation for this attitude was in the elementary schools. After mass education in which the absorption of historical absurdities was more important than mental development, boys passed into the factories with minds ill equipped to withstand a new environmentGrowing up in an atmosphere of constraint in which individual thought and action stubbornly follow the groove of class prejudice, there eventually emerges the sound, solid, British working man. 1.

There is little evidence of significant distinction within the factory and workshop between semi- and unskilled grades. Since the former received 40-50% higher wages² and were in relatively more secure employment, they were clearly more fortunate than the unskilled and the casual labourers on the edges of the poverty line. They might also have been able to achieve upward mobility - thus millers and grinders might learn a trade on the lathe and eventually become fitters and turners;³ "Strikers" in the casting industry could become smiths, though they would usually need to wait until they were about 40 years old.⁴ To

1. V.W. Garratt op.cit. p.80.

2. Semi-skilled in engineering = £73-£84 p.a.: Unskilled.= £52.2-£62.6

3. R.S. Smirke op.cit. (K) Engineering and Allied Trades (1916) p.20.

4. ibid. p.27.

the problems of the unemployed and the very poor, some factory workers could be quite unsympathetic:

I was met by either a tirade against the unfortunate and a "serve-em-right" idea, or by an easy sort of detachment that fixed the responsibility on the inscrutable laws of nature. 1.

Perceived distinctions which could occur between semi- and unskilled grades, and which expressed themselves in all the many esoteric titles given to the levels of work (jelly hand, caulker, striker etc), are more clearly discerned in residential patterns.

Both Rowntree and Booth attempted to divide working class residential areas by social class. Roberts however, claimed that since all manual workers were concerned with their social pecking order, even parts of taverns had different status rankings:

.. he's only a taproom man" was understood to be a common slur...Each street had the usual social ranking...Every family too, had a tacit ranking, and even individual members within it. 2.

Clearly, this thesis cannot ascribe status rankings to individual streets. The divisions must be on much broader lines than that, and it is claimed that three relatively distinct classes of working class area can be discerned in Edwardian Birmingham. First, those areas occupied by social mixes of higher-paid skilled workers, foremen, smallmasters, clerks and teachers; second, those areas occupied by numbers of lower-paid skilled workers, by semi-skilled workers and unskilled workers in continuous employment; finally, areas occupied by casual workers, the unemployed and

1. V.W. Garratt op.cit. p.102.

2. R. Roberts op.cit. p.6, pp.4,5.

the most deprived and destitute of the population.

The percentage of people living in Birmingham's different housing stock is given in column 1 of Table 1.3. If 25% of the population were non-working class, and presumably living in houses of five rooms or more, then the distribution of working class housing would be represented by column 2 of the table.

Rooms	1. % total population	2. % working class
1	0.4	0.5
2	1.3	1.6
3	28.5	35.6
4	15.9	19.9
5	24.7)
6 +	29.2	)36.1

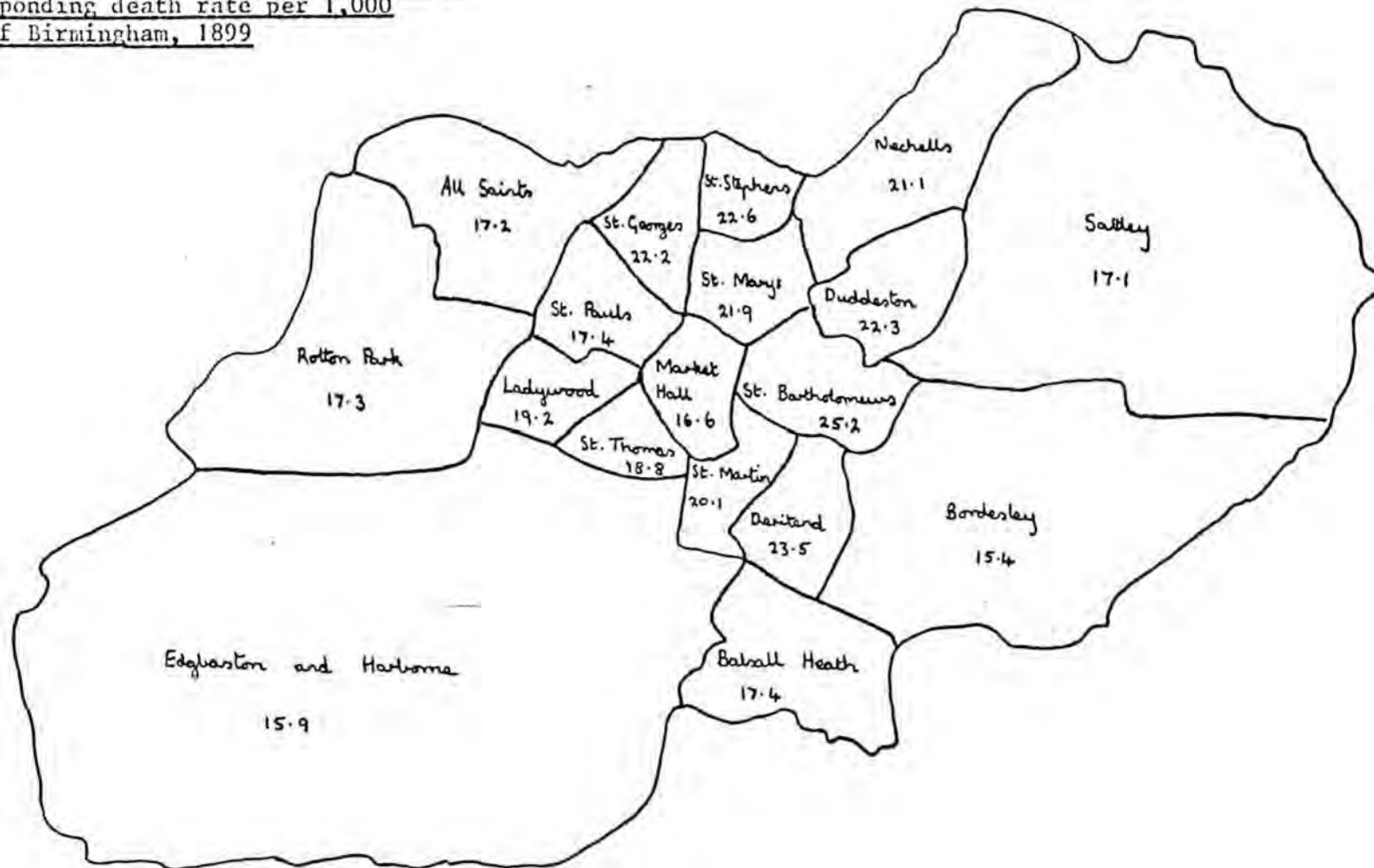
Table 1.3 Percentage of the total and the working class populations living in 1 to 6-roomed accommodation in Birmingham 1911. Source: Cd 3864 (1908) Cost of Living of the Working Classes: Report to the Board of Trade, p.24.

It is clear that about 36% of the working class population lived in the larger accommodation of three bedrooms (five rooms) and above. Some of these houses were sited in central wards at rents of less than 5/6d, but the most popular were in the outer wards at 5/9d to 6/6d, and of these the most elite accommodation favoured by wealthy artisans, foremen and clerks cost over 7/6d per week.¹

The effect of the outward settlement by more affluent workers is to be seen in the poverty and death rate statistics by ward. Data on the former figure is not complete, but does show close correlation

1. Cd 3864 (1908) Cost of Living ... p.25.

Table 1.4 Map of municipal wards with
corresponding death rate per 1,000
C.E. of Birmingham, 1899



to death rates,¹ and these are displayed in Table 1.4 (map) attached.

The pattern illustrates the traditional East-end, West-end urban division, the East central wards apparently being the most destitute. The central ward of Market Hall was low because of its very small population (c 8000), and the high number of shopkeepers, hoteliers and office workers registered there.

But from St. Pauls, out to the outer ring of All Saints, middle-class Edgbaston, to artisan Saltley lived the communities of skilled workers. The total population of these wards whose death rate (in 1899) was less than 17.5/1000 accounted for 59.5% of the County Borough's population.² If 25% of the County Borough's population was non-working class, one is again left with the figure of about 34.5% as the percentage of skilled workers and their families in the total population.

Yet this figure, drawn from four different sources,³ is at odds with Rowntree's discovery that only 12% of York's working class population lived in "distinctively well-to-do artisan" houses,⁴ and Hobsbawm's concept of a labour aristocracy being some 10% of the working class.⁵ Further evidence tends to show though, that it would be wrong to regard the 35% above as being in any case an homogeneous group, living in the mixed artisan and lower-middle class areas. One study discovered that the average family income of working class residents in these latter areas was from 55/- to

1. See for instance Table 1.5 below.

2. = 313062 Census 1911 loc cit VOL.VII County of Warwick, p.5.

3. Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4. 1.1 and 1.2 as amended by Rowntree's data

4. Rowntree op cit p.183.

5. Hobsbawm op cit pp.273-5.

58/- per week, with two workers in each family.¹ Given that an average household received about one-and-a-half times the main adult wage packet,² this would require an adult wage of about 36/- weekly plus. In engineering between 6.8% and 16% of workers received this wage,³ depending upon time or piece-rates respectively. Since piece-rate wages would tend to be more unstable and responsive to market conditions, it is justifiable to ignore the higher figure and perhaps hypothesise a median figure of between 11-12%.

In other words, workers living in the well-to-do accommodation and mixed in with lower-middle class and smallmasters, accounted for about 11-12% of Birmingham's working population and this tallies with both Hobsbawm's and Rowntree's calculations. To distinguish them from less affluent skilled workers, they may be called "highly skilled", for they represent the pattern-makers, turners and joiners of engineering, and equivalent grades in other work.

Directories list their streets peppered with journeymen, clerks, shopkeepers, smallmasters, teachers, and "high grade" shop assistants.⁴ Many must still, like Rousier's smallmaster "live(d) like a working man, not in the style of the middle class"⁵ as measured by the fashion of furniture and clothing. But the families of such workers would have missed the cultural affinity of distinctly working class areas. Rowntree

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1. A.E. Carver An Investigation into the Dietary of the Labouring Classes in Birmingham, with special reference to T.B. Birmingham Corporation 1913/14 p.32.
 2. E.H. Phelps Brown The Growth of British Industrial Relations 1959 p.19.
 3. Report..into Earnings Cd 5814 (1911) op cit pp.77-78.
 4. Birmingham Red Book; Kelly's Directory; Cornishe's Directory.
 5. P de Rousiers op cit pp.16-17.

noted how, in the semi-skilled areas, wives were constantly in and out of one another's houses -

"But with the advance in the social scale, family life becomes more private and the women, left in the house all day while their husbands are out at work, are largely thrown on their own resources... (in the) ... deadening monotony..(they).. become hopeless drudges." 1

Similarly, one little girl in Manchester found upon moving to a higher class of area that

"a street of working class houses ran the length of our garden and we were not allowed to speak, much less play with the children in this street. On the other side of the house the son of..a wealthy Manchester merchant..lived (with) a nurse maid in cap and apron to look after the three children. They were not allowed to play with us.." 2.

The life styles of all in this group were distinguished by their lack of crisis:

"they appear exceeding contented with life, and probably have substantial savings put away for old age, but on this point they are reserved." 3.

The wealthier, in particular the smallmasters, were even known to keep servants and buy up strings of terraced houses as an investment.⁴
A limited degree of upward social mobility was possible; children were

1. Rowntree op cit p.108.

2. C. Stella Davies op cit p.63.

3. A.E. Carver op cit p.28.

4. C.Stella Davies, op.cit., pp.19-21.

encouraged to gain places at King Edward Schools,¹ then hopefully becoming clerks in business or teachers. Or they could go to the Municipal Technical School, which had recently begun skilled trade classes.² And artisans' children would find the family purse of use in setting up on their own account after apprenticeship.³ Whatever happened, they were "seldom brought up as mere labourers."⁴

The artisan's search for "respectability", social approval⁵ and self-improvement led to a participation in local institutions somewhat apart from the pubs of the city centre. Yet this does not necessarily mean embourgeoisment, for recent research⁶ suggests that although the labour aristocrat accepted certain values held by the dominant groups in society (Gramsci's concept of cultural domination by a "hegemonic class"), he "interpreted and reformulated them in terms of his own situation, mediated and diffused them through his own institutions."⁷

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1. One boy, whose father was a butcher in Selly Oak, was pressured from the age of 8 to pass the entrance exam. At King Edwards (Five Ways) he claimed "A number of boys attending were sons of working class parents" - all presumably with entrance fees and uniform costs, very much in the upper areas of the working class. L. Halward "Let Me Tell You" (1938) p.57.
 2. Sir G. Kenrick "Organisation of Education in Birmingham" in Handbook for Birmingham loc.cit. p.320. 3900 students at B.M.T.S.
 3. A Freeman Boys Life and Labour 1914 p.21.
 4. P. de Rousiers op.cit. p.20.
 5. H. McLeod Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City, 1974, p.13; G. Crossick, Dimensions of Artisan Ideology in Mid-Victorian Kentish London (U/pub paper, ~~1973~~. Birmingham 1973).
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 6. See R.Q. Gray "Styles of Life. The Labour Aristocracy and Class Relations in later 19th century Edinburgh" in International Review of Social History XVIII (1973); G. Stedman Jones "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London 1870-1900; notes on the remaking of a working class" in Journal of Social History Vol.7 No.4 (1974) and G. Crossick, Social Structure and Working Class Behaviour in Mid-Victorian Urban Community (U/pub. paper, University of Hull - 1973).
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 7. R.Q. Gray op.cit. pp.451-2.

Thus skilled workers remained self-consciously working class, developing their own Friendly Societies, Lodges, clubs and leisure activities.

And in terms of social advance, certain well defined limits were externally imposed. Thus one youth, applying to become a clerk in a senior Birmingham commercial firm, was quizzed about his father's status:

"Foreman is he? Do you mean manager or something?"

"Yes, sir ..."

"Oh! I thought you wouldn't have got apprenticed (here) if your father had only been a foreman. You'll have to be a bit more careful in the way you express yourself young fellow!" (1)

Another failed completely to become an office boy in a leather shoe factory when it was discovered (despite his efforts to conceal it) that he was working at a bench in the factory. "The office staff", he complained "always held themselves aloof from the workers."²

Conversely, the areas occupied by the most destitute of families - St.Bartholomew, St.Mary, St.Lawrence, and parts of St.Stephen, St.George and Deritend - were distinguished by high death rates, poverty, unemployment and criminality.

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Number Relieved per 1000</u>	<u>Death Rate per 1000</u>
Deritend	22906	27.6	22.9
St.Bartholomew	21434	20.1	26.0
St.Mary	12042	19.0	27.7
St.Stephen	21622	-	25.4
St.George	18364	-	23.1
St.Lawrence (Parish)	8500	Winter 1898 700/1225 families on relief	"very high"
Saltley	60347	5.7	17.1

Table 1.5: Population, Death Rates and Relief for the most Destitute Wards of Birmingham and for comparison: Saltley 1898-1902 (mean figures)

1. Kineton Parkes, op.cit., p.61.

2. G.H.Chapman, Leaves from a Life Bound in Leather (Northampton) 1931, p.19. Indeed, the clerks were used to break a manual worker's strike, (p.36).

In St. Lawrence's, so much violence occurred that police went about in two's for protection, and alleged that one third of all Birmingham's crime originated there.²

These most destitute areas were characterised by the poorest and unhealthiest of speculative housing. One visitor spoke of "rows of houses with hardly a single pane of glass and half starved children almost devoid of clothing yelling and fighting in the streets."³ Rents of around 3/6d were common, 53% of St. Bartholomews paying this or less, for one to three rooms back-to-back.⁴ These properties were owned by landlords who rarely visited, and prosecutions by the Council for maintenance of these dwellings often ran up against vested interests. In one case the Council were refused permission by local magistrates to pull down houses in Navigation Street (Market Hall ward). The owner, a doctor, was able to marshal colleagues, one of whom (Dr. Brice) gave the 'expert' evidence that:

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1. Sources: Census (loc.cit.); Cd 6610 (1913) p.271; Special Housing Enquiry (City of Birmingham, 20 Oct.1914), pp.295/6; T.G. Bass "Every Day in Blackest Birmingham; Facts Not Fiction" (Birmingham) 1898 pp.1-9; "Man in the Street" Dec.1904. In eleven streets of St. Bartholomew's the death rate reached 42/1000 in 1899, and in Park Street it reached 63/1000 - Birmingham Daily Mail Sep.20, 1899.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail Sep.16, 1899; Rev. T.G. Bass "Down East, Among the Poorest" (Birmingham) 1904 p.19; nearly all the burglars in Birmingham were alleged by the police to live in Charles Henry Street (Deritend) at Prince of Wales Terrace, Birmingham Daily Mail Sep.4, 1898, Daily Argus, Sep.1, 1898.
 3. J.A. Fallows "The Housing of the Poor", Midland Socialist Pamphlets (Facts for Birmingham) No.1, p.6; see also A.E. Carver "An Investigation into the Dietory of the Labouring Classes of Birmingham", (Birmingham Corporation), 1913/14 pp.16/17 for some very close descriptions of conditions in these houses.
 4. B.D. Mail, Sep 20, 1899.

..they (the working class residents) are healthy.
 In a better class of house they would be more
 healthy. 1.

The residents of houses in these areas were there because they could afford no better. The occupations of St. Laurence's residents were given as

Hawkers, labourers, rag and bone collectors, wood choppers, waste paper sorters, meat tin collectors, button stitchers, cardboard box makers, hawkers of fish and salt, (2) orange sellers...etc. 3.

Nearly every house in these areas was said to be taking in outwork for the sweated "hook-and-eye" carding trade; to mount 25 sets on 144 cards earnt 8d, but there were deductions of 1d in each 1/-. Those engaged in this trade were often in severe distress, perhaps malnutrition, and used the labour of their children for long hours.⁴

Rowntree discovered similar areas in York. The population was a mix of the poorest unskilled labourers and "those who had known better days" - widows, unemployed, those with very large families.⁵

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1. Birmingham Housing Corporation vs Roderick J. July 28, 1905 (BRL 278510) p.55. Having lost the case, a council official scribbled in MS across the folder a request to the mayor to dismiss the magistrate, or ensure he tried no more of these cases. The magistrate's integrity was called into question. The vested interests which maintained these properties were clearly powerful.
 2. Salt sellers would buy lumps of salt at 2d from the Fazely canal barges, break them into four pieces and sell at 1d each, selling 2-3 lumps a day.
 3. Rev. T.J. Bass "Every Day.." loc.cit. p.9.
 4. B.D. Mail, Feb.6, 1908.
 5. Rowntree op.cit. p.73; Carver op.cit. p.16/17 found that such families in Birmingham had a mean size of 6.38 - thus anticipating a rise in fortunes as children began work.

There was, finally, a mid-way residential working class grouping which was said to consist of

a curious assortment of those who are employed in the semi-skilled trades, and those who are unskilled and whose work is ensured, 1.

and less affluent skilled workers. They lived in accommodation varying from the central parishes out to the fringes of the elite areas. The variations in life style were large, with wages of just over 21/- per week for unskilled workers to over 35/- per week for skilled men, and some semi-skilled on piece rate., Rowntree put this group at 62% of York's working population, and by deduction it accounted for between 60-65% of Birmingham's.² This would involve some 43,650 families in the County Borough, many of whom were squeezed into the 43,366 back-to-back houses in the city, about 34,000 of these being three-roomed and twenty-five years old.³

The latter areas were described as

dreary, desolate districts..broad belts of small property, cut up like rabbit warrens by courts and alleys...mere wedges of gloom. Of poverty, naked and ashamed, there is very little...Everywhere is the white curtains of conventionality...pots of plants..As to the people, their days are as dull as the exterior of their dwellings. 4.

But these people were not at the very bottom of the social ladder; there was always the nightmare that they might be thrown there - as one man attested,

Ordinarily each man likes to think there is someone on a lower step in the social ladder he can look down upon. 5.

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1. Rev. R.S. Pelham Training of the Working Boy, 1914. p.11, (ref. to B'ham).
 2. Highly skilled = 12%, unskilled = 20-25%.
 3. Special Housing Enquiry B'ham Corp'n 1914, p.198; Cd 3864 (1908), op.cit.p.84.
 4. Birmingham Daily Post, 7 Feb.1907.
 5. W. Goldman, East End My Cradle, 1940, p.199.

Rents of the three-roomed houses

varied in accordance with the character of the court as determined by the bulk of its occupants, courts of a certain type attracting to themselves, tenants of similar characteristics. 1.

Yet all were above the unhealthy and dilapidated properties of the casual labourers etc: for this group of the working class indeed:

Deritend and Digbeth had the reputation of being unsafe to walk through. 2.

As families acquired higher wages - usually as children began to work, the fashion was to move to larger houses:

It is usual with the Birmingham people, as they advance financially, to move into better houses and better neighbourhoods. There is none of that clinging to a particular locality which is so noticeable in the Londoner. 3.

Again:

(they) move incessantly from house to house, either because they cannot afford to pay the rent, or else as Tommy has gone to work and is bringing in an extra 6/- per week they feel they can afford a better and bigger house. 4.

So families would move out of the central areas to some of the 25,500 five-roomed houses already defined, on the fringes of the city. One Birmingham boy recounted how, on moving to one of these larger houses:

we had reached a higher rung on the social ladder.⁵

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1. Cost of Living of Working Classes..Cd 3864 (1908) p.84 - this of course, refers to Birmingham.
 2. V.W. Garratt op.cit. p.89. He did however, and was offered sex for 2d.
 3. A.E. Carver, An Investigation into the Dietary..(op.cit.), p.22. The parochialism of the London working class is attested in H. McLeod op.cit. pp.6-7.
 4. Rev. H.S. Pelham, op.cit. p.15.
 5. V.W. Garratt, op.cit., p.71.

Having moved there, it was claimed:

they imagine themselves superior to the less well-to-do, and in the first flush of their relative opulence...despise those lower on the monetary scale and envy those who have reached a more independent position. The people about this income represent the snobs of our labouring classes. 1.

The drift out, indeed, continued to the suburbs proper, outside the County Borough where rents were "not less than 6/9d".² This movement was most pronounced 1901-12, but an increasing shortage of suburban housing had halted the drift by 1914.

Clinging precariously to their social position, this great majority of the working class appears to have been split into different strata of perceived relative affluence, settling according to the "character of courts and streets."³ Indeed "there is almost a caste system in the various grades of labour"⁴ with most "pronounced grades or layers to be found".⁵

But for many, the experience of affluence was but temporary for, as Rowntree described in his classic poverty cycle, the peaks of early marriage and of working children were matched by the troughs of poverty in youth, as children were born, and finally in old age.⁶ Over all this loomed the spectre of unemployment, and of death of the principal wage earner. Thus biographies tell of the many moves of house, reflecting

1. A.E. Carver, op.cit. p.21.

2. Special Housing Inquiry (1914) op.cit. p.13. The suburbs retreating before the "remorseless advance of the abyss" - C.F.G. Masterman, From the Abyss, 1902, p.48.

3. Cost of Living...Enquiry Cd 3864 (1908), p.84.

4. A. Freeman, op.cit. p.40.

5. Kineton Parkes, op.cit. p.62; seen also in G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford) 1971, p.338.

6. Rowntree op.cit. p.171.

upward or downward movements on the strata; it was anathema however to fall to St. Lawrences or the areas in St. Bartholomews or St. Marys as described above.

It would appear then, that the social and economic distinction between the highly skilled elite, the very poor and the middle group was one perceived by working people both on the shop floor and in residential patterns. It would seem too, that the middle group was itself much divided. The analysis suggests an apparent fragmentation of the working class by skill, and perhaps even within communities, for which further evidence from census and marriage registers could provide more definitive assessment.¹ But it is a theme returned to at a number of points in this thesis, for it can suggest interesting developments in the study of working class political and nationalistic attitudes.

1. See M. Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire, (CUP) 1971 for a study of method: also the work of J.O. Foster on community fragmentation as in "Nineteenth Century Towns - a class dimension" in H.J. Dyos (ed.) Study of Urban History 1968, developed in Foster's Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, 1973.

Chapter 2

Public Elementary Education:(i) Drill, Discipline and Moral Education.

By statute and by bye-laws, Birmingham children attended school from five to thirteen years of age down 1900,¹ and until fourteen thereafter.² They could begin at the age of three, and many did.³ From then until eight they attended the infants' department and laboured to achieve a basic command of the "three R's". From eight they were formally taught reading, writing and arithmetic as obligatory subjects (and the girls learnt needlework), and a number of "class" subjects like elementary science, geography and grammar. Curricula were limited by the "Codes"⁴ issued periodically by the Board of Education, and down to 1895, Her Majesty's Inspectors examined schools with respect to these Codes, and grants were paid upon the results.

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1. Not until 1944 was school attendance compulsory by Statute; Acts empowered authorities to make bye-laws; 1880 Elementary Education Act (43 + 44 VICT c 23) compelled these bye-laws to be made. Birmingham's bye-laws were operative from 1870 anyway.
 2. Elementary Education Act 1899 62 + 63 VICT c 13.
 3. Board of Education, Reports on Children under Five Years of Age in Public Elementary Schools by Women Inspectors of the Board of Education (HMSO) Cd 2726 (1905). "Miss Munday's Report" shows that in one urban study, of 400 eight year olds, 61.5% joined before the age of five years. p.20.
 4. "Instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors under the Codes of the Board of Education".

After 1895, the practice of "cramming" pupils to earn school grants diminished and from 1900, the division between obligatory, class, and optional subjects by statute was abandoned. From 1905, the Board of Education adopted the practice of giving most of its general advice in "Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers...", revised and reissued periodically down to 1914.

Children were graded into seven standards from 1882.¹ Table 2.1 is a guide to the very poor levels of attainment at the beginning of the period. Down to 1889, children in Birmingham could leave school under age by attaining Standard V² (the majority leaving then at 11 years); from 1889 - 1900, Standard VI³ (usually by 12 years); from 1900, Standard VII⁴ (keeping the majority at school until 14 years old).

Table 2.1. Percentage of Pupils at Birmingham Board Schools passed at Standards I-VI in 1878.⁵

I	29.95
II	32.37
III	18.84
IV	12.30
V	4.67
VI	1.84

(Source: Reports of the Birmingham School Board 1878, p.70).

1. Code of 1882 C 3568 (until then, only six standards).
2. Elementary Education Act 1876 (39 + 40 VICT c 79) - the minimum age of exemption being 10 years.
3. A.F. Taylor History of the Birmingham School Board 1870-1903, M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Birmingham, 1955, p.143. Elementary Education Act 1893 (56+57 VICT c51) - minimum age 11 years: Elementary Education Act 1899 (62+63 VICT c 13sl)- 12 years.
4. School Management Committee Minutes (MSS) Min.9282/3, 4 Oct.1900: Only 268 boys out of 30,692 attending Birmingham schools were at Standard VII under the age of 14 years.
5. As a general guide to the Standards in 1910, Std.IV should have been able to read fluently a simple passage, write eight lines from dictations, conduct + - x ÷ operations and recite arithmetic tables. Standards V-VII demanded increasing fluency, comprehension and expression in reading, the ability to write simple essays and deal with fractions, simple geometric measurement, decimals, % and interest measurements - in that order. School Government Manual of the Codes and Suggestions, 1909/10 Section II, Part II, p.78.

For the increasing number of Standard VII pupils, and those continuing after 14 years, School Boards built Higher Elementary or Seventh Standard Schools in Birmingham, Waverly Road and Bridge Street Schools. After 1902, the new LEA's introduced county secondary schools.

Discipline in the Board Schools relied too heavily upon the two-foot cane and upon the weighty hand. Overtly, this was caused by several factors; the nature and character of the children and the teachers, irregular attendance and poor teaching.

These factors improved throughout the period 1880-1914, most noticeably better teaching methods gaining acceptance in the last few years. Yet over the whole period, with only some small slackening towards the very end in the better schools, discipline was still repressively applied. For over and above the overt causes of strict discipline, it was cardinal for the Victorian/Edwardian elementary school to see itself as a disciplining institution per se.

Of the children, a very large number came from poor families, were underfed,¹ poorly clothed and unhealthy.² Family instability increased school discipline problems. In one "typical slum school" an H.M.I. found that in 25% of cases, the mother worked away from the home and in 33%, the principal wage-earner's employment was intermittent.³ One third of Birmingham pupils in 1886 were able to claim exemption from school fees of a few pence per week, because of poverty.⁴

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1. Elementary Education Sub-Committee Minute 1297, 12 July, 1906: high absenteeism at Gem Street School due to over 40 children foraging in dustbins.
 2. ibid. Min.488, 12 May, 1904: instructions for regular clothes' fumigation.
 3. Board of Education "Reports on Children under Five.." op.cit. pp.35ff.
 4. A.F. Taylor, op.cit., pp.153 and 157.

Again, the compulsion of many pupils to attend school against their own and their parents' will added to the problems.

In the early 1880's, nearly half of Birmingham's male teachers and two thirds of its female teachers were not college trained.¹ Recruiting to the profession was largely through the pupil-teacher system which, at this time, came in for fierce official criticism² - the payment of £8 p.a. proving little incentive to the more able scholars. Sparked by the New Code of 1890 which initiated regulations for teacher day-training colleges,³ and by local authority initiatives in providing centralised training centres,⁴ the profession slowly acquired respectability.

Classes were generally too large, different Standards often being taught together. In 1890, the Birmingham Board employed 413 adult teachers,⁵ and had 42,718 pupils on the books.⁶ One saving factor was the high rate of absenteeism, in part a reaction to compulsion and in part due to the extensive family migrations from area to area. The average attendance in 1880 was just 73%, and in 1902 88.8%, which

1. A.F. Taylor op.cit. p.236.

2. Royal Commission on Elementary Education, Final Report C5329 XXXVII 1888 p.270, criticised pupil teachers' "great meagreness of knowledge, crudeness, and mechanical methods of study". There were 264 pupil teachers in Birmingham in 1897. School Management Committee, (July 1897), Min.7943.

3. Gustaf Ogren, Trends in English Teacher Training Since 1800. (Stockholm) 1953, p.66.

4. Birmingham tried to scrap the pupil-teacher system in 1880, but it was a dismal failure; and thus it demanded in 1883 that each "apprentice" receive 10 hours training each week in the Board's offices.

5. George Dixon, Address to the School Board, (Birmingham), 1889, p.17.

6. A.F. Taylor, op.cit. Appendix III; Report of the Birmingham School Board, 1901/2, p.21. A ratio of 103:1

meant that on bad days less than three-quarters of classes would be at school.¹ Family migration also increased school turnover. Thus in 1878, Smith Street School had 1072 admissions, 1012 children leaving, but only 115 admitted from its own infants' department.²

All of these factors made elementary school life a grim prospect, requiring grim disciplining methods. A teacher in one of Birmingham's Board Schools complained:

the first thing in excess is government of the boys. There is too much compulsory sitting or standing still; too much repression; too much the practice of the drill sergeant.

"Classes were too big", he continued, requiring the "suppression" of a too troublesome individuality...

...there was but one will, that of the teacher, and the children were the puppets responding to the strings he pulled. 3.

The teacher pulling the strings demanded a machine-like precision of action. One commented to an international inquiry in 1907:-

For instance, after marching into the classroom they must not sit down until commanded by the teacher, who counts meantime "one, two, three" to ensure their all doing it at exactly the same moment. The same procedure takes place for standing up when about to leave the room...Even in the writing lessons the children may not take hold of their pens until the command "pens up" is given, or lay them down until

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1. Report of the Work Accomplished by the School Board (Birmingham) 1901/2 p.21. Schools in 'difficult' areas were much more prone to absenteeism, attendance being averaged at c.60%.
 2. Taylor op.cit. p.163. It is not known how large the school itself was, though it is unlikely to have exceeded 1000. Even in 1909, schools in the poorer areas had up to 75% of the children "removing" each year: Birmingham Daily Mail, Apr.27, 1909.
 3. A.L. Jenkyn-Brown, Experience in Birmingham Board Schools, (Birmingham), 1899, p.17.

"pens down" is called.

The military ideal of automatic action in response to a given command is largely the ideal in much of the school discipline. 1.

Other educationalists agreed: the need of discipline meant the classes being "worked like machines"....of the pupil "we give him a little knowledge, it is true, but we rob him of his personality."² Indeed, some complained that the whole appearance of order and discipline in many schools was a "fictitious appearance...Military order in schools should be exceptional, not habitual; a tonic, not a food."³

But these seem voices in the wilderness; in the classroom the cane ruled supreme. Down to 1903, the Birmingham School Board limited the giving of corporal punishment to the Headmaster (and later, the First Assistant Master). All such punishments had to be recorded in a book, duly inspected weekly by the School Management Committee.

Two significant points are noted in this Committee's minutes. First, the very large number of cases of censure, reprimand and dismissal given to teachers for excessive corporal punishment. Second, the very large number of deputations from professional teachers' associations demanding a relaxation of the Committee's rules. Notably, the Birmingham Branch Head Teachers Association demanded the reintroduction of corporal punishment into infants' schools;⁴ and the Birmingham Branch

1. M.E. Sadler, (Ed.), "Moral Instruction and Training in Schools", Vol.1 (The U.K.), London, 1908, pp.323/4.

2. R.E. Hughes, "School Training"; London (UCCP) 1905, p.87.

3. P.A. Barnett, "Common Sense in Education and Teaching", London, 1902, p.43.

4. V.g. S.M. Comm. Min.9603, 6 June, 1901 - from Headmistresses of Infant Schools; rejected Min.9677 4th July, 1901.

Certificated Teachers' Association demanded the Committee allow all Certified Teachers to beat the children, with no punishment book being kept.¹

The B.B.C.T.A. campaign culminated in a letter/circular addressed to the Board, attacking the:

prohibitive regulation that fosters a spirit of defiance...and places assistants in a false and degrading position. 2.

The Board eventually accepted the recommendations of their disciplinarian teachers and from 1903, policy on corporal punishment was left entirely to the individual headmaster.³

Teachers' organisations favoured then, a very strict discipline, but the School Management Committee itself was not necessarily any more liberal. In one case at least, it cut a school's grant for "faulty" discipline. Vide, the Board Inspector's report upon the school:

The teachers and scholars work in sympathy, but in nearly all cases the eagerness of the boys to answer causes them to move their bodies and feet; in many cases boys stood up and even left their places in order to attract attention.

"I also noticed several instances of boys helping their neighbours surreptitiously.

These two points are, in my opinion, effectual bars to any school obtaining the Higher Grant for Discipline. 4.

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1. v.g. S.M. Comm. Min. 9659 20th June, 1901; rejected Min. 9677, 4 July, 1901; Jenkyn-Brown op.cit. claims teachers ignored these Regulations anyway - "either he must disregard (them), or lose control of his class", p.9.
 2. S.M. Comm. Min. 10392, 6 Nov.1902; letter dated 23/10/1902.
 3. ibid. Min.10450, 11 Dec.1902 - policy within the 1902 Revised Code.
 4. Mr. Broscombe's Reports, (M.S.S., Birmingham Education Offices), Feb.17th-20th, 1896, at Mary Street Boys' School: S.M. Comm. Min.7250, 30 Jan, 1896.

Thus the eagerness of children to answer and to participate, and to help friends at work, were checked by the requirements of "educational" discipline.

In the School Management Committee Minutes, teachers are constantly reprimanded though, for the excessive beating of children; "lateness",¹ "absenteeism"² and "careless work" were the most favoured causes for this beating. One headmaster was censured over excessive canings for "careless work" just prior to the government inspection of his school.³ He ignored the censure, and a month later was congratulated, with transparent hypocrisy, upon the good H.M.I. Report.⁴

After 1902 fewer cases came before the Committee since headmasters were then ultimately responsible for all school discipline. But from the punishment books that are still extant,⁵ it is clear that little or no relaxation in the severity of punishments occurred right down to World War One. Canings for girls appear to have been commonly given for "fidgeting", "muttering" and "continual nuisance".⁶ Canings for boys were for "incessant talking", "inattention", "careless work" and "truancy". In one case eight boys received six strokes apiece on

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1. e.g. S.M. Comm. Min.7253, 7 July, 1892: headmaster beating "so many under 10 years old" for lateness.
 2. ibid. Min.5830: girl caned after being kept at home by mother on an afternoon.
 3. ibid. Min.5857, 24 Nov.1892.
 4. ibid. Min.5910, 17 Jan, 1893.
 5. MSS.: a few only, not labelled as to school, and kept at the Birmingham Education Offices.
 6. Alma Street Girls' School, Nov-Dec.1917 (girls 8-14 years).

each hand for "throwing written messages through the windows to girls"; and in another case, one's sympathy stretches to an illustrious "Armitage, W",¹ who was caned for "writing 'Amen' at the end of his composition".

Events such as all these above betray a paucity of outlook, a narrowness of vision, an authoritarian discipline system which aimed to stifle embryonic individuality thus to allow within the teaching process, the passive acceptance of all that was taught. But the school was a disciplining institution per se; there was a very distinct element of discipline for its own sake, to keep scholars in their places, to teach them respect and obedience to orders, to pursue character formation in a very negative way - by repression.

In the appointment of monitors and prefects however, there were more positive aspects. The children appointed were those who best conformed to the high ideals of their master. Wrote one:

I have sometimes made a moral lesson of the appointment. All the boys whose attendance is sufficiently satisfactory are called out, and then all except two or three are dismissed with an explanation of the reason - the want of one of the before-mentioned qualities . 2.

An idea of what some of these "qualities" were was given by a Warwickshire County Council paper on the prefect system in Elementary Schools. It is analysed at greater length below for it expressed at least one group of assumptions and values attached to the education system by a significant number of people. Significant particularly, in that it was an official publication of a large education authority,

1. Unidentified boys' school, Aug.25-Sep.9, 1913.

2. A.L. Jenkyn-Brown, op.cit., p.15.

and that its ideas were accepted and implemented by a number of headmasters.

In a chauvinistic manner, the pamphlet first dealt with national supremacy which lies, it claimed, not in armaments but in a nation's "character...and a nation can only hope to have character where the individuals are trained men of character".

This was the school's responsibility; its character training was to be in the best of public school traditions. Headmasters were exhorted therefore, to "drag-up" the moral standards of their working class schools by a definite and systematic teaching of "the code of honour of a gentleman". Parents' objections were to be ignored.¹

The prefect system, by giving boys leadership responsibility, would develop not only the prefects' characters but - being emulated by the younger boys in a sort of hero-worship - that of the whole school. The system was

a most potent instrument in producing those fine qualities of character which we are proud to call English...To play the game in whatever they do; to do the right thing because it is right, to do their duty at any cost, to keep their word once given, to know the things "a fellow can't do", to abhor mean actions, to help one who is down... 2.

This revealing list of virtuously 'English' norms and mores affords a glimpse of the stereotyped character, primarily motivated by 'duty', towards which it will be argued, a large body of opinion in the education system appeared to aim. And there was an economic purposefulness in this training too, for prefects were to be given a certificate, to

1. *ibid.* p.16, "with regard to ignorant people, Philistines and carpers in general, one may bear in mind the advice of Dr. Jowett, "never apologise, never explain, let them howl"".

2. *ibid.* p.18.

be completed when they left school...

as the system became known in the district, it would be a testimonial of character which employers would know how to appreciate .

The pamphlet waxed to a grisly conclusion:

What is the secret of the power of these boys to act like real men? They have learned at school, young as they are, to govern and lead others, young as they are, they have learned to bear and to assume responsibility; they have learned to recognise duty and do it, and the bearded veteran or horse-throated tar eagerly follows to the sabre's point, or the cannon's mouth, the piping treble of the erst-while school prefect.

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke:
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the Regiment blind with dust and smoke;
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name;
When the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up! Play up! and play the game . 1.

Henry Newbolt, "Vital Lampada"

A summary of headmasters' reports upon the adoption of the system at the end of the pamphlet claimed an extraordinary success...

"the more it approximates the Public School tradition...the greater has been the success".² A remarkable change of behaviour was noted, especially of the "hard cases". One headmaster reported:

hard faced ones, who would care nothing for the cane, with quivering mouth and glistening eye while their conduct was being discussed by their colleagues . 3.

The ethos of scouting was thus carried over the schools; leadership giving discipline, regulation and example to the led. The pamphlet noted:-

1. ibid. p.18.

2. ibid. "Summary of Head Teachers Reports on Prefect systems for Warwickshire Elementary Schools" by Director of Education, March 1913, p.21.

3. ibid. p.22.

that wholesome deference to older boys... shows itself suddenly and without effort in schools without a past, and where the heroes are children of twelve and thirteen only . 1.

To return to the more negative aspects of school discipline, the most definitive example of discipline for its own sake was to be found in the institution of drill. In drill were reified all those values which legitimated the discipline system. By drill, is meant military drill, a system of formation marching executed to orders given in best military fashion. From 1886, every public Elementary School in Birmingham was required to provide daily drill as part of a twenty-minute Physical Education lesson, the school day being extended by fifteen minutes to accommodate this, and a "Superintendent Instructor of Drill and P.E." appointed.²

Some schools exceeded this; the local authority inspector reported in 1896 that one infants' school (Arden Road) was holding 45 minutes/day marching drill for all classes "including the babies" - which, he concluded, was too long.³

The purpose of drill was more than a mere exercise. First, it taught obedience to the authority of the master. Thus F.W. Hackwood,

1. ibid.

2. S.M. Comm. Min.2797, 11 Feb.1886. Mr. Bott. Only the more proficient scholars were allowed use of the gymnastic apparatus however "so that a stimulus may be given to individual excellence" - the rest did drill. Later amended (Min.5605, 7 April.1892) to 15 mins/day for four days, and 40 minutes on the fifth day - the four days doing drill, the fifth other exercises.

3. Mr. Broscombe's Reports: Mar.2nd and Sept.8th, 1896.

erstwhile Headmaster of Dudley Road School wrote:

the class at drill should be a mere machine, actuated by the will, and at the word of the teacher...A good test of drill in physical exercise is to try how long the class can stand to attention, - every child standing perfectly still without moving a single muscle . 1.

Next, drill taught the submission of all individual selfish drives to a common aim, that of the squad. As such it could be seen as a preparation for the individual's participation in corporate activity within society, - it could be used to teach the lessons of duty and service to the group. Thus J.J. Findlay (a popular educational writer), having indicated his displeasure at military drill in primary schools as

"too severe and monotonous to be an effective relaxation" 2. yet continues:-

"But with the change of life at puberty we witness also among boys a willingness to submit to the restraint of physical drill, an enjoyment of strict order and prompt response, and the recognition of the value of this to a corporate body of youths, who ere long will be members of the civic community, who feel already stirrings of the blood towards the days of active service which lie before them". 3.

And of course, drill was militaristic; it copied army practices and could lead to a closer involvement in the paraphernalia of the military - from innocently playing soldiers to formally joining soldier-cadets (Boys Brigade, Church Lads Brigade etc.) - or to eulogising

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1. F.W. Hackwood "Practical Method of Class Management", London, 1897. pp.20/21.
 2. J.J. Findlay, "Principles of Class Teaching", London, 1902/04/05/07/11, 1914 etc. pp.88/9.
 3. *ibid.* p.252.

and romanticising the practices of the military. Speculate upon the ideas which could be stimulated in childrens' minds, in the report below from a Board School in Clerkenwell of the late 1890's. After the morning service as

the boy regiments file out, there is a tramping of many small feet upon the floor and six hundred small voices troll forth a gay air:

"With ribbons gaily streaming,
I'm a soldier now, Loisetete,
And of battle I am dreaming,
And the honours I shall get,
With a sabre by my side,
And a helmet on my brow,
And a proud steed to ride,
I shall rush upon the foe,
Yes, I flatter my Loisetete,
'T'is a life that well will suit,
The gay life of a young recruit". 1.

To more idealistic educationalists not working within the strict environment of the Public Elementary Schools, it often seemed that the teaching of military drill was pure jingoism. A leader article in the *Journal of Education* connected it with proposals for school cadet corps and the whole "paraphenalia frequently witnessed in the poorer parts of London" of "sham fights, processions, waving of flags and singing of doggeral verses".²

The close association of drill with the military, and the use of P.E. as an institution of discipline was well represented at a national

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1. Charles Morley, Studies in Board Schools, London, 1897. (Hugh Myddelton School, Clerkenwell), p.292.
 2. "Military Drill in Schools", Journal of Education Dec.1900, p.748. This of course, was during the Boer War, and the schools cannot be entirely blamed for "mafficking" celebrations.

level, by the government decision to frame its "Model Course of Physical Training for Use in Schools" upon "Infantry Training 1902".¹

The Board of Education next appointed Col. Malcolm Fox, previously Inspector of Army Gymnasia, as Inspector of Physical Training in Schools, and advised the newly created L.E.A.'s to employ instructors drawn from those trained at army gymnastic courses.²

The new syllabus produced in 1904, although allegedly based upon the "Swedish System of educational exercises" was still "largely based on army recruit training".³ The new syllabus of 1909 moved right over to the "Swedish System".⁴ From then drill, undisguised as an institution of discipline, became less common and one would imagine that new teachers would gradually adopt the later methods. Yet even in 1907, still two-thirds of elementary school teachers were in favour of distinctly "military exercises" (sic).⁵

And so the colonel of a local Volunteer unit could attest with pride that

in all Birmingham schools they had, for the past twenty years, a system of compulsory physical training which resulted in the boys when they left school, being well acquainted with the words of command, and what was meant by smartness and efficiency . 6.

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1. This, under the influence of Lord Meath, founder of a number of para-military youth organisations and of Empire Day. J.O. Springhall, Youth and Empire: a study of Propagation of Imperialism to the Young in Edwardian Britain. U/pub. D.Phil. Thesis Sussex University, 1968, p.22; R.D. Bramwell Elementary School Work. (University of Durham), 1961, p.94.
 2. ibid. p.95.
 3. P.C. McIntosh, Physical Education in England since 1800, 1952, p.141.
 4. A not altogether exciting series of posture and dumbell exercises: Bramwell calls this the "Don't like It?-Nonsense! - it's-very-good-for-you" period. op.cit. p.103. Ergo, still disciplining as well as exercising.
 5. M.E. Sadler, Moral Instruction...(op.cit.) p.332.
 6. Birmingham Daily Gazette and Express, Jan.20 1909. Col. Hart at a Lord Mayor's dinner.

The more reactionary sectors of education, in particular Industrial and Reformatory schools, continued to retain both drill and P.E. Thus Redhill Boys' Farm School in 1912 had one hour's drill every day from 1p.m. - 2p.m.; on Monday and Thursday, General Drill; on Tuesday, Special Drill and on Friday, Company Drill.¹ Nor were all the children committed to these schools delinquents, and thus in need of the drill, close-cropped hair and the military and corduroy uniforms they received. Of the 3475 children under 14 years committed to English Industrial Schools in 1911, 54% were orphaned or deserted, and 143 were under six years old.² And in these schools was found an almost fanatic inclination to the military,

incessant saluting and standing to attention, the explanation being that discipline must be maintained, and that boys who have little natural respect must be made respectful, 3.

Respect, servility, smart prompt and unquestioning obedience to commands; submission of the individual to the corporate whole; these values are reflected in the drill and discipline of working class schools. They represent the first stage in the attempt at the erosion of individuality, and the acceptance of authoritarianism and military order. They reflect the established functions of the school in late nineteenth and early twentieth century society as an institution for social control. In pursuance of this function and directly complementing the drill and discipline lessons, were established deliberate lessons

1. Mary G. Barnett, Young Delinquents: a study of Reformatory and Industrial Schools. 1913, p.211.

2. ibid. p.3 and p.41.

3. ibid. p.90.

in moral education. These were quite separate from though in addition to the practice of drawing moral lessons from the teaching of history, geography and the study of english literature.

Birmingham children received up to two lessons per week. Their Board was the first in Britain to introduce systematic moral teaching, in 1879, and then as a sop by the secularists to the demands of Nonconformists and the Church Party. Headmasters were instructed to provide two lessons weekly to all pupils on "such subjects as obedience to parents; honesty; truthfulness; industry; ...frugality and thrift.." ¹

By 1902 only Huddersfield and Burton-upon-Trent had joined Birmingham in this. Yet by 1908, it could be claimed that out of 327 LEA's, over 100 had taken definite action in providing systematic moral education. ² The agency of this change was the Moral Instruction League, born in 1897:

To substitute non-theological moral instruction for the present religious teaching in all state schools, and to make character the aim of all school life , 3.

Its activities were first directed at the London Board, where it achieved some success by inciting parents to withdraw their children in large numbers from religious lessons. Gradually, it also influenced changes in the Board of Education's Codes. Of note was the Introduction to the 1906 Code. "Teachers can endeavour," it instructed:

by example and by influence, aided by a sense of discipline which should pervade the school, to implant in children habits of industry, self-control and courageous perseverance in the face of difficulties; they can teach them to reverence what is noble, to be ready for

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1. Birmingham School Board, Annual Report, 1878/9, p.50.
 2. Harold Johnson, (Secretary of the M.I.L.) Moral Instruction in Elementary Schools: a return from official documents, 1908, p.xi, xii.
 3. F.H. Hilliard, "Moral Instruction League, 1897-1919" in Durham Research Review, Vol.3, No.12, Sept.1961, p.54.

self-sacrifice, and to strive their utmost after purity and truth; they can foster a strong sense of duty...while the corporate life of the school....should develop that instinct for fair-play and for loyalty to one another which is the germ of a wider sense of honour in later life...to enable children...to become worthy sons and daughters of the country to which they belong.

The M.I.L. formulated its own "Graduated Syllabus of Moral and Civic Instruction", adopted completely by 20 LEA's, in 1908, and published most of the books used by teachers and pupils. Clearly, not all of the values which were represented in the syllabus bore relationship to strands of nationalism. Indeed, there was represented a blend, not altogether harmonious or consistent, of three distinguishable sets of disciplining morals, all of which demanded adherence to strict codes of individual conduct.

First, a religious set, concerned with the individual's spiritual welfare, sought to promote Puritanistic and self-effacing Christian values. Under the generic title "Habits and Manners", this was taught from Standards I-IV on the M.I.L. Syllabus, including lessons on 'charity', 'modesty', 'courtesy', "A Due Appreciation of Blessings".² Children were exhorted to adopt for instance,

the occasional practice of self-discipline by going without things they like...Tell them that to exercise self-restraint in little things is the way to have good manners, to be little ladies and gentlemen . 3.

Under this heading too, falls sexual self-control.⁴

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1. Extracted from 1909 Code (identical Introduction) Cd 4735 (1909) p.16.
 2. A.J. Waldegrave, A Teacher's Handbook on Moral Lessons, 1905, (2nd edn.), Appendix pp.145-154.
 3. ibid. pp.29, 31.
 4. F.W. Hackwood, Notes for Lessons on Moral Subjects. A Handbook for Teachers in Elementary Schools, 1888 and 1906, Chap.XXIX - "Modesty".

Second, there was a set of values rooted in political economy, concerned with work-discipline, time-thrift and Smilesian frugality, and taught from Standards II-VI on the M.I.L. syllabus. Thus one author, whose book was used in Birmingham schools, instructed children of Standard V:

We ought not to waste our employer's time...
We ought to work just as well when we are not being
watched as when we are...We ought to work cheerfully,
and not grudgingly . 1.

There was a dignity in labour, of even the most menial kind; work was "the only honourable way to acquire money".² Similarly, another author included whole chapters entitled "Painstaking and Accuracy", "Punctuality", "Industry and Perseverance".³

Both this and the religious set of values had traditionally been taught in schools for a considerable period before. William Barrow, for instance, had written in 1802 that he considered best the values of "sincerity, honesty, genercusity, industry and gratitude".⁴ Goldstrom noted that from the 1830's to the 1850's, schoolbooks were permeated with strong themes of respect for the social order;⁵ this justified the teaching of political economy in schools showing how the rich were essential to the well-being of the poor.⁶ And there are certain

1. A.J. Waldegrave, op.cit. p.17.

2. ibid. p.125.

3. F.W. Hackwood, op.cit. Chaps.XVIII,VII,VIII respectively.

4. W. Barrow, Essay on Education, 1802, pp.219-20.

5. J. Max Goldstrom, Changing Social Content of Elementary Education as Reflected in School Books, 1808-70, U/pub. Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham, 1968, p.87.

6. ibid. p.117.

parallels with the teaching of nationalism, for both the teaching of political economy and taught nationalism were designed to work against socially divisive beliefs and towards national efficiency. Thus a book for eight-year-olds, published in 1864 counselled its readers:

Capital is the result of labour and of savings. Nothing is more certain than that, taking the working classes in the entire mass, they get a fair share in the proceeds of national industry . 1.

The third set then, were the quasi-nationalistic and imperialistic morals, including the teaching of loyalty and patriotism, duty, courage, honour and "justice to other peoples", which occupied Standards IV-VII on the M.I.L. syllabus. These appear to have been unique to the post-1880's. One book recommended for use in Birmingham schools was by F.W. Hackwood of Dudley Road School.² First published in 1888 and again several times down to 1906, it is a positive panacea for the hard-worked teacher. Every lesson is planned, every conceivable question answered.

In the lesson on 'Loyalty and Patriotism', Hackwood was beleaguered with semantics. Loyalty was a "duty...a devotion to the representative of the land": patriotism was a "sentiment (feeling) which may become a duty in times of public danger...an attachment to the SOIL ITSELF".³ If then, a child should enquire for which of these two, armies generally went off to war

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1. Revised Lesson Book for Standard III of the Revised Code of the Committee of the Council on Education (British and Foreign Schools' Society) 1864, p.50.
 2. Harold Johnson, Moral Instruction...op.cit. p.8; F.W. Hackwood, op.cit.
 3. F.W. Hackwood, op.cit. p.168.

Own that it is DIFFICULT TO SAY
 which, and show that this KNITTING together
 of the two kindred duties is a great
 PRIVILEGE SECURED for us by the ARMIES
 that have fought and bled, the PATRIOTS
 that have contended, and the STATESMEN
 and legislators who have laboured in the
 past to evolve such a constitution that
 BLENDS THE TWO DUTIES so agreeably

Loyalty may fade if the monarch lacks "private virtues", but
 patriotism never fades:

Breathes there a man with soul so dead
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land . 1.

Patriotism prompts a "kindly feeling to our fellow countrymen...a
 defence of the soil", but we should not allow "hatred and hostility
 to other nations" nor a "blindness to our own defects".² Children
 should be taught about the patriots of the past, and reminded of the
 "PUNISHMENT usually awarded to TRAITORS".³ Finally and significantly,
 Hackwood and the other "recommended author", Waldegrave, reminded teachers
 that the patriotism they ought to teach was that which glories in
 Britain's freedom of speech, press, and liberty of conscience, rather
 than its boast of being "mistress of the seas". It is clear that while
 few teachers disagreed upon the necessity for teaching patriotism,
 some had great antipathy towards its more extreme and emotive versions.
 Thus Waldegrave, directly addressing children, wrote

Naturally we prefer our own country
 to any other, but we must be willing to
 allow other people to prefer theirs... 4.

To be unpatriotic of course, was unnatural. Children should note

1. ibid. p.169.

2. ibid. pp.172-3.

3. ibid. p.174.

4. A.J. Waldegrave, op!cit. pp.97-8.

that other nations were "superior to ourselves" in many points; the French in "sobriety", "politeness" and "taste"; the Germans in "thoroughness and musicalness"; and the Dutch in "cleanliness". Then there was a classic statement of this 'pacific patriotism':

There is no need to belittle England's achievements. We may point with pride to our success in seafaring, colonisation, manufactures and the development of free institutions. But enough should be said about the superiority of other nations in some things (1) to destroy that all embracing contempt for foreigners to which we are so prone . 2.

This 'brand' of nationalism easily blended with the ideas of religious Imperialism that of occasion represented themselves in the books. Britain was viewed as a great civilising Alma Mater, spreading freedom and justice to barbaric Africa and Australasia. To make the point, the unfortunate natives were described in moral education, history and geography books, in such a way that their need for British maternalism was clearly demonstrated.³ Thus the Bushmen of South Africa, though "they have their good qualities", are "one of the lowest types of humanity"; akin to the Bushmen were the Hottentots:

A Hottentot's only clothes may be a fur cloak, which he will hang from his neck till it drops away in pieces...the natives of Australia, "blackfellows" as the whites call them, were very wild, some of them were cannibals (but)...

Yet in this pacific patriotism was a very large element of inconsistency. In all the books on moral education (not to mention history,

1. This is deliberately vague. If by 'some things', he implies "sobriety" or "musicalness" etc, then they clearly are not "important things" compared to the list of "England's achievements".

2. ibid. pp.67-8.

3. A.J. Waldegrave, op.cit. Following examples taken from pp.73-4.

geography and English Readers which were illustratively used for similar purposes), time and time again, recourse was made to the examples of great victories, heroic deeds and military figures of the past. And again, appeals to the irrational, inchoate and anti-liberal sentiments occur in the teaching of the other 'nationalistic morals'.

"Duty" for instance, was represented as a higher, transcendent, even metaphysical force which propels men to act in a right way.

Duty is that which should be done
 "...Explain that everyone has a CONSCIOUSNESS
 of what his DUTY is; it is something
 SEPARATE FROM OPINION AND ABOVE IT;
 it is generally DIFFERENT FROM what we
 would LIKE OR CHOOSE, and we have to
 MAKE OURSELVES as it were, DO IT,
 although we have an INNER KNOWLEDGE
 that we MUST DO IT TO BE HAPPY". 1.

Duty then, was a call for self-sacrifice, demanding that individuals abandon selfish ends.

Illustrate by the strict DISCIPLINE
 of an army being requisite for the
 PERFORMANCE OF ITS DUTY, as each
 soldier becomes an obedient MACHINE
 at the disposal of the commanding officer,
 as in the Charge of the Light Brigade.
 "Theirs not to reason why,
 Theirs but to do and die". 2.

The inner reward so gained was a feeling of honour, for "HONOUR... is that right feeling which makes one do his duty at all times".³ Nor was duty to be entered upon unhappily or half-heartedly; the class were to recite en masse:

Tender handed stroke a nettle,
 And it stings you for your pains,
 Grasp it like a man of mettle,

1. F.W. Hackwood, op.cit. p.68.

2. ibid. p.69.

3. ibid. p.20.

And it soft as silk remains. ¹

But duty was confounded by "irresolution", and this was a sign of weakness and cowardice; if we are irresolute then

we have no time to do the right
WHEN THE TIME FOR ACTION ARRIVES

Duty fell due to parents, school, community and nation. And duty gave to character, strength and honour:

The path of duty is the way to glory
(Tennyson). ²

In all this, military heroes were paradigmatic of men of duty. Thus Lord Lawrence, the "Saviour of Our Indian Empire...held the Punjab during the Mutiny simply by the overwhelming force of his character".³ Then there was Wellington, the "Iron Duke"; military heroes of course entered into the lesson on "Courage" - the "Loss of the Birkenhead", the giving of the V.C., and the attack on the Kashmir Gate at Delhi for instance.⁴ "Courage" should be exercised boldly too:

I hate to see a thing done by halves.
If it be right, do it boldly; if it be wrong,
let it alone. ⁵

Nor did this quasi-militaristic nationalism peacefully co-exist with the other two sets of morals. Thus there was a contradiction between the aggressive and self-assertive norms of behaviour, and self-effacing humbleness and modesty before one's "betters". Self-assertion

1. ibid. p.69.

2. ibid. p.71.

3. ibid. p.71.

4. ibid. p.143-3.

5. ibid. p.146.

in children seems to have been particularly presumptive; they should been "seen and not heard".¹ But, the author equivocated, shyness "SOMETIMES HINDERS men from doing their DUTY".²

A variation in this contradiction was to be seen in the conflict between the virtues of decision, zeal and energy on the one hand and forethought on the other. Thus Hackwood, in teaching "Prudence" quoted from Edward III's retreat at Crecy that famous saying

He who fights and runs away
may live to fight another day

But again the author equivocated; the teacher was advised to "treat this guardedly", and quote yet another saying to his long-suffering pupils:

Perish discretion where it interferes
with duty . 3.

In the case of a conflict of values then, this quasi-militaristic nationalism appears to have superceded in importance in Hackwood's instructions to teachers, the values previously taught to schoolchildren.

It is probable that only lip service was paid to traditional pacific patriotism. For the whole ethos of this moral training and discipline was the rigid structuring of individual personalities to narrow norms of behaviour. This nationalist teaching projected irrational emotive and authoritarian ideas. The emotive strands drew great support from the heroic stories of great soldiers. The authoritarian base was reinforced by drill and discipline.

The practice of moralising spread throughout the teaching process; Chapter 3 examines history, geography and english literature teaching.

1. ibid. p.141.

2. ibid. p.140.

3. ibid. p.150.

Chapter 3

Public Elementary Education:(2) The Teaching of History,
Geography and English.

Three aspects are considered below - the government regulations, the advice of educational theorists and teacher trainers, and the content of schoolbooks.

Government regulations critically controlled curricula content. Down to 1895, the Codes set the standards by which H.M.I.'s examined schools and recommended grants, and they also restricted the content, size and number of schoolbooks issued.¹ Sales of books depended upon publishers meeting official requirements.

The Code of 1882 particularly, had a profound effect in requiring the replacement of the "all-inclusive" Reader by specific geography, history, science and general literature Readers. During the 1880's and 1890's, the number and variety of reading books increased rapidly to meet the alternative syllabuses set out in the Codes. The abandonment of annual grant assessment in 1895 and of the division of curricula into obligatory, optional and class subjects, set schools free from the constant change of Codes and syllabuses.² However, neither these

1. Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Books in Public Elementary Schools (H.M.S.O.) 1928, p.11.

2. ibid. p.13.

moves, nor the very clear statements of the revised syllabuses of 1902 produced any noticeable results in the supply and use of books for many years. Imperialistic and nationalistic attitudes in the Codes that were reflected in school books down to 1900, continued on to 1914 as old books were reissued rather than new ones written.¹

Further, Readers were usually of a poor and crude quality, history Readers particularly being criticised for overmuch political history, too grandiose generalisations, and "crude, inaccurate illustrations which falsify rather than illuminate".² Geography only late in the period acquired respectability as a university discipline; since there were few professional geographers "almost anybody"³ wrote the books. It is this overall poverty of quality which explains the ease with which half-truths could appear.

Very few children took history as a formal subject - in 1900, only some 4%,⁴ and its slow introduction into the Elementary Schools was limited to the Senior Standards.⁵ However and as a general rule, one set out of every three Readers used above Standard II was a history

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1. V.E. Chancellor, Some Attitudes in School Text Books in English History, 1800-1914. U/pub. M.Ed Thesis, Birmingham University, 1967, pp.36-7.
 2. Board of Education, Report of Consultative Committee on Books..op.cit. (1928), pp.33-4.
 3. Royal Geographical Society, Educational Reports. R. Scott Kelte, "Report to the Council of the R.G.S.". 1886, p.23.
 4. H.L. Withers, Teaching of History and other Papers, (Manchester University Press), 1904, p.168.
 5. In Birmingham in 1879, Standards V and VI got 40 mins per week. By the late 1890's, Standard IV was receiving history. By 1902, it was being taught in all Senior Departments. School Management Committee Minute No.8 13 Feb.1879; A.L. Jenkyn-Brown op.cit. p.5; C. Birchenough, History of Elementary Education, 1914, p.305.

Reader.¹ Elements of history were thus taught, albeit as part of a recitation or dictation lesson, to most children. In 1902, Standards III and IV were estimated to receive $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 hours per week, and Standards V-VII, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.²

Geography meanwhile, was introduced into school syllabuses in the '70's and '80's (according to one academic, as a response to the "social force of Imperialism").³ In 1879, Birmingham scholars received two lessons each week;⁴ indeed, geography was being taught to a far greater extent in Board schools than in fee-paying schools.⁵

Finally, all children took English literature; the 1879 Birmingham timetable included up to 20 lessons each week on reading, copying, dictation and recitation from the Readers.⁶ These books too, provided a considerable fund of examples for the moralists, historians and geographers.

A major concern in both history and geography teaching was to trace the acquisition of Empire. Thus the 1885 Instructions to H.M.I. on geography teaching, marking a departure from the traditional rote-fact learning, specified

It is especially desirable in your examination of the fourth and higher standards that attention be called to the English colonies, and resources,

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1. H.L. Withers, op.cit. p.168.
 2. ibid. p.176.
 3. R.D. Bramwell, Elementary School Work (University of Durham), 1961, px.
 4. S.M. Comm. No.8, 13 Feb.1879 (1 hour 20 mins).
 5. R.G.S. Reports loc.cit. pp.13 and 36: C. Birchenough op.cit. p.305 - by 1890, 12,367 school departments teaching geography.
 6. S.M. Comm. No.8, 13 Feb,1879.

and to those climatic and other conditions which render our distant possessions suitable for emigration and honourable enterprise . 1.

This reference to emigration may well have represented the Education Board's acquiescence to the strong Boothite lobby. Likewise the New Code of 1890, and the Day School Codes of 1895 and 1896, prescribed for history teachers "special reference to the acquisition and growth of colonies and foreign positions of Great Britain."²

One historian has alleged that this particular intention for the teaching of history changed after 1902:

The moral and military defeats of the Boer War were followed immediately by the failure of Joseph Chamberlain's campaign for Imperial Preference. Revulsion against much of what was implied by Imperialism was widespread. The teaching of Empire history was checked on the grounds that it must be both child and parent of bombast and vainglory . 3.

Leaving aside whether Chamberlain's campaign failed in 1903, it is clear that Bramwell relies too heavily upon an article by Sir Charles Lucas, from whom the last sentence is borrowed.⁴ Of course, a number of educators strove to break the tradition of teaching solely British Empire history; but contemporary reports suggest that European history was "not formally or generally recognised" in schools and was mentioned "only where it was in close contact with English history."⁵ Even by 1927,

1. R.G.S. Reports, loc.cit. p.14.

2. R.D. Bramwell, op.cit. pp.vii-viii.

3. ibid. p.viii.

4. Sir Charles Lucas, "On the Teaching of Imperial History" in History 1916-17, I, p.5.

5. Committee of Seven "The Study of History in Schools", Report to the American Historical Association. (New York), 1899-1909 Appendix V, p.221.

out of 41 separate history syllabuses taught in London schools, "the majority...are concerned too exclusively with the story of Britain and the British Empire."¹ Neither is Bramwell justified in drawing evidence from the Codes and Suggestions; the Suggestions of 1910 stated that

the broad facts of Imperial growth ought to form a stirring theme full of interest to even young citizens of the British Empire

and in an Appendix, detailed three separate history syllabuses for Standards V to VII. The first two were exclusively concerned with British history, and the third touched upon non-British topics in the fifth year only. All three specifically mentioned the "expansion of Empire."² The suggested curricula for London schools published at the same time, dealt exclusively with English history from 10-13 years, and Imperial history from 13-14 years.³ There is little evidence therefore, of any setback in the teaching of Empire in history lessons down to 1914.

In geography, the subject developed through physical and local studies based upon the German Heimatkunde; the researches of Froebel and of Herbertsen, all began to affect syllabuses after 1902. But teachers were slow to respond and inadequate to the job.⁴ In many London schools in 1910 for example, the only educational aids were still the "politically coloured wall maps."⁵ The 1910 Code continued

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1. "General Report on the Teaching of History in London Elementary Schools" (H.M.S.O.) 1927, p.7.
 2. Suggestions...1909/10 Cd 2638 Sec.V p.48 ff.
 3. L.C.C. Education Committee, Report of a Conference on the Teaching of History in London Elementary Schools. (L.C.C.) 1911.
 4. R.L. Archer, W.J. Lewis, A.E. Chapman, The Teaching of Geography in Elementary Schools, 1910, p.3.
 5. L.C.C. Report of a Conference on the Teaching of Geography in London Elementary Schools, (L.C.C.) 1911, p.13.

to emphasise local British studies for younger children, and specialisation in British Empire geography for higher standards.¹

To this demand for Empire teaching, history and geography books responded. The great majority painted impressive and idyllic pictures of Empire. A not untypical quote from a history book written during the Boer War appears unaffected by the slaughter in South Africa:

The British Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century includes lands in every part of the globe, some gained by the valour of our soldiers, or by the patient toil or steady enterprise of colonists from the mother country. It embraces people of every race, colour and religion, all living peacefully and prospering under the British flag and content with the knowledge that the strong arm and brave spirit that gained freedom for them will always be ready to defend the precious gift. 2.

The unfortunate natives of these countries were once again described in such a way that their need for Imperial rule was clearly shown, as in a senior geography book:

The difference between the savage and civilised races is practically the same as that between a child and a man, for savages unite the main characteristics of childhood with the strength and passions of manhood. Like children they imitate closely and consistently....Like children they sacrifice ultimate good for immediate pleasure.. Like children they have no power of concerted action...Like children, they do not understand and so have no command over the powers of nature... 3.

Indeed, this same book divided the world into three areas - the "White-", "Black-" and "Yellow Men". One is assured however, that the natives of India are really "sun burnt white Men (se)" for "he never lost his wavy hair or his narrow nose."

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1. 1910 Code Cd2638 Sec.V, p.47.
 2. King Edward Readers, Std.V pp.5/6, 1901.
 3. Lionel W. Lyde, Man and His Makers, 1901, p.1.

A more extreme view was to be found in a 1911 history book by Fletcher and Kipling. Of the African freed slave, they commented;

Lazy, vicious and incapable of serious improvement or of work except under compulsion. In such a climate, a few bananas will sustain the life of a negro quite sufficiently; why should he work to get more than this? He is quite happy, and quite useless, and spends any extra wages he may earn upon finery. 1.

The Cassell's Reader too, talked of

barbarian peoples whom it is profitless to conquer; yet amongst whom it is difficult otherwise to enforce peace and order. 2.

It is clear from any study of the writings of leading contemporary educationalists, that this teaching of Empire had a more purposeful goal than the mere acquisition of useful knowledge. From the teaching of Imperialism was to be born an awareness of nationalism; children were to be imbued with "a spirit of nationality". Thus Professor Laurie wrote of

evoking...that personal attachment which we call Patriotism... the true patriot's whole life as a man is stimulated and broadened by something much greater than himself, and that something is the idea of nationality. This idea operates as a formative force in the education of the young. 3.

This "spirit of nationality" provided an awareness of duty; the L.C.C. educationalists writing of history teaching in 1911 thus stressed:

no such teaching can be considered complete if it does not develop a spirit of duty in the minds of the children. 4.

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1. C.R.L. Fletcher and R. Kipling, A School History of England, 1911, p.240.
 2. Cassells Class History, 1884, p.100.
 3. S.S. Laurie, Training of Teachers and Methods of Instruction, (Cambridge), 1902, pp.260-1.
 4. L.C.C. Report...on History Teaching (1911), pp.34-5.

This duty, in common with the values of the moral educators, appears to have involved individual dedication to the corporate Nation. Indeed, some popular educational writers saw this as the ultimate goal for all State schools. Thus

the school should inculcate in its pupils true loyalty and public spirit. It should develop a constant readiness for self-sacrifice to the common weal...The scholars should be taught to be proud of their country and its history. They should realise the mission of their race. The imperial character of their heritage should be ever before them. They should be trained to realise how glorious a page in history has England written. The lives of our great heroes should be imprinted on the hearts and fixed in the imagination of our scholars...By these means will the child realise that he is indeed one of a great people, and that his is a glorious heritage worthy of whatever sacrifice time and state shall demand of him . 1.

Fired by Seeley's imperialistic work of the 1880's, teachers and teacher trainers imbued history and geography teaching with specious nationalistic moralising.² Even in 1907, a survey found that patriotism and nationalism were being taught in most Elementary Schools "not so much in set lessons as through history and geography, through the learning by heart of patriotic pieces, and the singing of patriotic songs, celebrations of great national events..."³

It appears that the direct inculcation of patriotism in moral lessons, particularly as practiced in France, Germany and America was not universally popular but only because, as an L.C.C. pamphlet

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1. R.E. Hughes, School Training, 1905, p.107.
 2. Influence of Seeley's "Expansion of England" (1883), urging the scrapping of constitutional history and replacement with Imperial history. Hilda Johnstone named "moral mongering" as the second of the "Seven Deadly Sins of Historical Teaching" in History, 1912, p.91.
 3. M. Sadler, M.I.L. inquiry op.cit. p.330.

made clear, such methods were not always thought to be effective.¹ Indeed the L.C.C. authors felt that, patriotism being a "natural sentiment", such drilling-in was unnecessary. Patriotism would develop naturally out of the prescribed history and geography lessons.

Others felt they should speed the process of patriotic proselytization through, with a certain sleight of hand:

in trying to make his pupils patriotic, the master will endeavour to practice a Pauline craftiness, and to catch his hearers with guile... (in teaching the Battle of the Armada for instance)... It must be our victory over our enemies, the preservation of our own homes and hearths, and of our own religion, from a danger which is real and actual. 2.

Implications of this Pauline craftiness were to be found in the schoolbooks. Apart from the perspectives of Empire, they provided an "awareness of nationality" principally in four ways.

First, the theme of ethnic distinction recurs. The British were inevitably portrayed as brave and honest; even our early forbears were so dubbed:

The Saxon Englishman was a savage with the vices and cruelties of an overgrown schoolboy, a drinker, a gambler, and very stupid. But he was a truth teller, a brave, patient and coolheaded fellow. 3.

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1. L.C.C. Report...on History Teaching (1911) p.35.
 2. E.E. Kellett, "Teaching of Patriotism" in Journal of Education, March, 1900, p.18ff.
 3. C.R.L. Fletcher and R. Kipling, op.cit. p.29.

In the reports of the more recent battles, there were strands of assumed racial ascendancy; thus in a Reader used in Birmingham schools, children were told of Waterloo that it was

another illustration of the enormous energy, the exhaustless patience, the bull-dog will of the British. For eight long hours the British Army stood up against the terrible fire of the enemy; column after column fell, and the entire side of one square was blown away by a volley of grape. One sullen word of command ran along the line. "File-up! File-up! - and the troops silently obeyed. At length the crisis came; the order to charge was given, and the men who stood like statues before the "iron hail" of the French artillery swept like a whirlwind upon the foe. 1.

Other races were rarely portrayed as gloriously. The Irish (according to Fletcher and Kipling anyway) were lawless, ungrateful and unable to rule themselves. The Germans were luckily (for them) related racially to the British. The French were less trustworthy, but occasionally brave and intelligent. Asians and Africans were particularly base, much being made of the Black Hole of Calcutta incident.²

Second, and particularly in response to the Codes and Suggestions, the lives of the great heroes received considerable attention. In the Revised Code of 1899, twelve out of the thirty stories for period "1688 to Present" at Standard V level were wholly devoted to wars and war heroes. In the Cambridge Readers, again, twenty four out of forty historical figures were noted for their military prowess and several more connected with major wars.³ These "good and valiant"⁴ men provided nationalistic examples for children to model themselves upon. Paradigmatic

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1. New Royal Readers. Supplementary Home Lesson Book for Standard V, 1884, p.175.
 2. V.E. Chancellor (thesis) op.cit. pp.128-133.
 3. ibid. p.148.
 4. sic. Pitmans Readers, 1901, p.6.

of all good 'English' virtues, of honesty, courage, loyalty, duty and patriotism, they gave a distinctly military and heroic flavour to the nationalism taught in schools. The description of wars and of combat too, was usually bloodthirsty - in one popular Birmingham Reader children were told of the "burned and blistered bodies" at the Battle of Antwerp 1585, and of the violence at Naseby, Balaclava and Badajoz.¹

Third, and particularly from 1900 on, some books contained strong notions of potential foreign threats. One text book made clear on the Boer War for instance, that

It was absolutely necessary to establish in the mind of the civilised world, and especially of the African world, that any violation of our frontiers would be instantly punished. 2.

The fourth aspect of the provision of 'nationality awareness' emerged particularly out of this 'uncertainty of Empire', and it was the theme of having to prove that "we are worthy of those who went before us." Entwining history teaching with the teaching of civics for instance, gave an opportunity to present England as the global font of all liberty and freedom, won by civic heroes against oppression and tyranny:

Pageants let the World Revere Us,
For Our People's Rights and Laws,
And the Breaths of Civic Heroes,
Bared in Freedom's Holy Cause 3.

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1. Blackwood's Educational Series, Book 6 (by Prof. Meiktejohn), 1885, pp.103-4.
 2. J. Hassall, A Class Book of English History, 1901, p.579. This was for 13 year-olds. In the previous year, Hassall also wrote on elementary "Active Army Alphabet" (1900) for infants. "A was an Army that sailed to the Cape, B were the Boers who licked it into shape..." See K. Griffith Thank God We Kept The Flag Flying, 1974, p.7, where a page of this book is reproduced.
 3. New Royal Readers, 1884, Standard VI , p.115.

Thus "our children should be taught that... our ancestors fought and suffered and died in the cause of freedom."¹ But this approach to patriotism was somewhat inconsistent with the very severe and repressive discipline of the school. How indeed, could children ever conceive of such "freedom"? Out of the uncertainty of Empire from 1902 is detected the seeds of a more irrational and impactive approach to nationalism, providing its own call to duty:

But I don't think there can be any doubt that the only safe thing for all of us who love our country is to learn soldiering and be prepared to fight at any moment. 2.

These then were the strands woven into the teaching of nationalism: the call of Empire, of duty, of service, of national messianism and perhaps too, notions of 'threats' to stimulate a greater patriotism; the distinction of race, symbolised in the great heroes. The evidence of history and geography and general literature Readers, of government and Local Authority Codes and curricula, and of teacher trainers show that a significant part of school time was spent in teaching imperialistic and nationalistic values to children. In the Empire Day and various regal celebrations, this work was immeasurably furthered.³ Linked with the drill, discipline and moral education lessons, it would seem that the ethos of much nationalistic teaching was aggressive, militaristic and emotive.

In passing it should be noted that general Readers contained considerable numbers of patriotic songs,⁴ and that the period saw

1. ibid. Standard V, Supplementary Home Lesson Book, p.25.

2. C.R.L. Fletcher and R. Kipling, op.cit. p.244.

3. This is analysed in Chapter 12 below.

4. Like "Hearts of Oak", "Men of England", "England and Her Queen" as found in New Royal Reader, 1884, Standard II.

the publication of a large number of patriotic song books for use in schools.¹ The poetry of Kipling, Tennyson, Newbolt and Watson was recommended by LEA's to patriotically illustrate the teaching of history.² Finally, a whole fund of popular imperialistic literature was available for use in schools, by such authors as Kipling, Ballantyne, Henty and Rider Haggard.³

It is instructive to look at some original notes made by teacher trainees of their lessons in Elementary Schools.⁴ These include the comments of observing students, and of the method lecturers. They are particularly revealing of nationalistic assumptions held by the students, the lecturers and the school pupils.

The first lesson was on the "Loss of the Birkenhead" - a prose piece, the aim of which was stated: "To develop literary appreciation."⁵

It seems though that this aim was entirely submerged by the desire to promote patriotism, for the teacher himself commented

The main pt. of the story -
emphasising British heroism and devotion
to duty was intensely interesting to them
(the class) and proved all too short. Many
thoughtful answers given.

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1. See House of Commons Papers, Accounts (17) 137 "National Education - Ireland - School Books...a Return..." 1894 for lists of the material available.
 2. See L.C.C. Report...on History Teaching, 1911, Appendix pp.70-72, - the list includes 'Recessional', 'Flag of England', 'Charge of the Light Brigade', 'Defence of Lucknow', 'Rifleman Farm', 'In Memoriam', 'Ode on the Death of Wellington', 'Admirals All', and 'Mother of England'.
 3. See J.O. Springhall, Youth and Empire...U/pub. D.Phil thesis, Sussex University, 1968.
 4. L.A. Strudwick, Saltley College, Birmingham. Students Record of Notes of Lessons, Criticism Lessons, Visits of Observation and Educational Essays, 1910/11 MSS. B.R.L.
 5. ibid. 8/2/1910 by A.J. Mac-Kinlay.

Criticism by observing students, however, *alleged* that a "great opportunity for graphic description was not made sufficient use of", and that the moral of the story - "true English bravery and self-sacrifice was not brought out well enough." The impression is conveyed of a particularly jingoistic group of student teachers. Nor is this impression dispelled by the method lecturer's comments. He too claimed that the theme of British heroism was not well enough pursued:

He had a capital opportunity when he asked the boys to pick out the striking passages, and an intelligent boy replied:

"What a wonderful way the men lined up and waited to die"

The order in this case would be: the heroism of the soldiers; the influence which impelled them to act as they died; the circumstances which rendered it more difficult; the temptation; "all to the boats"; "joint heirs with Christ"; similes; rhythm; history.

It is perhaps strange that in a lesson designed to bring out literary appreciation of a piece, similes and rhythm fall to the back of the queue and are preceded by considerations of heroism, duty and religion. And one cannot but notice the attempt to train embryo and gullible minds in the nobility of fatal self-sacrifice, and the seeming success of this attempt.

A second lesson, on the "Powers of Europe",¹ had a threefold aim:

- "(1) To teach the meaning of the word "Power"
- (2) To show considerations which constitute the claims of a nation to be a power
- (3) To appeal to the boys' patriotism"

This student teacher attempted to prove that the sources of 'power'

1. *ibid.* 14/11/1910 by J. Dobbs.

were in the 'nature of the people', the country's strategic position, its natural products, its discoveries and its strength of arms. Evidence of power came from trade, defences, and the country's "respect among other nations."

In his attempt to appeal to the childrens' patriotism however, he spent most of his time on the British Empire. He showed just how much bigger and more important it was than the Russian and Austro-Hungarian. He indicated the necessity of defences, the navy, and of Britain's "respect among nations." The method lecturer commented:

teacher also commended for his resolute and earnest manner. Appeal to patriotism was a very good idea; it would have been an exceedingly happy ending to his lesson if the teacher had carried it out with more resolution - he did not let himself 'go'

Thus a direct effort was made to appeal to the sentiment of imperialism, and to give it semi-factual legitimation. But a whole series of value judgements must have been carried over here, - ethnic judgements upon the "character of the people", political judgements upon the necessity for defence, sentimental judgements upon "respect among nations."

From these two lessons are received glimpses of a technique which, ignoring the normal content and purpose of the given discipline, tilts it to serve a uniquely patriotic/nationalistic/imperialistic purpose.

The evidence of the ideas behind the techniques of education, curricula, books and now lessons provokes the assumption that this was a not uncommon practice.

Chapter 4

Public Elementary Education:(3) The Reception of Educational
Nationalism.

It is easy to hypothesise but nearly impossible to evidence the reception that the direct and indirect teaching of nationalism would have been given by the children.

Given the sheer weight of propaganda identified above, applied to impressionable children at "a period when human nature is most plastic",¹ perhaps it was inevitable that many children should uncritically accept and internalise the myths so provoked. Strudwick's notes showed this happening in the classroom. In the few extant school newspapers too, which were run and edited by Public Elementary schoolboys, can be glimpsed the overtones of such lessons.

Thus in one newspaper, readers were exhorted to "play the game", and observe "duty".² In a particularly revealing passage, it is left to speculation just what the children had been taught about Germany prior to W.W.I.:

The boys of our school need not be afraid
of the Germans for we have a boy in Standard
2 who is going to stab them in the back when
they come. 3.

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1. From "Suggestions...1905" quoted in H. Johnson Moral Instruction in Elementary Schools; a return from official documents, 1906, p.vi.
 2. Cradle Alcock Boys' School. First edited by F. Sutherland, a pupil in a Senior Standard. No.1, 7 Feb.1913.
 3. ibid. 19 Mar.1913.

Of course, the war profoundly increased the patriotic tone of the magazines. But even within one month of it starting, schoolboys were to be found giving advice to other schoolboys that

Just now many soldiers are seen. One of our readers says, that as a mark of respect for what they are doing for us *who* are at home, every boy should respectfully salute any of our 'heroes in khaki' 1.

Ten months after war began, the school magazines (which seem then to have increased in number), were passionately nationalistic. Boys wrote long articles on duty, self-sacrifice, faith and courage. Stories of contemporary heroes abounded and morals were drawn from them; rolls of honour were published flanked by "Dulci et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori."²

The enemy by then had become subhuman:

Our dear country is in danger. The foe is fierce and is seeking by unheard of barbarity to blot this country out of existence. Our fathers and brothers are falling on the battlefield. 3.

There is an inhumanity too, in the childrens' perception of the war - the callousness as seen in one's description of the French 75 mm field gun as

The most perfect, the most daintily conceived engine of human slaughter which the mind of man has devised... mowing down Germans in the fight for Verdun. 4.

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1. ibid. No.7, Oct.1914.
 2. Yardley Road Council Schools' Herald No.2, Nov.1915.
 3. Cradle, No.9, July 1915.
 4. Yardley Road Council Schools' Herald No.6, Mar.1916.

This all owed much to the war propoganda effort of course but it was no more nor less than an extension of the values taught to children for nearly forty years previously. Duty and self-sacrifice, the inevitability of victory, the insensitiveness to the reality of battlefield carnage - all were to be found in the pre-war syllabuses.

Again, the drill and discipline of the schools would have increased the popularity of the paramilitary youth movements and of the part-time Territorial and Militia forces, analysed in Chapters 9, 10 and 12. At an extreme, the Approved schools and Reformatories were purposefully military, for they held "Army classes" and examined children in the "School Army Test Certificate." Table 4.1 shows how many thus chose the military and naval forces as a career.¹

4.1 Percentage of boys who left Reformatories 1908-10 entering certain occupations.

Army	16.2	(largest group)
Farming	13.9	
Mercantile Marine	5.9	
Miners	7.3	
Navy	2.7	
Others, including emigrants	54.0	
Total	100.0	11,531

There are a number of points against the hypothesis. First it has been noted that the quality of the children and of their environment in poor areas did not make for good teaching methods. High family instability, compulsion and absenteeism worked against teachers' efforts.

1. M.G. Barnett, Young Delinquents: a study of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1913, p.74.

The L.C.C. noted in relation to geography teaching too, that restricted powers of expression and of visualisation outside the courts-and-alleys environment led to an inability to imagine or conceptualise different conditions. These children were "incapable of prolonged acts of attention, though their interest is readily gained."¹

Nor were many teachers particularly able, for that same report showed teachers in 1911 still teaching "useful" (i.e. useless) information, and government reports indicated teachers still using the class-reading-out-aloud method.

The third point therefore, is that in including the use of discipline for its own sake as well, did not the beating and drill make children sullen, uneager to learn, indeed more likely to reject all they were taught? There is some evidence for this; a Birmingham teacher regretted that "the boys are not proud of their school and feel no sorrow at leaving it, nor in after life do they take an interest in its affairs."²

And indeed, the recurrence time after time of the same boys' names upon the punishment sheets evidences a will that is not crushed, a character that is not rigorously stereotyped, (and in the case of the boy who wrote "Amen" particularly), an individuality that belies erosion.

Finally, the children were at school for relatively few years of their lives; is it possible that schools could have had as much effect as they appeared to hope they would have?

1. L.C.C. Report...on Geography Teaching, 1911, p.24.

2. A:L. Jenkyn Brown, Experience in Birmingham Board Schools, (Birmingham) 1899, p.18.

Clearly, the bourgeois and aristocratic ethos of the schools did not turn working class children wholly against their parent culture. From the evidence available, it is only possible to say that first, it introduced them to concepts of nationality and gave them justifications for views which saw the nation as a united body requiring loyalty, service and duty, as against a class-divided state in antagonistic self-competition. Second, it introduced notions of ethnicity - the British race as apart from everyone else. Third, it gave a vast deal of information about the Empire and sought to explain and justify Imperialism. Finally, it introduced them to the strict and inflexible discipline which was to be continued in society, through the law, the police, and the Poor Law Guardians, and through the employers. Such a bedrock of training would have made the work of nationalist propagandists in later life, that much simpler.

Whether children accepted all this then, is partially irrelevant beside the question of whether, given greater age and wisdom, they retained such information and values. Working class biographies suggest that people retained at least some elements of the nationalistic socialisation of the schools, and a knowledge (if not an acceptance) of the *raison d'être* of Imperialism. Thus Roberts recounted how his teachers

fed on Seeley's imperialistic work, 'the Expansion of England' and...Kipling, spelled out patriotism amongst us with a fervour that with some edged on the religious...(they) gazed with pride as they pointed out those massed areas of red on the world map. 'This, and this, and this' they said, 'belong to us!'....We picked up besides, a lot of inconsequential facts on India, parts of Africa, and that tired cliché.. about the 'empire on which the sun never sets' 1.

1. R. Roberts, Classic Slun...(MUP) 1971 pp.110-2.

One ex-Birmingham man was, as a pauper child, sent to a Reformatory where he found that the "stern military discipline made us all part and parcel of the system...which broke our spirits until we almost lost our souls."¹ Yet at an early age (22 years) he began to take a leading part in the anti-socialist crusade for, he believed:

socialism was likely to lead to dangerous diseases which...might well endanger the whole British Empire. 2.

Another, from the lower-middle class but reduced by his father's death to a Board school in the 1890's, stated how he learnt his patriotism but later revised his opinions:

boys from the higher class boarding schools were courageous, honourable and chivalrous, and steeped in the traditions of the school and loyalty to the country. We tried to mould ourselves according to this formula. Needless to say, we fell very short of this desirable end, but I attributed our failure to the fact that we were only Board School boys, and could never hope to emulate those of finer clay. Nevertheless, the constant effort did us a lot of good. We thought British people were the salt of the Earth, a belief that I revised considerably in later years. 3.

The Irish in Britain were subject to more intensive pro-British propoganda in school than even English children, as part of the Catholic Church's social control policies.⁴ Thus

The Empire and the sacredness of its preservation ran through every text-book like a liet-motif. Our navy, and the necessity of keeping Britannia ruling the waves is another indelible mark left in my memory - though the reason for this was never satisfactorily explained. Pride in our vast flung colonies and

1. Sam Shaw, Guttersnipe, 1946, p.69.

2. ibid. p.166.

3. F. Willis, Peace and Dripping Toast, 1950, pp.56-7.

4. Returned to in Chapter 8 and 14.

the need for their protection and preservation were emphasised...The British always won wars - not the English, but the British - giving the impression that we were all more or less brothers under the skin...We were always the kingpins, and we were always in the right - these are the straight, patriotic impressions that remain. 1.

In religious lessons though, the Irish children could be taught to hate Britain through the tales of religious persecution, and particularly Cromwell's misdeeds at Drogheda and Wexford. This left some confusion:

My mental prejudices, today as an adult, work something like this: ferocious, sacrificial Irish-Catholic (die for Ireland's freedom) first; ferocious, sacrificial patriotic Britisher second; and patient, wandering dreamer third...and what is true of me is certainly true of most slummy Irish-Catholic 'Britishers' 2.

The biographies, within the obvious limits discussed, tend to confirm the analysis of the teaching of nationalism above, and while demonstrating the wide variation in individual reactions to the propaganda, do illustrate the retention of strong memories of both the teaching process itself and of the information thus imparted.

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1. Pat O'Mara, Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy, 1934, pp.74-5.
 2. ibid. p.75.

Chapter 5

Adult Education, and the Churches.

Adult educational institutions in Birmingham were run by the local authority, political parties and the churches. The local authority's principal efforts concentrated upon the Municipal Technical School, attracting the sons of skilled workers to the skilled trade classes in engineering, brassfounding and building; 3900 students attended.¹ There, they were exhorted to embrace the bourgeois values of "honour, truth, grit, industry....do the nailing to the mast with the hammer of true British determination. No hauling down of the flag, no truckling to the enemy."² The school saw its role, to purposefully revitalise the artisan youth; a Territorial unit (RE) was begun there,³ and its debating society passed resolutions against socialism, and in favour of conscription.⁴

The Conservative and Unionist party originated a series of short-lived organisations for working class political education, to

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1. Sir G. Kenrick, "Organisation of Education in Birmingham" in Handbook for Birmingham ed. G.A. Auden, (Birmingham) 1913, p.320. 600, 150 and 450 students regularly attended the three classes above: Birmingham Municipal Technical School Magazine Vol.III May.1909, No.31.
 2. B.M.T.S. Magazine, Vol.II, No.2, Sep.1905, p.44.
 3. ibid. Vol.III, No.29, Jan.1909, p.131.
 4. ibid. Vol.III, No.30, Mar.1909, p.150. Much, no doubt, to the delight of the school's governor, Alderman Martineau, who was both a member of the National Service League and later Colonel Commandant of the 5th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (a Territorial battalion).

which Chapters 7 and 8 will give attention, including Conservative Working Mens' clubs, Trade Union Tariff Reform Association, and the Working Mens' Constitutional Union. The Liberal party did little until about 1909, when the Young British Liberals began to organise meetings for working men; growth was slow down to 1914.¹ The I.L.P. and Socialist Centres in Birmingham embarked on a variety of educational operations.² From 1904, both the Labour and Socialist Churches began propaganda; the Labour Church in Selly Oak under the aegis of the Cadbury family, invited M.P.'s like George Lansbury to address its congregation³ and the Socialist Church in Stirchley appears from its lecture series to have embraced Syndicalism, 1911-14.⁴ The Clarion Fellowship Club in Birmingham was said to be particularly active, holding open air meetings, debates, social gatherings and running training classes for speakers.⁵ The Socialist centre provided a library, a press and propaganda vans, and was instrumental in inviting men like Ramsay MacDonald and Robert Blatchford to speak in the Town Hall.⁶ Its publications included "Midland Socialist Pamphlets" and the

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1. Young British Liberals. Collection of Leaflets 1909-14, B.R.L.
 2. Birmingham and District L.R.C. Annual Reports 1904-13.
 3. Selly Oak Forward. 18 Oct. 1913.
 4. Run by coal merchant Eldred Hallas, General Secretary of the Birmingham and District Municipal Employees Association. Lectures and pamphlet on the "need for rebellion" announced "there is a class war in our midst today, a fierce fight between the robbers and the robbed." Stirchley Labour Church Syllabus of Lectures 1911/12, 1913/14. The Labour Church was described as "a revolt against the life service of a God of Injustice and Despair". F. Hughes, Old Law and New Prophets (Midland Socialist Pamphlet No.3) 1910.
 5. R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years, 1931, p.202; Birmingham I.L.P. Federation Year Book, 1909, p.38.
 6. Birmingham I.L.P. Federation Year Book, 1909.

"Socialist Library" series on current topics at about 1d each (or sometimes gratis). Occasionally it issued large numbers of pamphlets to educate public opinion on a particular issue, as in 1903 when 120,000 leaflets were issued on the Municipal General Powers Bill.¹ For all this combined effort the response appears poor; indeed, in all the many annual reports of all the Labour and Socialist societies, not one mention of numbers is made. Early on, the societies complained of indifference and apathy - "they (the working class) would rather have sport than hard thinking."² And although the popularity of radicalism waxed more strongly in Birmingham after 1910,³ yet the funds available to the societies remained very low. The Birmingham Socialist Centre's best year was 1914, with £235 received,⁴ which was about one-third of the money received by the Birmingham Womens' Suffrage Society.⁵ Indeed, it was probably the fractionalisation of efforts by the societies that proved the greatest barrier to expansion.

The W.E.A. in Birmingham organised popular lectures at local Institutes, longer courses on specialist topics, and arranged for workers to attend all of the University of Birmingham's lectures in 'History' and 'Industry'.⁶ The cost (3/-) of this last service and the erudition of lectures would probably mean that but a few skilled workers

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1. Birmingham Socialist Centre Annual Report May.1903 (6th)
 2. W.H. Nickolds, chairman of Handsworth I.L.P. Handsworth Herald, 14 Oct. 1905.
 3. This is discussed in Chapter 8.
 4. Birmingham Socialist Centre, Annual Report 1915 (18th)
 5. Birmingham Womens' Suffrage Society. Annual Report 1910.
 6. Birmingham I.L.P....Year Book 1909, p.42.

and clerks would participate. The W.E.A. claimed affiliation to 46 societies in the Midlands, with a potential audience of 25,000 men and women.¹

The role of religious societies in adult education was a continuation of their Sunday School role. Most working class children went to Sunday School, in part to get them out of their parents' way, in part because

it seemed to be the unanimous opinion, that, whether it were true or not, 'religion' was a good thing to teach children. 2.

In the 1892 religious census, Birmingham Sunday Schools claimed 287,000 pupils from a total (including adult) population of 669,000 in Birmingham and suburbs.³ Poorer areas in the centre still showed between 20-33% of the total population attending at all religious services, and the outer areas of higher working class strata showed a greater proportion.

Sunday Schools had between 150-400 "scholars" on their books.⁴ Nevertheless, by 1909, most denominations were finding that attendance

1. Labour Mail, Sep.1906. The lack of employer support was noted in Chap. 1. The W.E.A. could well deserve further research.
2. R. Tressell, Ragged Trousered Philanthropists 1965 (ed'n) p.142. See also R. Hoggart, Uses of Literacy, 1971, (ed'n), p.118.
3. Aston and East Birmingham News, 17 Dec.1892. The census does not separate out Sunday childrens' and Sunday adults' schools.
4. Some like Rocky Lane (Saltley) and Clifton Road (Sparkbrock) - in the outer wards - had over 1000 scholars and 80 teachers each. There were 450 Primitive Methodist Schools on the W. Midlands, taking 40,000 children. 88 non-conformist Sunday Schools alone were able to mass 16,000 children into Birmingham's Victoria Square. It was "big business", especially in the more 'select' working class areas. Birmingham Sunday School Union "Who's Who in Birmingham Sunday Schools" 1910; Birmingham Daily Mail, 2 June.1909.

was dropping and it was in reaction to this that they introduced the Church Lads Brigades, Boys Brigades, Scouts and Boys Life Brigades discussed below.¹ But once having left school, the working class were apt to throw-off Sunday School as "childish."² One study discovered 20% of working class boys attending at the age of 14, but beyond that the figure dropped to 1%.³ Boys from skilled parent families were perhaps less likely to give up Sunday School; the church attendance of 17 year old boys with highly-skilled parents was said to be 22.2% (2 in 9), compared with 12.2% (5 in 41) for those with semi-skilled parents, and 4% (1 in 21) for those with casual labourer or destitute parents.⁴

One aspect of working class religio sity and adult education was the involvement of skilled workers in the Adult School Movement. There were 84 of these schools in the Midlands, with an average attendance of 8066 from 12,488 on the books in 1902.⁵ The 1892 census gave attendance in Birmingham and suburbs at 7948, of which 35.4% were Quaker, 15% Baptist, 13.3% Wesleyan, and only 12.3% Church of England. Just 12% were deliberately undenominational.⁶

Begun by Joseph Sturge and the Society of Friends in the 1840's,

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1. Chapter 12.
 2. A. Freeman, Boy Life and Labour, 1914, p.125.
 3. A. Paterson, Across the Bridges, 1911, p.14.
 4. A. Freeman, op.cit. pp.40-76. It is of course clear that so small a sample population, cannot be countedered to give anything more than a broad guideline.
 5. Nelson Street Adult School Magazine, May 1902.
 6. Aston and East Birmingham News. 17 Dec.1892.

they involved employers, philanthropists and other supporters of popular education.¹ The Cadbury's, Tangye's and Rowntree's met with the working class direct, and helped teach them literacy, numeracy and later more philosophical and technical subjects. Being interdenominationally religious, the schools embraced radical, but Christian, social reform. These schools educated the new socialist leaders like Tom Mann, who recalled meeting John Bright, Joe Chamberlain and George Dixon, and being impressed by his Quaker teachers who "commended not only our admiration, but our genuine love."² The schools by 1900 had become agencies for the self-improvement of artisans.³

The non-conformist chapels to which most were associated were attended by the employers too. At the Unitarian Old Meeting House in Handsworth, employers and city councillors and employees would all listen to the Rev. Lloyd James verbally assaulting the social system and heaping blame on employers for unemployment "without any complaint". But between the masters and the men in the congregation "a social gulf divided....Not a word was spoken between them in all the years."⁴

Some Adult Schools tried to reach the mass of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, even the casual labourers that eluded most. George Cadbury was said to have "many thieves and drunkards" in his Mosely

1. G.C. Martin, "Adult School Movement" N.A.S.U. 1924, pp.72ff.

2. Tom Mann op.cit. p.15. Others found them "too deliberately pink, not revolutionary enough", V.W. Garratt, op.cit. p.109.

3. Some report even embourgeoisification, as workers prosper and set up in business (even meet and marry middleclass wives there) v.g. E.G. Davis "Some Passages From My Life" (Birmingham) 1898, pp.11-20.

4. V.W. Garratt, "Man in the Street", pp.112/13.

Road classes, brought in by 'search parties' led by workers

familiar with the haunts of the vicious
and the submerged, and having the password
of that class 1.

The Nelson Street Adult School² energetically canvassed the local neighbourhood, bringing in up to 464 people on one Sunday and having 770 names on their books.³ Indeed, men were visited time and again in the courts and streets until they agreed to come. To add attraction, the School diversified its activities; a Savings Club, Cycling Club, Chrysanthemum Club, Brass Band, Coal Club, St. John's Ambulance, Boys Brigade, Bagatelle, Billiards, Air-Gun shooting, Football. Indeed there are good reasons to believe its popularity stemmed less from the interdenominational religion which overlaid its teaching and its work, or the temperance it preached so hard, but from its availability as a social club to a mass of people who had little or nothing else. The Digbeth Institute was similarly successful in the slum areas of its locale, including among the 2000 men and women in lodging houses nearby.⁴ Its religious services attracted up to 1300 people including small tradespeople, factory hands and the unemployed; many who had never been to church before were grabbed on the streets and urged to come. Many were reported to say that it was the first time they had been spoken to in years.⁵

1. G.C. Martin, op.cit. p.123/4 (referring to 1898/1900).

2. In the "fringe area" of 3 and 5 roomed houses between Ladywood and St. Pauls Wards.

3. Nelson Street Adult School Magazine, Feb.1902.

4. Digbeth Institute Reports II (1909) p.7.

5. ibid. IV (1911) p.6. If true, a remarkable tribute to working class community.

The services were happy sing-songs mixed with vigorous Bible-thumping and "hell-fire-and-damnation";

Abstract theology has little interest for Digbeth folk, but they do feel the need of some dynamic that will lift them above their sordid environment. 1.

But although the audience was socially mixed, it is clear from photographs of services that the social classes did not sit together in worship.

I also noticed that most of the men with collars went into the galleries, while those that had mufflers around their necks sat underneath.

So even here the differences between the strata exhibited themselves. A limited mobility was however possible:

One of the workers informed me that after a few weeks regular attendance the men with mufflers took to themselves collars, and mounted to higher places. 2.

With considerable effort, the Adult Schools and attached non-conformist churches were able to reach the unskilled and semi-skilled masses, but it took continuing effort and novel ideas to keep attendances up. Occasionally a School or chapel lost energy and then attendance inevitably fell. While popular in the outer wards and suburbs with the skilled and highly skilled workers, these few Schools failed to encourage significant or large-scale working class religiosity.

Religious observance tended to be directly related to social status. Thus the higher attendances were found among middle-class people, then

1. ibid. II 1909, p.15.

2. ibid. p.14.

the highly skilled and skilled artisans, then the middle group of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and the lowest among the very poor and destitute. Table 5.1 shows this.

5.1 Percentage of the total population in selected wards attending morning and evening services (but excluding all 'schools')¹ on Nov.27 1892, and the annual death rate per 1000 in 1899/1902.

	% Attending	Death Rate/1000
Edgbaston	31.0	15.9
Balsall Heath	22.6	17.4
St. Pauls	18.9	20.9
St. Bartholomews	10.2	26.0

Overall attendance in the central areas was 26.6%. This somewhat high figure however, was caused by the popular central churches (like St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham Cathedral, and St. Martins) attracting suburban residents. Compared to Rowntree's finding that 27.5% of the adult working class of York were worshipping on one Sunday, it would appear that the Birmingham working class were somewhat less religious.

To the poorer and more destitute working class however, there is evidence of the very real appeal of ritualist and fundamentalist religion, ranging from the elaborate ritualism of Anglo-Catholicism to the spiritual rebirths of the Primitive Methodists.

From 1900 there was a great increase in Anglo-Catholicism in Birmingham, inspired by the pioneering work of St. Alban's parish and

1. It is not possible to say how many attended both of the daily services, nor is it possible to limit attendance to adults.
Sources: loc.cit.

the influence of Bishop Gore.¹ St. Albans in Deritend began work in 1865; even in its early days, with room for 250 people, its clergy "were obliged to send away a number of people for whom no room could be found."² In the first twelve months, this ritualist mission had given 3000 communions. It was unpopular with other Birmingham clergy; riots were organised and the church nearly demolished, usually by "roughs, who gladly obeyed the call of the agitators." A false petition of 1174 parishioners was organised, and later a 23,000 signature Birmingham petition was presented. All to no avail; the church prospered from strength to strength, moving into a large iron building in 1881 and constructing new mission chapels and schools of SS. Patricks, Catherines and Columbias. Of 2000 occupations listed in St. Alban's baptism register, all were working class, unskilled up to skilled.³ The parish of St. Albans almost dominated the municipal ward of Deritend; the 1892 census figures compared to death rate as in Table 5.1 show:

	% attending	Death Rate/1000
Deritend	40.1	22.9

The attraction of ritualism to the poor is thus very clearly demonstrated.

Similarly popular was the ritualist Rev. Fr. James Adderley of St. Saviours in Saltley. An active socialist too, and a 'bête noir' to other Birmingham clergy for his political work, James Adderley built up an enormous congregation with his Anglo-Catholic services.

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1. Rev. F. Underhill, "Church Life in Birmingham Today" in The Sign, Oct. 1921.
 2. Rev. J.S. Pollock, Vaughton's Hole, Twenty Five Years In It. 1890, pp. 4, 7, 51.
 3. Pollock, op.cit. p.51, Lists the major categories: the register has not been inspected at source.

At Easter, 1000 strong processions moved around Saltley, violently clashing with anti-ritual Wycliffe preachers.¹ Encouraged by this, 150 outside clergy descended on the factories, workshops, pubs, processioned with crucifixes through the courts and alleys, grabbing men wherever they found them. Their energy encouraged support while the Mission was actually running.²

The ritualist religion replaced philosophical abstractions with physical symbols. In the chanting, candlelit mystic atmosphere filled with incense smoke, the working class could enter a different world - a world lifted from temporal cares - and under the eyes of compassionate icons, they could become lost in the half understood but comforting words of spiritual mythology. To the dispossessed, the oppressed, the sick and the poor, the opiate of religion can always give temporary comfort and bring temporary release. The problem for ministers and priests is to translate their message into working class terms; ritualism provided one avenue to reach the heart of working men, spiritual evangelicalism provided another.

It is five years since I found 'The Light'. It was when the Navy Mission was held down in Meriden Street. I remember my mates trying to get me off on the beer. One pulled me across the road to the pub in my shirt sleeves. He tug'd and tug'd until he pulled the sleeves off my shirt right out, but he did not get me back into sin: I am still firm on the Rock Jesus Christ. 3.

"We occasionally" wrote David Smith, "win some of them to Christ," for in 1911 over 200 "decision" cards had been signed by some of the

1. B.D. Mail, Apr.18, 1908.

2. B.D. Mail, Feb.16, 1909.

3. Navy Mission Society Reports B.R.L. 1911/12 esp.

2000 navvies employed or redundant in Birmingham. This crowned a year of ceaseless effort; total attendances at open air Bull Ring meetings, works, lodging houses, Club Room and Mission Room meetings totalled 42,887.

Evangelical revivalism, operated on a mission basis by some of the non-conformist churches and the Salvation Army, would attract working people by the sheer energy of its clergy and its promise of spiritual release. As with Anglo-Catholics, missions only believed something was achieved when the worshippers "felt uplifted", The Primitive Methodists were particularly popular for this; at one Birmingham meeting

The consciences of many were torn with the terror of God's impending judgement on sin. Many were smitten by the Lightnings of the Word. Sighs and groans blended with the preacher's appeals...Hundreds, as impelled by the spirit of obvious unbelief, rush from the place.. 1.

Exorcisms, congregational confessions, all harked back to old love-feast Methodism. But again, when the Missions ceased their hard work, many adherents and converts would disappear.² The general tendency was for decreasing working class observance in the central city areas,³ although by their ceaseless efforts in the courts and alleys⁴ it is likely that most were "touched" by the churches even after they left Sunday School. In particular, the common message of

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1. J. Flanagan, "Scenes from My Life" 1907, pp.11/12. Of course, a careful rereading of that passage shows it open to an interpretation of disillusion rather than spiritual awakening.
 2. At St. Lawrences "we are always gaining, and we are always losing", Rev. T.J. Bass, Hope in Shadowland. (1903), p.140.
 3. Rev. F. Underhill op.cit. p.135. Thus as areas became increasingly working class, church attendances fell. The Sparkbrook vicar's hospital collection in Oct.1889 was £111 - "cheques £50, sovereigns £20 etc"; in Oct.1914, he realised £8-17-8, "sovereigns £1...etc" Rev G.N.H. Tredennick, Reminiscences of Twenty Five Years in Sparkbrook. (London) 1915, p.10.
 4. St. Lawrence's Christmas Day Congregation was only 59 in 1903, but it contacted its parishioners through Factory Clubs and visits, Womens' Help Society, Nurses, Church Lads Brigade, and much open air work. Rev. T.J. Bass op.cit.

Temperance led by the Band of Hope, with its sentimental ballads found some converts.¹ But as to political education, the churches were deeply divided.

There are two alternative models which may be applied, either that churches encouraged or discouraged political radicalism. It is possible to believe that indirectly, some churches and in particular the ritualist and revivalist religions of the poor, served to siphon off or sublimate social unrest. The common message of them all, Temperance, for instance, preached that the all-embracing evil of drink was responsible for much of the social distress and misery of the working class. Failure to discern cause from effect was a regular feature of popular religious doctrines on poverty, and the belief that moral reform was an essential prerequisite to social reform was found, not only in religious tracts, but in the propaganda of the military and political nationalist groups too. Thus the beliefs and values held by a number of religious workers might have been somewhat more conservative than otherwise, deciding against radical social reform in favour of gradualist charity and godly conversion, and thus paralleled to contemporary rightist political ideology. Both the Digbeth and Nelson Street Adult Schools were fiercely nationalist at the Boer War:

Let us remember that God made man a
vertebrate animal with a strong backbone,
and that the crouching attitude of the
monkey is an unworthy one! 2.

The Established Church (the Rev. Fr. James Adderley excepted³) with

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1. Like "Coom whoam to thi' childer an' me", portraying a wife at the pub door vainly trying to retrieve money from her reeling husband, - enormous efforts by the Band of Hope in working class areas. C Stella Davies, North Country Bred, p.26.
 2. Nelson Street Adult School Magazine Vol.I, No.1, Jan.1900 - an article by the headmaster.
 3. He began a 'Church Socialist League' (whose organ was the 'Optimist'), and supported Labour candidates in local and general elections. This infuriated local Unionist opinion. Birmingham Daily Mail, 1 Feb.1909; Birmingham ILP Year Book, 1909 p.44.

its 'Brigades and Scouts, tended to be nationalist and pro-Imperialist:

How great a thing, how complex a thing, how responsible a thing, God has given us in our English Empire. And our English Empire involves, remember, our English Christianity 1.

Of the Chapels, the Wesleyan Methodists tended towards Roseberyite Imperialism,² while some chapels of the Primitive Methodists (who normally were pacifist) appear to have given support to the Boer War.³

Again, the attachment of unskilled and casual workers to the ritualist cults is disturbingly similar to the subversion of late eighteenth century militant radicalism by Methodism. It demonstrates a marked reluctance or inability by some destitute workers to face real issues, and their predisposition to myth and escapism in crisis.

Against all this of course must be set the very real impetus to radicalism given by numbers of the Adult Schools, nonconformist churches, and attached P.S.A. classes. In encouraging discussion of social conditions, they would have sparked intelligent enquiry among their artisan clientèle and the whole history of the Labour Movement is replete with men originally inspired by such teaching. The Cadbury's school was definitely radical, while even Nelson Street school agitated about housing and unemployment. Politically, both Quakers and Primitive Methodists tended to be radical and pacifist as did numbers of Baptists,

1. Church Missionary Intelligencer, July 1885.

2. Stephen Koss "Wesleyanism and Empire" in Historical Journal, Mar.1975, Vol.18, pp.105-118.

3. Ebenezer Magazine and Mens' Own Record, April 1911, - support for the International Arbitration League against the 'Naval Race'; see however P. Knight, British Public Opinion and the Rise of Imperialist Sentiment in relation to Expansion in Africa 1880-1900 U/pub Ph. D. Thesis, Warwick University 1968, p.537, for Primitive Methodist support over the Boer War.

while Congregationalists and Unitarians might be expected to be much immersed in the topical political questions of the day.¹ Since but 31.6% of attendances in the 1892 Birmingham religious census were Church of England,² it would appear that the influence of nonconformity there was quite strong.

Essentially though, few churches were primarily concerned to exert a political influence; over contentious issues, like strikes and elections, numbers of preachers were reduced to "amiable platitudes."³ The churches and chapels were split over the question of nationalism, and their role in direct nationalist education of adult working people cannot be definitively assessed.

Only in August 1914 was a national consensus reached, the cause of war being universally acclaimed from pulpits as holy, righteous and just.⁴

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1. V.W. Garratt, Man in the Street pp.112-3; H. McLeod, Class and Religion in the late Victorian City, (London) 1974, p.137, and p.178 - "Congregationalist and Unitarians were chief recruiting grounds for middle class progressivism."
 2. Aston and East Birmingham News, 17 Dec.1892.
 3. H. McLeod, op.cit. p.142.
 4. See Chapter 16 below.

Chapter 6

Political Aspects: (1) Political Environment

It was a characteristic peculiar to Birmingham that from 1899-1914, both the City Council and all of the city and suburban Parliamentary constituencies remained under the control of the Conservative and Liberal Unionist parties. This monopoly of political power was reinforced by the control of all of the important local newspapers, by the support of most employers in the major Birmingham industries, and by the charismatic leadership from Highbury of Joseph Chamberlain.

This situation had indeed been the case since the Chamberlain break with Gladstone over Irish Home Rule in 1886. The Liberal caucus, so assiduously developed by Chamberlain since 1870, chameleon-like changed to Liberal Unionism, retaining its claim locally as the party of radicalism and social reform, and its claim to the maintenance of non-conformist interests.¹ The Liberal Unionism of Chamberlain differed from that of others who had split from Gladstone, and notably from the Whiggism of Hartington. An agreement was reached between Chamberlain and Hartington that the latter should have exclusive influence over his "duchy" of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire.² Employers'

1. H. Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910, 1967, p. 183.

2. M.C. Hurst, Joseph Chamberlain and West Midland Politics, (Dugdale Society, Stratford-upon-Avon) 1962, pp.7-8.

dissatisfaction with Liberal national and municipal policy, and artisan's dissatisfaction with the Liberal record of failure both as an employer of Council labour and as a builder of artisan dwellings helped complete the break.¹ In the 1892 Parliamentary elections all seats swung to Unionism by an average of 27.1% over 1885, and in none of the borough contests was the Unionist vote less than 60% of the poll.²

The constant hold over all Parliamentary seats continued down to World War One. In the municipal contests, the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists combined held 52 out of 72 seats in 1902,³ and following the elections to the new Greater Birmingham Council in 1911, controlled by 63 seats out of 90.⁴

The local newspapers were almost exclusively Unionist. The Birmingham Daily Mail and Birmingham Daily Post favoured Liberal Unionism. The Midland Express, a Conservative paper at ½d founded by Arthur Pearson in 1901, amalgamated with the other principal Conservative newspaper - the Birmingham Daily Gazette⁵ - in 1904. The Birmingham Evening Despatch was also begun by Pearson in 1902, and styled itself the "official Unionist evening paper in Birmingham";⁶ this attractively

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1. C.M. Green, Growth of Conservatism in Birmingham 1873-1891 U/pub. B.A. Dissertation, Birmingham University, 1971: he also alleges manipulation of the Redistribution Act.
 2. A table of all results is published in H. Pelling op.cit. p.180.
 3. Birmingham Evening Despatch, 3 Nov.1902: Liberals = 15, Labour = 3, Independent = 2.
 4. ibid. 1 Nov.1911: Liberals=18, Labour=6, Independent=3.
 5. which had been "consistently Conservative for 148 years" Birmingham Portraits (MacMillan Collection) Vol.7 - Authors and Editors BRL 296083 f.87.
 6. Birmingham Evening Despatch, 2 Nov.1906 - Leader article.

produced paper was still running in 1914. Others had a chequered career. The principal Liberal daily, the Daily Argus, closed in 1902. The Birmingham Telegram closed in 1907; the Birmingham Magnet lasted from 1900-05, and the Birmingham City News only from Oct-Dec 1905.

The Liberal party was supported by the Aston and East Birmingham News, but this was a weekly paper restricted to the north and east of the city. The Liberal's sole publication, "Man in the Street", was on a monthly issue of 4000 and even in 1910, with massive efforts to recapture Parliamentary seats, it only achieved 80,000 over a complete year.¹ Not until 1912, when the Birmingham Gazette and Evening Despatch were taken over by a new editor "under Liberal colours" did matters improve.²

The Labour Party's journals were short-lived - Labour Mail, Labour Standard, Pioneer and various "Forwards" - usually issued at election times and succeeding in carrying on for but a few months afterwards.

The early Birmingham Daily Post had been staunchly Liberal, for its proprietors, Sir John Jaffray and John Feeney (who also owned the Birmingham Daily Mail), and its leader writer William Harris were influential figures in the local caucus.³ Chamberlain's split with Gladstone in 1886 was followed (1887) by a realignment of the 'Post's policy, to support Chamberlain. The indecision of Balfour over Protection was reflected by similar editorial indecision in the 'Post and in 1905, its Free-Trade editor Alfred Feeney was put "under considerable

1. Birmingham Liberal Association, Annual Report, 28 April.1910.

2. ibid. 1913.

3. H.R.G. Whates, Birmingham Post 1857-1957 (Birmingham) 1957, pp.79-80.

pressure from Chamberlain supporters" and resigned.¹ His place was taken by a convinced Chamberlainite, J.V. Morton, erstwhile editor of the Birmingham 'Mail (which had no worries about Tariff Reform), subsequently editor of the 'Gazette and Express,² and who additionally was famous in organising a torchlight procession for Chamberlain during the Boer War. One of the 'Post's leader writers was C.A. Vince, Chamberlain's Private Secretary and important figure in the national party organisation.³

The Birmingham Daily Post and 'Mail were not "absolute" papers, for in between elections their leader articles could be both balanced and thoughtful. They never supported strikes however, and were passionately anti-socialist. They liked to emphasise the liberality of Liberal Unionism, on occasion attacking the Yellow Press over its more extreme anti-German articles. Similarly they attacked the National Service League's demand for conscription, preferring Haldane's Territorial Scheme. But at election times and at times of crisis, they followed a very hard and distinct Tory line, excluding or dismissing the arguments of opposition. In the Boer War, at the 1906 and 1910 elections, over the Aliens Bill and in the 1908-9-10 Naval Scares, they became as "yellow" as the national Daily Mail. To the local Labour Party, the Birmingham Daily Mail was "the working man's Bible...he waits till it tells him what to do."⁴

1. ibid. p.178.

2. ibid. pp.178-181.

3. ibid. p.149.

4. Forward (Rotten Park) Oct.1913.

But the Birmingham Daily Post in 1900 was a "stodgy, dull, middle class paper run by people who had been doing so for some time."¹ Its security was becoming very seriously challenged in Birmingham by the ½d national Daily Mail, begun by Northcliffe in 1896 and guided by the simple order to "Explain; simplify; clarify."² Reducing lengthy articles and thoughtful journalism to the "comment of the paragraph", the Daily Mail had by 1900 achieved a circulation in Birmingham with "at least as many readers..as the most widely circulated of local daily papers."³

Table 6.1 Circulation Figures of the Daily Mail and the Birmingham Daily Post, 1898-1906.⁴

	(in '000's)	
	<u>Daily Mail</u>	<u>B.D. Post</u>
1898	429.5	29.1
1899	610.3	29.9
1900	989.3	30.8
1901	836.7	29.9
1902	807.6	29.3
1903	771.6	29.0
1904	809.5	28.3
1905	768.2	28.5
1906	750.2	28.5

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1. H.R.G. Whates, op.cit. pp.162-3.
 2. R. Pound and G. Harmsworth, Northcliffe 1959, p.200.
 3. Sir J.A. Hammerton, With Northcliffe in Fleet Street, 1932, p.118. (Editor of Birmingham Weekly Post in 1897).
 4. A.P. Wadsworth, "Newspaper Circulations 1800-1954" in Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society, 1954/5, p.25.

From table 6.1 it is clear that the local 'Post lost little readership as a result of the Daily Mail's penetration, and thus the Daily Mail must have attracted a new clientèle. Northcliffe tried to capture lower-middle class readers who, he felt, had the greater wealth to attract advertisers.¹ But as one newspaper vendor outside London's Kings Cross station claimed (to the editor of "Newspaper Owner and Manager")

thousands of working men were buying the Daily Mail who had never bought a morning paper before. 2.

Penetration by the Liberal national dailies appears to have made little headway. The Cadbury's Daily News had a circulation of just 39.1 thousand in 1901; reducing its price to $\frac{1}{2}$ d and changing its style, it reached 153.6 thousand in 1906 - only a quarter that of the Daily Mail.³ "Man in the Street" never mentioned it having any circulation in Birmingham, and the Birmingham Liberal Association constantly complained over the lack of such a paper. Indeed, the Association "made special efforts in 1912 to extend the sale of the Daily News in Birmingham."⁴

Of Labour national newspapers, there is evidence that "Reynolds" and the "Clarion" circulated (though not the "Labour Leader"), but many newsagents refused to handle them and reliance was placed on door-to-door circulation by I.L.P. members.⁵

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1. F. Williams, Dangerous Estate; the anatomy of newspapers, 1957, p.143.
 2. R. Pound and G. Harmsworth, op.cit. p.213.
 3. A.P. Wadsworth, op.cit. p.25.
 4. Birmingham Liberal Association, Annual Report, 1912 (also to extend the Westminster Gazette and Daily Chronicle).
 5. Northfield Ward Labour Party 1904-54. U/pub. typescript, anon, in B.R.L., f5.

Given this Unionist monopoly of the sources of public information, it is too easy to posit a "mass manipulative" hypothesis, to see the working class as an atomised and receptive mass for the projection by the newspapers of their fabricated images of reality. But it is not clear who actually read which newspapers, and what parts of the newspapers different people tended to study. Again, a recent work suggests that news is a peculiar form of knowledge, deriving its character very much from the sources and contents of its production.¹ Newspapers have to be filled, and are filled, in cycles of endlessly repeated dramas whose themes are familiar and well understood: The themes are thus recognisable; the facts of the situation may be accepted by the reading public, but not the dramatic interpretation of the facts, the causes or the consequences of events to which the public may have become immune.

A survey of newspaper readership in 1938 discovered that in the lowest income group studied (less than £125 p.a.), only 45% of families took a daily newspaper and a half of these read the Daily Mail.² Most took Sunday newspapers, particularly the News of the World and People. Irrespective of income, reader interest in morning papers began with accident reports, then local news and weather, then Trade Union and Labour news. Royalty was placed eighth and British armaments, ninth. Bye-elections fell to the bottom of the scale.³

In other words, large numbers of poor people in 1938 abstained from

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1. S. Cohen and J. Young, Manufacture of News, Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media, 1974.
 2. Political and Economic Planning, Report on the British Press in April, 1938, p.231 (sample size - 80,000).
 3. ibid. p.250.

buying a daily newspaper, and those that did buy tended not to read articles of national importance. By 1938 though, the radio had begun to replace the newspaper and again, peoples' preferences might have been quite different from thirty years and one World War previously. Newspaper "leader" articles were not popular, except at "times of crisis...(when)...leaders do have a formative influence on public opinion."¹

But newspapers were the "principal agenda making body for everyday conversation of everyday men and women", thus proprietors could promote interest in and discussion of selected topics. Second, proprietors could exclude information such as party political failings, or provide an apologia for them. Third, proprietors wielded the power of presentation, at extremes to promote public confidence or cause panic within the limits discussed above. For Birmingham, the Unionist monopoly of news reduced that diversity of presentation which could guard against the misinformation of public opinion, and the proprietors were constantly guilty of promoting Unionist policy in all of the three aspects above.

Birmingham employers too, were for the most part supporters of Unionism because of its Tariff Reform programme. Resolutions in favour of Tariff Reform were passed both by the Council of the Chamber of Commerce,² and by a Special General Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce in 1903.³ The political association between the Liberal and Labour parties drove still more to Unionism as the anti-socialist crusade after

1. ibid. p.262.

2. Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Journal, June 1903, p.60. Votes 14:1.

3. ibid. Sept. 1903, p.114, votes 48:9.

1907 gained ground.¹ Individual Liberal employers included the Cadburys, Richard and George Tangye, Arthur Chamberlain of Kynochs² and Chamberlain and Hockman, and industries with a sizeable export business to countries which did not impose tariff restrictions (such as the Saltley carriage manufacturers).

Another important aspect of Birmingham politics was the charismatic status of Joseph Chamberlain, attracting a depth of popular attachment that seems scarcely realised outside Birmingham. The cult of Chamberlainism became a continuous public relations exercise for the Unionist parties. The early "images" depicted Chamberlain as a "local-boy-made-good" - the Radical mayor, "Our Joe", who was clearly destined to become Prime Minister.

But the most common images were those of Chamberlain "the Imperialist", as they appeared in the propaganda of his Tariff Reform League from 1902. His speeches passionately called for a recognition of Empire, an Empire men scarce seemed to care about. An urgent reawakening of Britain's imperial consciousness was seriously required, and the vessel of that reawakening was to be the Tariff Reform League.

Thus Chamberlain evinced the past:

Learn to think Imperially; I ask you to be
worthy of your past. 3.
...and the present:
We have an Empire, the greatest the world
has ever seen, the most extraordinary combination
of free and other nations that have been brought
together to recognise one king and one flag. 4.

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1. ibid. Many articles warning employers to look out for Socialists in the Trade Unions and in the Birmingham Right-to-Work Committee. v.g. Oct.1908, p.157.
 2. Birmingham Election News. Jan.6th and Jan.8th, 1906. The gun workers themselves though, actively supported Bordeley's Unionist, Jesse Collins.
 3. Straightforward, No.1, May.1914.
 4. Monthly Notes on Tariff Reform, No.1, Vol.V., July 1906, Speech at Highbury, June 5th, 1906.

...and he evinced a destiny:
to hand down our great inheritance
unimpaired to our descendents...Our glory!
It will be the glory of this generation if
we strengthen the foundations of this great
and unparalleled dominion; it will be our
eternal disgrace if we allow it to fall. 1.

A significant change in Chamberlain's attitude post-1885 can be noted. From the man who once said,

I confess to you that I am so parochially minded that I look with greater satisfaction to our acquisition of the gas and water, to our scientific frontiers in the improvement area, than I do to the results of the imperial policy which has given us Cyprus and the Transvaal. 2.

is later heard:

The influence of the Empire is the thing I think most about, and that influence I believe will always be used for the peace and civilisation of the world. 3.

Joseph Chamberlain's third image, that of the "workers' friend", originated first in the social reform programmes he initiated as a Radical on the City Council, and was furthered in the Tariff Reform League propaganda which cited Imperial solutions to the social problems of unemployment and poverty.⁴

As a politician, he commanded the total support of the Birmingham Unionists; even the Conservative Free Traders wavered and collapsed, Thus Sir James Rankin volte-faced:

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1. ibid. No.2, Vol.V. Aug.1906, Speech in Birmingham on July 9th, 1906.
 2. Speech c 1880. Reported in Pioneer No.1, June 1899.
 3. Crowned Masterpieces of Eloquence, Vol.III, 1910 - Speech to W. Birmingham Unionists, 15 May, 1903.
 4. Considered in Chapter 8.

Mr. Chamberlain had one of the most lofty conceptions for the welfare of this Empire that he had ever heard of...if by Mr. Chamberlain's means they could get the colonies closer united...he was bound to say, Free Trader as he was, that he certainly would be willing to go in for some means of taxation upon some of the articles imported into this country.
(Applause) 1.

Chamberlain candidates could often turn to their leader for electoral appeal. Thus J.T. Middlemore, contesting North Birmingham for the Unionists in 1906 and having little else to recommend him, displayed posters showing Chamberlain and other Birmingham Unionists riding horses, dressed in khaki, swords drawn and captioned:

I rely confidently on Birmingham men to be true to their old friends and once more strike a blow for Union, Empire and Reform - Joseph Chamberlain.....Men of North Birmingham, follow the advice of your trusted leader by VOTING FOR MIDDLEMORE. 2.

The opposition to Chamberlainism in Birmingham, such as it was, met with little success. Numerous pejorative epithets were coined, such as "Great Freak" etc., but it was an impotent fury that rasped against him.

As the Liberal party receded into political obscurity, the Labour Party only began to emerge as a force of significance after about 1910. This latter group, split into Trades Council, I.L.P. branches, Birmingham Socialist Centre, Clarion Fellowship, Labour and Socialist Churches, Workers Educational Association, and Church Socialist League tended to exert somewhat fractionalised efforts.³

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1. Miscellaneous Correspondence etc. Collection B.R.L. 264714 f.20, Rankin at an Annual Dinner, c 1904.
 2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections, 1892-1906, (B.R.L. Collection) f.171.
 3. Birmingham I.L.P. Federation Year Book 1909: see also A.J.A. Morris (ed.) Edwardian Radicalism 1900-14, which demonstrates how protean and fragmented the radical left really was.

The central Labour Representation Council, representing all of the above bodies and a number of Trades Unions apart from the Trades Council, increased both in membership and funds 1907-13 but table 6.2 shows this growth to have been unspectacular.

	Societies	Funds	Municipal Seats Contested	Municipal Seats Held
1907	13	10-8-6 ¹ / ₂ d	5	1
1908	19	39	7	0
1909	23	53 ²	16	1
1910	45	103	6	0
1911	50	57	15	6 ³
1912	59	118	7	1
1913	65	77	7	4

Table 6.2 Numbers of societies including trade unions, but exclusive of the Trades Council, affiliated to Birmingham and District L.R.C.; municipal representation; and annual funds 1907-13.¹

The number of trades represented by the Trades Council in 1908 was 72, with 115 branches and 31,500 members.⁴ The Trades Council is more important

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1. Birmingham and District L.R.C. Annual Reports, 1907-1913. Municipal election statistics from local press, 1st-3rd Nov. each year.
 2. Over half the money being provided by just two societies - the Lithographic Printers and the Typographical Society, just prior to the 1910 elections. L.R.C. Report, 1909.
 3. This increase being caused by the widened boundaries of Greater Birmingham, bringing in the Selly Oak Cadburyite socialists.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, Mar 9, 1908.

therefore, and is discussed in Chapter 10 at length. Yet if the political influence of the left is measured by L.R.C. funds and local representation, it was infinitesimally small. The income of the Birmingham Liberal Club alone in that L.R.C. peak year of 1912, for instance, was nearly nine times as much.¹ The income of the Birmingham Socialist Centre (noted above), was but one third of the Women's Suffrage Society.² The membership of the I.L.P. in Birmingham in 1909 was but 1300,³ which was 0.23% of the male and female population over 20 years in Greater Birmingham. All the Socialist and Labour Party attempts to gain Parliamentary and municipal representation had Liberal support; except that in Acocks Green in 1911 and 1913, in Small Heath in 1911, and in Sparkbrook in 1912, local Liberals breached the unwritten agreement that the parties would not put up opposing candidates. The failure of both Liberal and Labour representatives to capture seats, and the inability of the Labour groups to encourage much working class positive political activity or affiliation must be seen as a clear failure of Radicalism.

And so it would appear that Birmingham from 1899 to 1914 was essentially Unionist; it was controlled by a caucus led by a powerful Imperialist; it was sustained by a right-wing newspaper monopoly, and supported by many employers; it was powerful in the face of the failure of radicalism to capture working class imaginations, at least down to 1911.

The following four chapters look at different aspects of political propaganda and political support for nationalist ideas 1899-1914. First is examined the newspaper coverage and elections of the Boer War. The Birmingham Lloyd-George riot of Dec.1901 is included, but not the

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1. Birmingham Liberal Club. Annual Report, 1913, (f.1020.11.2).
 2. Birmingham Socialist Centre, Annual Report, (18) 1915, Birmingham Womens' Suffrage Society, Annual Report 1910.
 3. Birmingham I.L.P. Federation Year Book 1909; Census 1911 (loc cit), population of Greater Birmingham aged 20+ c556000.

(essentially different) more lighthearted and non-violent mafficking crowd.¹ Chapter 8 looks at the principal election propaganda 1902-14, and Chapter 9 examines separately the important topic of anti-alienism. Finally Chapter 10 assesses working class election support in municipal and national contexts, membership of political organisations, the composition of the political power group in Birmingham, and the late growth of support for Birmingham Radicalism.

1. Chapter 15 includes discussion of such crowds, viewing them within the wider aspect of working class leisure.

Chapter 7

Political Aspects:(2) Propaganda and Response in the Boer War.

When war broke out in 1899, few people appeared to think that it would last very long, and still fewer cared to criticise it. The newspapers in Birmingham gave it frantic support. The Boers' "temporising procrastination...evasive replies...insult our dignity";¹ British soldiers were ready "to wipe out for all time the stain of Majuba Hill";² the government was urged to "Get to grips with them!...

If Kruger must be cured of his insane delusions of the fighting power of the Dutch burghers, we have the medicine to apply in the best equipped army corps that has ever left our shores." 3.

People were warned to look out for Boer spies, resident in Birmingham.⁴ Even the Liberal Daily Argus talked of the 'freak' victory of Majuba, and prophesied the rapid overpowering of the Boer army;⁵ it carried a cartoon showing Chamberlain on a horse sticking a wild pig with his lance, to the caption "Boer at Bay."⁶

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 9 Sep.1899.

2. ibid. 18 Sep.1899.

3. ibid. Leader article 23 Sep.1899.

4. Midland Express, 22 Oct.1901.

5. Daily Argus, 5 Sep.1899.

6. ibid. 11 Sep.1899.

No doubt Liberals could take ostrich-like refuge in the myth that the war was all about the democratic enfranchisement of Transvaal Uitlanders.¹ But the propaganda generated here, the excitement and joy of impending conflict, the strands of thinly veiled egotistic nationalism were hardly different from the propaganda over the reinvasion of Egypt but one year before, the impending clash with France over Fashoda, and the string of military conquests from the Second Afghan War on.² The Boer War represented a high point in frenetic and aggressive Imperialism as seen in popular propaganda. And it was to receive a severe check within two months of the opening of hostilities. First at the Modder River, and then in the first "Black Week" of December 1899 at Colenso, Stormberg, and Magersfontein, the British army reeled back defeated with over 3000 dead. Yet the newspapers at first reported victories at Mafeking,³ Ladysmith,⁴ and the Modder River and the

Transvaalers are said to have declared
THEY WILL NEVER FIGHT AGAIN. 5.

As the truth filtered back, newspapers began to grumble at Generals Buller, Methuen, and Gatacre and applauded the appointment of Field Marshal Lord Roberts V.C. to overall command. While they waited

1. ibid. 13 Sep.1899.

2. See Hugh Cunningham, "Jingoism in 1877-8" in Victorian Studies, June 1971, pp.429 on, for 2nd Afghan War; and Byron Farwell, Queen Victoria's Little Wars 1972, for lists of the very many campaigns by year.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 13 Nov.1899, (and Kimberley - ibid. 18 Oct.1899).

4. ibid. 29 Nov.1899.

5. ibid. 5 Dec.1899.

for "Bob's" to work wonders, a scapegoat was needed and it was found in the shape of the long suffering foreigner. As the foreign press proclaimed Boer victories, Birmingham men were urged

it is a wonder that half a dozen stalwart Englishmen, armed with good horsewhips, do not go over to Paris and administer a severe castigation to the vulgar cowards... what the Parisian lacks in physical stamina, he makes up for in vulgar abuse of his enemy....Like a dog he barks loudest in his own kennel. 1.

Then came the "victories", each one greeted with greater crowd enthusiasm than the last. At the Relief of Ladysmith, khaki-clad Imperial Yeomanry troopers were carried "shoulder-high up and down the streets amid shouts and a pandemonium of cheers and songs."² Music Halls and theatres altered their acts; the Curzon Hall cinema was twice filled, alleged the 'Post -

with remarkable audiences from first to last most patriotic and Imperial. The vast assembly stood and sung "God Save the Queen" at the commencement and throughout cheered every scene and every animated photograph of the generals and of war episodes. 3.

The occupation of Pretoria also called forth scenes of "unrestrained joy", as did the departure of volunteers to the Colours - in Handsworth, speeded by crowds singing "Soldiers of the Queen" and by gifts of individual khaki bibles from the chaplain.⁴ In the city centre, fifty were seen off at an open air service in the pouring rain, by an alleged

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 28 Nov.1899.

2. Birmingham Daily Post, 2 Mar.1900.

3. Ibid. Considered further in Chapter 15.

4. Handsworth Herald, 17 Feb.1900.

crowd of 20,000.¹

Thus came the Relief of Mafeking, so eagerly anticipated that in the Lozells area it was celebrated two days before the official despatch.² Streets filled with "mafficking" crowds:

Staid citizens, whose severe respectability and decorum were usually beyond question or reproach were to be seen parading the streets, shouting patriotic songs with the full force of their lungs, dancing, jumping, screaming in a delirium of unrestrained joy. 3.

In this climate, Lloyd-George chose to speak in Birmingham against the war. The local newspapers grasped the nettle, and waged a campaign that was eventually to lead to a riot. On 10 Dec.1901, the Birmingham Daily Mail announced "a Pro-Boer meeting arranged...(by)...one of the most virulent of pro-Boers." The next day a "ratepayer" wrote to say that the meeting should be banned and the following day an anonymous letter trusted "someone will organise a meeting outside the Town Hall in opposition."⁴ Then an "ex-soldier" (yet another conveniently anonymous letter, note,) wrote that "no doubt a few discharged soldiers from South Africa will be present. Perhaps Mr. Lloyd George will repeat to our faces the accusations he made against us in our absence."⁵ The Mail's editor "feared there will be a disturbance...the town was not going to permit the meeting should, as a notorious pro-Boer gathering, be taken outside Birmingham as representative of the opinion of the city."⁶

Another editorial raged against Lloyd-George's insults of the king,

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1. Birmingham Daily Post, 22 Jan.1900.
 2. Handsworth Herald, 26 May.1900.
 3. ibid.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, Dec 12th.1901.
 5. ibid. Dec 13.1901.
 6. ibid. Dec 14.1901.

our troops, even of our Joe...

And this man, who could make out our soldiers and our ministers to be wholesale inhuman butchers (...is to be 'honoured' in Birmingham...) the city which has given so nobly and so freely of her sons to fight her battles, which has made so many sacrifices... We fail to see how patriotic Englishmen can sit quietly under the tirade of foul calumny and vulgar abuse... 1.

Again...

Many men who have lost sons, or brothers, or intimate friends are expressing great indignation... the returned soldiers and militiamen are displaying an anxiety which is not mere curiosity to see the man who lauds our country's enemies and accuses our troops of barbarism. More serious than all... however... is that two hundred Irish toughs are being engaged to eject intruders from the meeting. It seems incredible that Birmingham people should be challenged by a display of force of that kind. 2.

Enter the mob orator and Conservative "working man", city councillor J.G. Pentland who, claiming to have seen the Irishmen, used the columns of the 'Post and the 'Gazette on the morning of the meeting to call on the population "by all means, let us show what loyal Birmingham men can do."³ He and another orator, Councillor William Lovsey, sent out sandwichboardmen throughout the town urging men to come and demonstrate "For King! For Country! For Birmingham wants no traitors!"⁴

Between 40,000 and 100,000 people turned up. The meeting was broken up, all the windows of the Town Hall were smashed by flying stones, the doors were rammed in by telegraph poles torn down by the crowd, and in a subsequent police baton charge, 27 were injured and one man died. Lloyd-

1. ibid. Dec 16.1901.

2. Birmingham Daily Post, 17 Dec.1901.

3. ibid. and Birmingham Daily Gazette, 18 Dec.1901.

4. Midland Express, 19 Dec.1901.

George escaped disguised as a policeman. The Mayor blamed the 'Post and 'Mail'¹; Lloyd-George split the blame between the newspapers ('Chamberlain's Press') and the mob-orators ('Chamberlain's Hangers-on').² Lloyd-George's biographers saw the whole thing as a Unionist plot, involving the newspapers, and hatched at Highbury.³ Only the 'Post absolved itself, and blamed medical students.⁴

A more recent study blamed Kynoch's gunworkers, who were said to have been inspired by a visiting foreign arms dealer, claiming Lloyd-George's peace policy would close the factory.⁵

Of eleven people arrested by the police, ten were working class and the eleventh, a bank clerk, was only 16 years old.

Table 7.1 Occupations of those charged in connection with the riot at the Town Hall, 18 Dec.1901.⁶

Basket Maker	Joiner	Silversmith
Painter	Machinist	Brass Polisher
Bank Clerk	Shunter	Art-Metal Worker

Two were described as "lads...strips of boys"

Average age 22.5 years: Range 16 years (clerk) to 46 years (basket maker).

1. Daily Argus, 19 Dec.1901.

2. Daily Argus, 20 Dec.1901.

3. W. Davies, Lloyd-George 1863-1914; J. Grigg, Young Lloyd-George 1973, p.286.

4. B.D. Post 19 Dec.1901.

5. D. McCormick, Pedlar of Death, Life of Sir. Basil Zaharoff 1965; Birmingham Post, 11 July.1965.

6. Midland Express, 20 Dec.1901-2 Jan.1902.

Thus this riot involved large numbers of working people, and was openly encouraged by newspaper pressure and Conservative mob orators. Indeed Pentland was later to claim that the "honour of leading the crowd" was his.¹ But it can never be known how many of the people went along to the meeting out of detached curiosity and took no part. Certainly the propaganda was violent enough, in these times when people were given to expressing emotions in crowd scenes, to inspire genuine anger and reaction in those who did have relatives or friends living in South Africa. Again, among the crowds packed about the mob orators were both ex-soldiers and personally interested gunmakers. Violence also originated in gangs of youths who saw the occasion as an excuse for destruction; not only the Town Hall was damaged but confectionery stalls were overturned and buses had sign plates ripped off.² Finally, some people were perhaps incensed at Lloyd-George's clever epithets coined for the town's idol, Chamberlain.

The riot was in part an example of frenetic nationalism among some of the working class, in part due to personal anger and revenge, in many cases too probably a confused mixture of both. It was made more violent by deviant youth. It does not demonstrate overwhelming pro-war support among even the 100,000 who were said to have been present, but it does demonstrate the ability of newspapers to influence popular opinions and actions, and the predisposition of some working class people to violence in the name of patriotism.

The war, reported dutifully with at least half a page daily in most newspapers, figured too in Unionist propaganda during the annual

1. Man in the Street April.1902.

2. Midland Express 19 Dec.1902.

November municipal elections, and in the national election of 1900 (fought only in Birmingham East). The war issues were raised in Nov. 1899 in Balsall Heath, Bordesley, Ladywood and to a lesser extent in Nechells, and later in Ladywood (1900, 1901, 1902), Saltley (1901) and Bordesley (1902).¹ For all those elections in which reports of speeches still exist, 1899-1902, 8 out of 13 contests became embroiled in debates about government conduct of the war, the influence becoming progressively weaker over the period.

Thus in Ladywood in 1899, the Quaker Liberal candidate's victory could only mean

throughout England, a defeat for Mr. Chamberlain. 2.

Again in 1901, Ladywood voters were told that if the Liberal won

it is not improbable that the news would be flashed across the seas that in Mr. Chamberlain's own city the friends of Kruger are making headway - a message no patriot citizen could, even in thought, tolerate for a moment. 3.

Where it was not possible to claim that an opponent was a pro-Boer, Unionists could still ingeniously tar him with the brush of "unpatriotism":

Our enemies the Boers, have won many advantages by a disreputable sort of cunning. They have fired from under the White Flag. ELECTORS! Beware of Boer methods in political warfare. 4.

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1. Reports of all municipal elections are drawn from the local press from about 15 Oct to 5 Nov each year. In this case, Birmingham Daily Mail, Nov. 1st-3rd, 1899, Oct. 22nd 1901, and Birmingham Evening Despatch, Nov. 1st, 1902.
 2. Daily Argus, 3 Nov. 1899.
 3. Birmingham Municipal Elections 1901-6 B.R.L. collection Pamphlet from Ladywood Ward 1901, issued by Dr. H. Perry.
 4. ibid. Unidentified ward, c Nov. 1902.

Local elections also hinged upon the need to restrict Council expenditure, the need for gasworks and artisans' dwellings. The Liberal Party tended to avoid, if they could, discussing the war. The wards where nationalism formed a part of the municipal debate ran from mixed semi-skilled and skilled areas (like Nechells) out the respectable clerkish and highly skilled wards (Balsall Heath).

The poorest areas, including St. Bartholomews and Deritend, were fought solely on housing and economy issues. Contests in St. Mary's, figuring both Messrs. Pentland and Lovsey, became involved in the war, and in the Home Rule debate because of the large Irish vote.¹ Market Hall, though central, was dominated by the business vote from middle class suburban residents; average attendances at meetings were an apathetic 30 or so, and the business discussed was trams and economy.²

Saltley's interest in the Boer War in 1901 was a spillover from the Oct.1900 'khaki election' there, it being the only seat (Birmingham East) contested. J.V. Stevens, the Lib/Lab candidate supported by the powerful A.S.E., A.S.R.S. and Gasworkers, had initial cause for optimism in the khaki election. Councillor Toller, the first solely labour councillor on Birmingham City Council, had been elected from East Birmingham only two years before.³ Stevens was a local "working man", General Secretary of the Amalgamated Tin Plate Workers, and had represented St. Thomas's ward since 1889.⁴ His Unionist opponent,

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1. Daily Argus, 3 Nov.1899. Both Unionists had the active support of local postal employers and, quite illegally, of their vehicles too.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Oct 18 and 30, 1901.
 3. Daily Argus, 18 Sep.1900.
 4. Aston and East Birmingham News, 29 Sep.1900.

Sir Benjamin Stone, was an affable but unenergetic M.P., whose main claim to fame was as a leading urban photographer of his day (dubbed "Mr. Kodak" by Stevens). A poor public speaker, his campaign was enlarged by the personal participation of the Colonial Secretary and Jesse Collins; it was therefore bound hand and foot to the government's record of conduct of the war, twisted (as in Chamberlain's election address) into a vote of confidence to the "honour and courage of our troops."¹ In the campaign, all Unionist speeches railed against Liberal disloyalty. In one case, Chamberlain ended such a speech by inciting his whole audience to sing "Rule Britannia!" in the venue of a school playground.² Stone prophesied that historians would dub the war "the greatest thing of the present age."³ His posters proclaimed:

Don't Vote for Pro-Boers, Little Englanders,
Krugerites and Home Rulers, but for Stone
and the Unity of the Empire. 4.

As the Liberal newspaper lamented, "khaki is in the air, and other questions will not be allowed to live in the same atmosphere."⁵ So Stevens found himself, while attacking government policy, forced to applaud the myth that the "nation rose as one man, and by a gigantic effort, by the unstinted sacrifice of life and money, by the heroic gallantry of its soldiers and sailors, saved the situation and converted

1. Daily Argus, 19 Sep.1900.

2. Daily Argus, 24 Sep.1900.

3. ibid. 28 Sep.1900.

4. ibid. 4 Oct.1900.

5. ibid. 20 Sep.1900.

defeat into victory".¹ It was inconceivable that he could attack the record of sacrifice and of patriotism of soldiers. This is an important point, and one seen in all of the municipal contests too with the possible exception of Ladywood. There is no evidence of Liberal and Labour disagreement in Birmingham at election times about either the validity of the war, or the courage of troops. What was essentially under attack by the opposition was the government's record of war conduct. This of course, was deftly turned and interpreted by the Unionists into a vote of no-confidence in the war itself, and thus alleged support for the Boers. The Birmingham Socialists, at this time fielding no separate candidates, fiercely condemned the war in their journal and were the only local party that did so.²

Time and time again Stevens attempted to force the debate over to social questions, and the necessity of post war reform. Perhaps half of his speeches and under one third of Stone's were concerned with housing, old age pensions and employment.

But Stevens also used other forms of nationalistic propaganda to his own assount, reminding Stone's ex-employees that some years before the M.P. had imported Swedish blacklegs "and the man who could bring foreigners here to cut down wages and make conditions worse than they were was not the man to represent working men in the House of Commons."³ And Steven's posters, flanked by the Union Jack and the Royal Standard, loudly proclaimed:

WHO IMPORTED SWEDISH WORKMEN TO TAKE THE PLACE
OF ENGLISHMEN? SIR BENJAMIN STONE! THEN VOTE
FOR STEVENS AND BRITISH LABOUR (4) and STEVENS,
THE TRUE PATRIOT. 5.

-
1. ibid. 24 Sep.1900 - (this of course, is a speech by Stevens himself!)
 2. Pioneer (ed. J. Fallows) June 1899-Feb 1902. Other SDF branches followed the Clarion; this, being edited by Blatchford, supported the war.
 3. Daily Argus, 29 Sep.1900.
 4. ibid. 26 Sep.1900, 2 oct.1900.
 5. ibid. 4 Oct.1900.

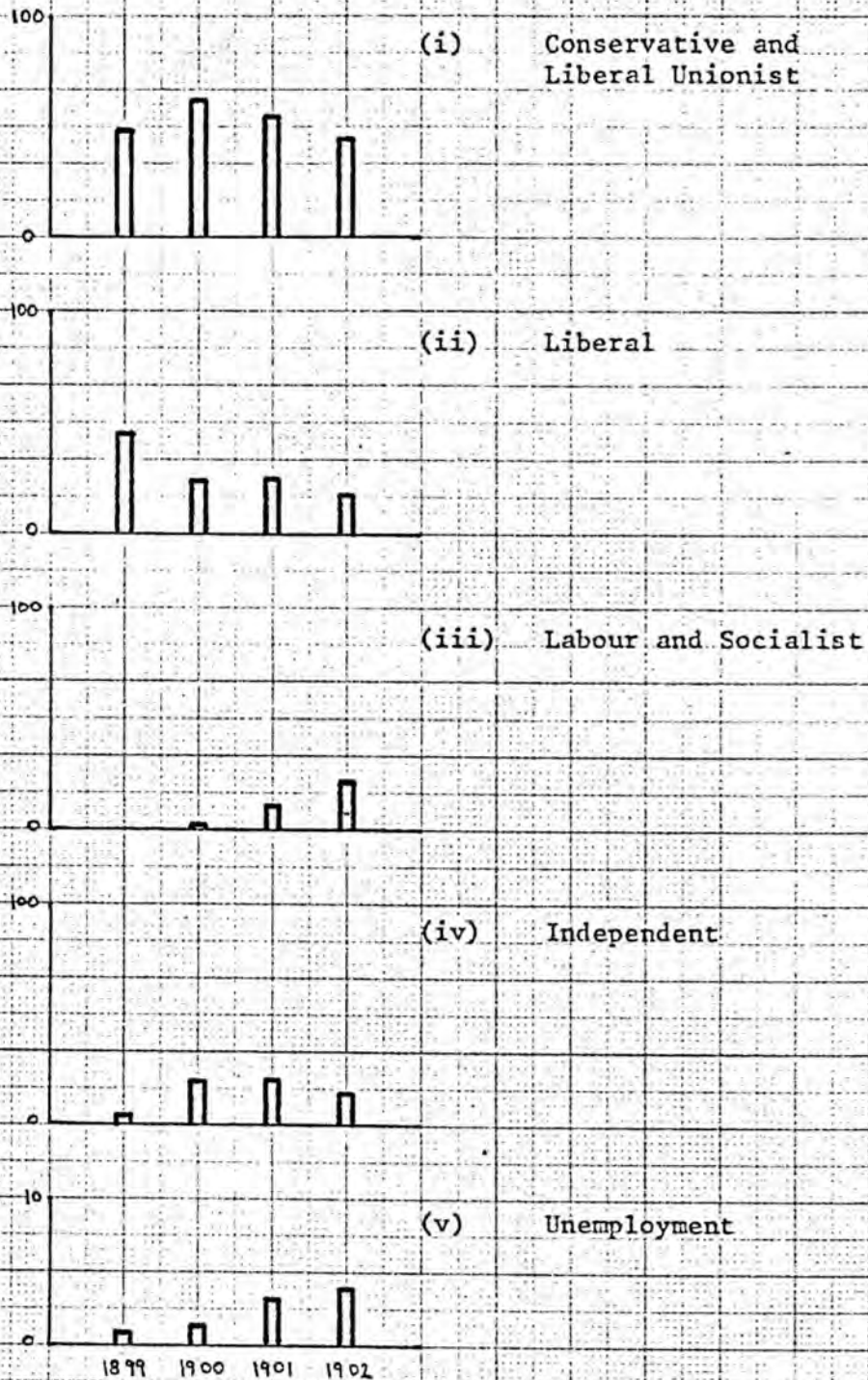
The election was won by Sir Benjamin Stone, who retained the seat with a 2.1% swing to Unionism over the 1892 election; on a low turnout, he received 63.8% of the votes. But this contest was held on a 'stale' register, requiring residence from 15 July.1899 for one year.¹ By Oct.1900 there had been over 4000 'removals' from the East Birmingham electorate.² Despite the efforts of the A.S.R.S. Wives Guild to find them, many had moved too far away to return to vote. Others, in uncontested constituencies, were untouched by propaganda, posters, leaflets or meetings, and had they still felt inspired to make the journey and vote, then the bad rain that occurred on that day would have deterred them still further. The turnout was 59.9% of the poll; if none of the 4000 returned, this would represent 86.3% of those left. R. Price, in his analysis of the khaki election, cites the low turnout as a measure of voters' apathy to the South African War.³ He fails though, to assess the effects of this 'stale' register, or to take into account the effect of a large number of uncontested seats where no propaganda or electoral enthusiasm was generated. Whereas he found that Unionists and Conservatives were only returned in working class constituencies where they advocated social reform policies, the experience of East Birmingham in particular shows both sides being drawn into the war debate as well, and both sides agreeing on the heroism and self-sacrifice of British troops. It would be interesting to know, and this Price does not tell us, how many Labour and Liberal candidates actually attacked the image of the British

1. Daily Argus, 12 Sep.1900.

2. ibid. 1 Oct.1900. Electorate = 13070. Removals = c 30%.

3. R. Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class, 1972, Chap.III.

Graph 7.A Percentage share of votes
 by political party in Aston and Birmingham
 municipal elections 1899-1902, and national
 unemployment figures (%)
 (from Labour Gazette : Return of certain
 Trade Unions to the Board of Trade...)



soldier and the record of the British peoples' participation in the war, rather than government policy in its conduct. Certainly in Birmingham there is little evidence in either the local or general elections that such an attack on the fundamentals of nationalism would be tolerated and, in the riot against Lloyd George, there is some evidence that it certainly was not.

Although very roughly half the speeches in Birmingham's national and municipal elections were war orientated, yet it was a decreasing involvement reflecting increasing disillusion with the campaign. As the war ended, costing £205 millions and 22000 British dead, few aggressive assertions of innate racial superiority were being made, but critics of both government and the army's senior officers were numerous. The Unionists and Roseberyite Liberal Imperialists found a loss of support, even from the bourgeoisie.

This increasing disillusion is reflected in the municipal voting statistics. Graph 7A shows the percentage share of votes by political party in the Birmingham and Aston municipal elections 1899-1902.¹ It will be seen that 1900 marked a resurgence of Unionist municipal fortunes; both Ladywood and St. Mary's were captured from the Liberals on the 'khaki' call. But in the following years, war disillusion was perhaps accompanied by a reflection by voters upon the irrelevance of such Imperial issues in local politics; both the Unionists and Liberals lost support. Ladywood fell in 1901 but was recaptured in 1902 with reincarnated "pro-Boer" propaganda against the Quaker Liberal. In Bordesley however, the artisans became disillusioned and by a slim margin, voted

1. The use of this municipal election data is continued in Chapter 10, where the meaning and validity of the analysis is more rigorously analysed.

in Labour Councillor J.A. Fallows in 1902.

Perhaps at this point a Radical "take off" could have occurred; certainly the fortunes of the Labour Party near the end of the war appeared bright. (7a.iii) Yet it did not occur. From 1902-14, the Unionist and Liberal Imperialists launched new propaganda attacks in local and national elections, directed at the increasingly enfranchised working class. Armed with the realisation that the abstract notions of Imperialism were hopelessly irrelevant to working people, these propagandists strove to relate abstract concepts of Nation and Empire to the physical wellbeing, economic and social prosperity of the working classes. The techniques used assumed rather than asserted national superiority, they made great play of various alleged "threats", they mapped out a national and imperial destiny. They were of occasion used by both Liberals and Unionists to support mutually exclusive policies, and they were employed on occasion by local labour leaders influenced by Blatchford. The ideas generated formed a nationalist myth that was most starkly to oppose the radicalism of social reform, for it was to act effectively to submerge the realities of wholesale unemployment, poverty and misery of the great mass of working people.

Chapter 8

Political Aspects:(3) Political Propaganda 1902-1914

The nationalist issues were focused in the 1906 and 1910 elections, but appeared increasingly (and irrelevantly) in the municipal contests too. The following chapter looks at the propaganda directed at working people, 1902-14, with the exception of anti-alienism. This latter is considered separately in Chapter 9, for it is clearly an issue which calls for wider development, particularly in terms of working class racist response.

To first identify the relative importance of all issues raised during the 1906 and 1910 elections in Birmingham, a content analysis of every reported speech in two intentionally different constituencies was made. Birmingham East was both times contested by the Labour Party; in the 1906 election, they nearly won, and in the 1910 elections the constituency was still the most marginal.¹ Aston was contested by the Liberals in both elections, and remained one of the strongest centres of Unionism.² All contests were two-cornered. Reports of speeches were taken from one Unionist³ and one Liberal⁴ newspaper,

1. Unionist share of vote 1906 = 52.6%, Jan.1910: 68%.

2. Unionist share of the vote 1906: 74.5%, Jan.1910: 79.5%.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail.

4. Aston and East Birmingham News.

to achieve balance. It was not possible to apportion each speech into the times devoted to each issue; newspaper reports were necessarily précised and again, it is possible that (say) one sentence on anti-alienism could achieve more audience impact than whole paragraphs on religious disestablishment. Thus for every speech, every issue mentioned was counted once; reports of the same speeches in different newspapers were compared to avoid double counting on issues. The results are believed to give a representative picture of the relative importance of issues in all other Birmingham constituencies too.

Table 8.1 (a) Percentage of reported speeches made by candidates which referred to various issues, 1906 Parliamentary election in Aston Manor and Birmingham East.¹

	Aston		Birmingham East		Mean Unionist
	J. Richardson LIBERAL	E. Cecil CONSERV.	J. Holmes LABOUR	Sir J.B.Stone UNIONIST	
Tariff Reform/Free trade	100	75	83.5	88.5	81.5
Home Rule	75	65	-	-	32
Chinese Slavery	25	12.5	92	25	18.5
Anti-Alienism	-	50	8.5	25	37.5
Old Age Pensions	25	-	58.5	-	-
Land/Housing Reform	25	-	16.5	-	-
Anti-Socialism	25	12.5	-	-	6
Defence	-	12.5	8.5	-	6
Nationalisation	-	6	25	-	-
Licensing	-	12.5	-	-	6
Education	-	12.5	-	-	6
Social Reform	-	-	8.5	-	-
Taff Vale	-	-	8.5	-	-
Nos. of Speeches:	4	8	12	8	16

1. Birmingham Daily Mail 19 Dec.1905-18 Jan.1906,
Aston and E. Birmingham News, 23 Dec.1905-20 Jan.1906.

Table 8.1 (b) Percentage of all reported speeches made by candidates which referred to various issues, Jan.1910 Parliamentary election, Aston Manor and Birmingham East.¹

	Aston		Birmingham East		Kenn Unionist
	J. Allen LIBERAL	E. Cecil LCU	J.J. Stephenson LABOUR	A. Steel- Maitland UNIONIST	
Tariff Reform/Free trade	85.5	70	80	100	81
House of Lords	43	40	60	-	25
Old Age Pensions	43	30	40	17	25
Navy/Defence	28.5	30	-	33	32
Anti-Socialism	-	60	-	17	43.5
Social Reform	14.3	-	60	-	-
Budget	28.5	10	20	-	6
Home Rule	-	20	-	-	12.5
Licensing	14.3	10	-	-	6
Land Tax	-	10	-	-	6
Education	-	10	-	-	6
Work Conditions	-	-	20	-	-
Housing	14.3	-	-	-	-
Nos. of Speeches:	7	10	5	6	16

1. Birmingham Daily Mail 18 Dec.1909-15Jan.1910.
Aston and East Birmingham News 1 Jan.1910-22 Jan.1910.
 Aston was not contested in Dec.1910.

What emerges from this study is that for the 1906 election in these constituencies, Tariff Reform, Home Rule, Chinese Slavery and Anti-Alienism were the most frequently discussed issues with the Liberal and Unionist parties, and Tariff Reform, Chinese Slavery, Old Age Pensions and Housing were most important with the Labour Party candidate. For the 1910 election, Tariff Reform was still the most frequent issue raised with all parties; the Unionists also emphasised Anti-Socialism and dwelt on the Naval Crisis. For Liberals and Labour, much attention was paid to the attack on the House of Lords, and on general social questions. The large number of "Old Age Pension" references in Aston Manor was in fact due to a smear and counter-smear campaign launched by both sides on the sitting M.P.'s record of support or non-support for the measure, which had passed into law in 1908.

The policies into which the threads of the nationalist myth were woven were Tariff Reform/Free Trade, Home Rule, Chinese Slavery, Anti-Alienism, Anti-Socialism, Naval Defence and the House of Lords Debate. The debates on nationalisation, Trade Union law and social reform were only involved in the myth when Unionists hinged their anti-socialism upon these policies. Old Age Pensions and Housing were not touched; for the most part, they were studiously ignored by the Unionists.

Tariff Reform, the most important policy of the Unionist parties in Birmingham from the year of 'Joseph's vision' in 1902, receded into insignificance with the death of Chamberlain and World War One. Enormous efforts were expended on it, both at national and municipal elections. From mid-1903 to one month preceding the election in Nov.1905 for example, the Imperial Tariff Committee in Congreve Street issued 25

million leaflets and pamphlets, and hundreds of thousands of posters.¹ In the 1906 election itself, the principal central hoardings from Edmund Street to Great Charles Street were covered with 3500 square feet of Tariff Reform posters.² From January 1909 to January 1910, a further 53,169,716 leaflets, pamphlets and posters were nationally issued in addition to a further 50 million general leaflets from the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations.³ At most municipal elections too, Tariff Reform loomed large as national posters were revamped and over stamped; as, for instance:

J.B. Arter. For Good Trade and Empire,⁴

and candidates could claim:

politically I am a Unionist and a Tariff Reformer (hear, Hear), and municipally I am a Progressive. 5.

The propaganda projected four essential arguments. First, that Britain was under "attack" from "the foreigner" and was not defending herself. Second, that the natural corollary to the free importation of goods was the free import of foreign labour. Third, that the interests of Trade Unions, labour representatives and Tariff Reformers were, in fact, identical. Fourth, that Tariff Reform would strengthen the Empire for the benefit of all.

The first idea was the most common. The economy from 1902-10 was stagnant; long periods of unemployment and wage reductions encouraged

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 21 Nov.1905.

2. ibid. 30 Dec.1905.

3. T.J. Macnamara, Tariff Reform and the Working Man, 1910, p.19; N. Blewett, British General Elections of 1910. U/pub. D. Phil thesis, Oxford 1967, p.558.

4. Birmingham Municipal Elections 1901-6 B.R.L. collection St. Martins, 1905.

5. Birmingham Daily Mail, 21 Oct.1907, E. Rudland of St. Thomas ward.

by 1910, increased labour militancy. To all this, Tariff Reform offered the simple panacea. If people suffered unemployment and low wages it was because the 'foreigner' was taxing our exports; further, he was allowed free access to "dump" his surpluses into the British economy, and thus dislocate domestic production.

The "foreigner" grew richer while the mass of the working class grew poorer. This was "war" - the faceless foreigner acted without scruples. He became no longer a competitor in foreign trade, but an enemy in economic conflict. Beat him, and our problems would all be solved:

(To the tune of 'Men of Harlech')
The Tariff Reformers' Marching Song.
 Hark, the unemployed are calling,
 Work is failing, wages falling,
 Foreign foes our marts enthralling,
 Food and shelter dear.
 Never heed the platform stumper,
 Scorn the Cobdenite tub-thumper,
 War against the German dumper
 Forward, free from fear! 1.

Given the choice, the favourite "foreign foe" was usually a German. A popular "Trade and Empire" cartoon (usefully adapted in the wards and constituencies, being over stamped with "Vote For.." and the appropriate name), showed an unemployed artisan standing outside a shop labelled "Continental Supply Stores Ltd." The wealth of detail evades description, but the words "why employ British workmen when foreigners work cheaper?" were prominent. The artisan was being questioned by a fat and prosperous European:-

1. C.A. Vince, Election Songs for the Men of Birmingham, verse 3.

Foreign Member of the Cobden Club: "Vy don't you go to Vork?"

British Workman (unemployed): "Because you have left me no work to do".

Foreigner: "Ach! You haf the fery big loaf!"

British Workman: "But I have no money to buy it with!" ¹

Clearly, now read the propaganda, if the situation is now bad it is going to get much worse:

This must be stopped (read one large poster)
or soon the greater proportion of our own
people will be unemployed! 2.

To make the point further, the Unionists opened a shop in Corporation Street in both elections, packed with those very foreign goods which, it was alleged, were causing unemployment in Birmingham - guns, brassware, foreign jewellery.³ The street around the shop, in the weeks up to the elections, became a public forum for debate on both sides.⁴ The popular posters of starving artisans and their families, of grasping foreigners gloating over Britain's downfall, and of symbolic black beasts sitting on John Bull's back all reinforced this crude nationalist message.⁵ In a more lighthearted yet sinister move, the Tariff Reform League (T.R.L.) issued a "popular music hall song with an excellent swing" for inclusion in repertoires:

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1. Birmingham Municipal Elections 1901-6 loc.cit. f.133 a local council election in 1903!
 2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L. collection f 71, Jesse Collins at Bordesley and "British trade for British Workmen".
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 23 Dec.1909.
 4. ibid. 11 Jan.1910.
 5. ibid. 12 Jan.1906. Captions like "Ach! But dat is good..." as the black beasts gloat over the starving children.

John Bull's Store

When old England was the market place of nations,
 When our goods were shipped to every shore,
 Crowds of foreigners were always found a-buying,
 At the counter of the John Bull Store.
 Though of course we had our foes, still as everybody knows
 They were taking all the things we made;
 For the German, Yank and Russ, though they sometimes laughed
 at us
 Weren't a patch upon John Bull at trade...

(continuing about the appearance of poverty, then of an "eye-glass'd champion" (!) etc)¹.

Films too were issued.² Ingenuity was not lacking; on the morning of the January 1910 election, Davenports, the brewers, sent a coach "the British Isles" round Birmingham stacked out with a stereotyped Dutchman, Russian, Frenchman, American and German, and with a similarly stereotyped John Bull persistently and unsuccessfully trying to climb on board.³ The foreigner was to be then, the whipping boy for all of Britain's problems.

Nor was that all: for a second nationalist element followed from the first:

You are suffering from unrestricted imports of cheaper goods. You are also suffering from the unrestricted immigration of the people who make these goods...If sweated goods are to be allowed into this country without restriction, why not the people who make them? It all comes to the same thing, - less labour for the British working man. 4.

Here Chamberlain speciously associated Tariff Reform with the Alien problem; it was a trick that the Liberals were to repeat with the issue of Chinese Slavery.

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1. Daily Mail, 13 Jan.1910. It is not known whether it ever was used on stage.
 2. These are considered in Chapter 15, as part of a study of leisure.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 14 Jan.1910.
 4. Monthly Notes on Tariff Reform (Imperial Tariff Committee, Birmingham edition) Vol.II No.1, Jan.1905. Chamberlain at Limehouse, 14 Dec.1904.

A third argument in the propaganda urged working men to see the essential congruence between the interests of Tariff Reform and Trades Unionism. Both were protective, both sought an improvement in the economic system for both had at heart the interests of the working man. From the revenue off import duty it was argued, great schemes of social reform could be financed - of course, the foreigner was paying! But from the start, the T.U.C. appealed to all workers to resist Tariff Reform "as you would a malignant disease."¹ Thus the T.R.L. formed its own Trades Union committee: the Trade Union Tariff Reform Association (T.U.T.R.A.) was an attempt to capture working class votes through T.R.L. propaganda, and for a time formed the cornerstone of the Unionist attack on socialism.

In April 1904, the T.U.T.R.A. summoned delegates from Stockport, Gateshead, Newcastle and Seaham to its first annual meeting.² Except for the Flint Glass Makers, all delegates attended as individuals and not as accredited union representatives. By 1905, groups were being set up nationally, the strongest being in the Midlands, centred upon Birmingham.³ From 1906-8, efforts were made to capture the South West and in 1909, the Association decided to strike into Free Trade Lancashire. Its successes are analysed in Chapter 10 below. But it was not a wealthy organisation, depending upon the beneficence of individual chairmen, and the parent T.R.L. for propaganda. Conservative mandarins shared a class-based suspicion of trade unions, and of working men in politics however, that was to rob the T.U.T.R.A. of support for it

1. Labour Leader, 24 Nov.1903.

2. K.D. Brown "Trade Union Tariff Reform Association 1904-13" in Journal of British Studies, Vol.IX No.2, May.1970.

3. Monthly Notes on Tariff Reform (M.N.T.R.) (Tariff Reform League, London Edition) Dec.1905.

"never received from Conservative H.Q. the attention or support it deserved."¹

The fourth strand in T.R.L. propaganda looked beyond petty national worries, to the consolidation of an Imperial zollverein.

Thus Chamberlain claimed:

I am a fiscal reformer because I am an Imperialist, believing that upon the maintenance of the great Empire which we have inherited depends the greatness of our own little country 2.

and

The day of small nations has long since passed away. 3.

The marriage of Tariff Reform and Empire gave form to notions of economic imperialism, for it was the Empire which could save Britain from poverty, absorb her unemployed labour, and keep her 'Great'. It was "our glory...our great and unparalleled dominion...our inheritance... to hand down unimpaired to our descendents."⁴

Economic insularity in world markets became virtually indistinguishable from a political philosophy of anti-internationalism; the peoples of the Empire were variously "friends", "brothers" or "heritage"; the rest were "foreigners" and "foes".

The T.R.L. then, provided the economic rationale of defensive nationalism and assertive Imperialism. Opposition to Tariff Reform in Birmingham was weak. The Labour and Liberal parties claimed that the

1. L.S. Amery, Political Life, Vol.I. p.298.

2. M.N.T.R. (Imp. Tar. Comm., B'ham) Vol.I, No.2, Aug.1904.

3. Straightforward, No.1, May.1914.

4. loc.cit., 5 June.1906.

measure would cause higher bread and sugar prices; the Unionists countered by claiming there would be higher wages and lower unemployment, to pay for them. The Labour Party sloganised "not tariffs but Social Reform",¹ seriously questioning the logic of the arguments and Alderman Ben Dean asserted that "if the Empire could not be kept together without taxing people's food, the sooner it crumbled down the better."²

Yet even in opposition arguments appeared hints of a thinly veiled nationalism. Free Traders emphasised that the Germans ate black bread, horse flesh, horse lungs - such was the fare of a Protected Nation. Black bread, made from rye, had long been a sign of social inferiority, eaten only by the very poor at the worst times, and to eat horse meat was anathema.

Tariff Reform gave Unionists a chance, in at least two cases, to attack the loyalty of Liberal employers with overseas interests. A. Brampton, Liberal candidate of the Central Division, was a Duddeston employer constantly reminded of his factory in Calais. On polling day, a photograph of his factory was published showing the notice "No Hands Wanted", and underneath was captioned:

A working man correspondent writes:
Is there any chance of a job in Calais? 3.

Again, J.V. Wilson (N. Worcestershire) was attacked for his chemical factory in the U.S.A., "when many chemical factories in Oldbury are closing down."⁴

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1. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1896-1906 B.R.L. p 78. J. Bruce Glasier, Bordesley, 1906.
 2. Handsworth Herald, 31 Oct.1903. A prominent Lib/Lab trade unionist.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail 1st, 7th, 14th January.1910.
 4. ibid. 28 Dec.1905.

The propaganda of the opposition therefore, never matched the T.R.L. in Birmingham and, in conclusion, it seemed as lamented by the editor of Birmingham's "Labour Mail" that

an epidemic of Fiscalitis will once more afflict our unfortunate country...Unfortunately working men are particularly subject to this new form of mania and when they do get it, they get it very bad indeed. 1.

Much the same techniques were used by Unionists in attacking Irish Home Rule. The party claimed that Home Rule would destroy the integrity of the Empire, that an independent Ireland could be employed by an enemy as a strategic base for assault on the British mainland, and that the whole policy was but an American plot to destroy British political and economic credibility.

A popular poster painted an heroic situation: Tory workers and soldiers in the centre guard a proud but tattered Union Jack, surrounded by a terrifying clutch of cut-throats wielding cudgels and axes and knives, and depicting Irish and Liberal 'prominente'. "Britans to the Resoue" reads the caption, "Vote for the Unionist Candidate and Defend the Flag."² Such propaganda though eye-catching, was unlikely to prove relevant to ordinary working class voters. The message that Ireland could be used as an enemy staging post was more cleverly put, by focusing hostility on the individuals of the Irish Nationalist Party, through the simple method of declaring that "they (like the Germans above) also hated and reviled the British:

1. Labour Mail, May.1907.

2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L. f 6.

Before and during the war, Mr. Redmond and his friends posed as the enemies of Great Britain. They cheered for the Mahdi, they cheered for the Mullah, and they cheered for the Boers in the House of Commons. He had himself seen them rising to cheer on account of British defeats in South Africa! 1.

The much spilt blood of working-men soldiers was not to be cheered at! "When cries of 'shame' which greeted this last remark had subsided...", Chamberlain went on to show that such men, "betraying British interests", would be only too anxious to invite a foreign power into occupation.²

Even more astute was the frequent allegation that Home Rule was an American plot. It was, said Jesse Collins in the December 1910 election, a plot "from Patrick Ford downwards, not governed by their regard for Ireland, but by their intense hatred of England and their desire to bring her to grief."³ And Unionists indicated that in six months previous to the Dec. 1910 election, Redmond had collected sixty thousand dollars from the 'States.'⁴ The reason for such "hatred" of course, lay in American greed and envy of British power and economic prowess. Like American tariffs, it was but another foreign sedition to undermine the Empire.

But Home Rule in Birmingham at least, was something of a non-controversy. The Liberal and Labour candidates Holmes (East), Outhwaite (West), Stevens (South), Lee (Central) and Holland (Edgbaston) in 1906,

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 3 Jan. 1906: Chamberlain in West Birmingham.
 2. The sheer fact that the Irish Nationalists were battling to get a foreign power out of occupation seems lost in this argument.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 30 Nov. 1910.
 4. ibid. 3 Dec. 1910.

all declared against Home Rule anyway,¹ and the Liberals issued a small booklet disowning the policy entitled "Home Rule. Who raised the Issue?"² In Birmingham North, containing St. Mary's Irish community, all that the Liberal candidate in 1906 would say was that Home Rule "may not be necessary",³ and the 1910 candidate totally renounced the policy.⁴ Handsworth's Liberal candidate in 1906 totally ignored it.⁵ Only J. Bruce Glasier (Labour, Bordesley 1906) openly supported Home Rule, and of course Bordesley artisans then received the full force of Collins' counter-propaganda. Yet although initially declaring that the issue was the "major issue of the election",⁶ Glasier appears to have progressively ignored it during subsequent speeches. Like Tariff Reform, Home Rule was another essentially irrelevant Unionist construction of nationalist myth.

In the Chinese Labour question though, was seen perhaps the most specious nationalist red-herring of all, and entirely the responsibility of the Liberals. The question arose about 1903, with the importation into the Transvaal of Chinese "coolies" to replace the Kaffir and white labour force. The existence of a cheap labour force in settlement camps in a British colony was said to be an insult to the tradition of freedom, and reeked of slavery. Again, one reason for

1. ibid. 2 Jan.1906.

2. ibid. 3 Jan.1906.

3. ibid. 18 Dec.1905.

4. ibid. 7 Dec.1909.

5. Birmingham Daily Post, 6 Jan.1906.

6. ibid. 4 Jan.1906.

fighting the Boers had been to establish a place to export surplus unemployed white labour from Britain. Finally, the Liberals and the Labour candidates alleged that the importation of Chinese labour in South Africa was but one step from its importation into England.

The first argument provided the philosophical *raison d'être*:

Your fathers gloried in the freedom
of every man on British soil! 1.

leapt out, in heavy capitals, from early propaganda. But working class support might have been more attracted to the other two arguments.

Thus were the workers of South Birmingham aggrieved to learn that

Poor men who are starving (in S.A.) are
offering themselves for very little money,
which makes it worse for those who are at
work. At Johannesburg, there are thousands
of men walking the streets out of work, yet
the mine owners are agitating for Chinese
labour in the mines.

Here are some of the wealthy mine owners
who will PROFIT BY THIS SLAVE LABOUR
which is shut to the Britisher...

Then followed a long list of foreign names, like 'A Beit', and 'L. Brietmeyer', and ending "Vote for Hirst Hollawell and British Labour!"²

Again, note the connection with anti-alienism; the Rand magnates names are suspiciously Jewish. The Chinese too, like the Irish, had their sinister image, a relic from the Boxer Risings. The Liberal's journal described, with baited breath, how escaping Chinese in South Africa were

1. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L. f.58.

2. ibid. "A Birmingham artisan writes from South Africa...."

slinking across the farms by night...
 with Asiatic contempt of life in their
 blood, Chinese callousness and cruelty in
 their hearts. No one can understand them;
 they understand no man...the end is sometimes
 violence and murder. 1.

By 1906, the slogan of "No cheap Chinese" was directly associated with
 the slogan "No unemployed and No Cheap Labour", as evidence a Labour
 Party newsheet:

Will you vote for Collins and Cheap Labour?
 The supporters of this ordinance will not
 stop short of importing Chinese labour into
 England, if British labour were not 'cheap'
 enough for their requirements...Still, the
 workers of England had better look out. By
 voting for Chinese labour in South Africa
 they will be voting also for Chinese labour
 in England.

Then followed a quote from the Birmingham Daily Post of May 18, 1877:

Shiploads of Chinese labourers are about
 to be imported by a London firm of shippers... 2.

Thus were Anti-Alienism and Chinese Labour woven together by the
 threads of nationalism. But for such suggestions of personal economic
 threat few working people were likely to care much for the principles
 of freedom of foreigners in a country thousands of miles away.

Together with Anti-Alienism, the politics of Tariff Reform,
 Home Rule and Chinese Labour dominated the 1906 election in Birmingham.
 From 1906 on, and seen in the municipal elections too, the challenge
 to the nationalist myth grew stronger, led by Liberal radicals and

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1. Man in the Street, Oct.1905. And the Unionist papers attacked, with
 transparent hypocrisy "this most unwarrantable use of mere prejudice
 as an electioneering weapon" "Birmingham Daily Mail, 2 Jan.1906.
 2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L. & Bordesley
Elector Jan 15.1906, propaganda of J. Bruce Glasier, Labour candidate
 for Bordesley.

increasingly the Labour Party. So the battle grew fiercer; the Unionists directly attacked Socialism and the defence policies of the Liberal government, and embraced whole-heartedly Joe's Tariff Reform. As the Liberals relied upon the support of Redmond's Irish nationalists, the Unionists plied harder against Home Rule. The great clash over the House of Lords saw Unionists racing to defend the whole fabric of the Nation with every weapon to hand.

The Anti-Socialist campaign in Birmingham began in Aston in 1905, where, it was alleged by a local paper, ~~Kier~~ Hardie had laid a plot to capture the Town Council for Labour. A flurry of letters protested about "our Council being made the dumping ground for the irresponsible incapable and un-English nobodies (of the) Socialist party.."¹ Municipal Unionist propaganda then focused on the "notorious taint of disloyalty" of socialists:

At West Ham, on the occasion of the death of Queen Victoria, one of the members of the Council said her late Majesty was a "bally old woman" and that she and the other members of the Royal Family were "paupers" and that the Socialists were not going to support the vote of sympathy. 2.

In Bordesley the Labour councillor, J.A. Fallows, was accused of refusing to drink the Loyal Toast; to frighten the B.S.A. workers, he was "revealed" as a pacifist.³ And the themes developed also claimed that all socialists were atheists, many were foreigners, and that socialism was a "German-made canker...eating into the heart of Great Britain."⁴

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 27-31 Oct.1905.
 2. Aston Scrapbooks Vol.2 Aston Manor Municipal Election Nov.1905 (B.R.L. collection) f.319.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail 1 Nov.1905: he lost his seat, gaining less than 30% of votes in a two cornered fight against a Unionist.
 4. As Footnote 2 above.

In 1907 the campaign intensified as the Labour Party contested three out of six wards in Birmingham and all four in Aston, and issued some 30,000 leaflets.¹ This pattern was a national one and the Unionist response likewise. All over the country, Tories harangued against "socialistic pure robbery"² etc. Anti-socialist societies (including a delegation from the Balsall Heath Ratepayers' Association) met at Caxton Hall under the auspices of the Middle Class Defence Association, and were told to "march together, horse, foot and artillery against the common enemy, socialism!"³

In Birmingham, newspapers prophesied rates at 10/- in the £;⁴ cartoons were captioned "Wake up Birmingham - the Fight Against Socialistic Domination";⁵ socialism was indicted the enemy of industry, religion, the family and the whole national fabric.⁶

The municipal results showed a decisive defeat for the Labour party. As the newspapers proclaimed "Socialism Repelled and Routed",⁷ the Conservative and Unionist Association in Birmingham met and decided upon a concerted anti-socialist plan of worker education. Even women were to be urged on "the dangers of socialism in the home life of the country", and the alternative fiscal path to social reform was to be

1. Labour Mail, March.1907.

2. Birmingham Daily Mail, 21 Oct.1907.

3. ibid. 25 Oct.1907.

4. ibid. 29 Oct.1907.

5. ibid. 31 Oct.1907.

6. ibid. 30 Oct.1907.

7. ibid. 2 Nov.1907.

advocated.¹ In Aston, Balfour opened a Labour Unionist Club specifically "to serve as a strong weapon in the fight against Socialism in the Borough";² another was later opened in Leicester.³

In 1909, the tirade began anew, with the efforts of the Anti-Socialist Union to collect one million shillings, in order to train and send working men to Parliament.⁴ Increasing labour militancy was attacked by the National Free Labour Association, instituted in 1893 by a policeman's son, William Collison, to break strikes and establish a "free labour" market. By 1909 it claimed to have broken 680 strikes and have 725,000 wage earners "enrolled under its banner."⁵ Collison was an extremist; he had no sympathy with strikers whom he described as a "mob ... with ... (a mixture) ... of the brains of a child and a savage."⁶ The electorate too were a "mob..." which do not think ... (it) ... is a formless thing, without set or defined purpose."⁷ Nevertheless, the N.F.L.A. issued 50,000 posters to the mob in Nov. 1910 election, and one million leaflets, and sent out 200 "non-Union working men speakers to advance our views in industrial constituencies", and advise workers to vote Conservative.⁸

1. ibid. 5 Nov. 1907.

2. ibid. 15 Nov. 1907.

3. ibid. 21 Nov. 1907.

4. ibid. 26 Oct. 1909.

5. ibid.

6. W. Collison, Apostle of Free Labour, 1913, p. 98.

7. ibid., pp. 317, 319.

8. ibid. p. 283. Collison believed in the Conservatism of Lord Salisbury, and labelling all labour politicians as thieves and criminals he wrote (p. 322) "had (Salisbury) been alive, he would have driven the whole pack before him like cattle, the paltry Jews, the screaming Celts, and the money mongers who speak in the name of the Lord."

The Jan.1910 election was to be fought, said the local paper, on the issue of "A Socialist Budget vs Tariff Reform",¹ or, according to the national press "One million paupers and the Red Flag Chancellor."² The Daily Mail ran a series of ten articles against socialism,³ exposing the "murderers...butchers...and masters" of the French Revolution.⁴ Local politicians denounced socialism as a "German device, a foreign import."⁵ And the Liberals were but "Radical Socialists", spreading the usual "lies" and false promises.⁶

The propaganda was quite startling; socialists were to destroy the whole "cherished heritage" of "industry, of property, of monarchy, of Empire". Particularly to be singled out was the family, allegedly "an odious form of property."⁷ Marriage was to be destroyed and then would follow "the substitution of state control of children for parental care and responsibility."⁸

Unionists were supported by the employers; the Chamber of Commerce ran a continuing diatribe against socialism and

to be a socialist was to be suspect by the employers, but perhaps that mattered less in Northfield than elsewhere. 9.

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 3 Dec.1909.
 2. Daily Mail, 12 Oct.1909.
 3. ibid. 19-28 Oct.1909.
 4. ibid. 28 Oct.1909.
 5. Birmingham Daily Post, 6 Nov.1909: A. Steel-Maitland at Bordesley.
 6. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1910 B.R.L. collection A. Steel-Maitland speech.
 7. Straightforward, No.3, July 1914.
 8. ibid. No.2, June.1914.
 9. Northfield Ward Labour Party. A Short History 1904-54 (Unpublished typescript, B.R.L., anon). c 1954 f.5.

One will never know how many socialists were, like Tom Mann, sacked for their convictions.¹ And indeed, given the very wide Unionist definition of "socialism", witch-hunting could have been common.

It was through the assault on the loyalty and patriotism of "Radical-Socialists" that the Unionist's naval and military defence propaganda gained momentum and energy. But it was fed, at grass roots, by an increasing hatred of Germany and this in turn, rested upon the fear of German economic supremacy so evident in Tariff Reform propaganda. Indeed, even Home Rule was threaded to this, through the strategic threat posed by an independent Ireland. The anti-German crusade began well before the Boer War; in its first year the Daily Mail was warning its readers that "the Keynote of modern Germany is militarism" and that there was a world danger "in the inherent brutality of the German character."² Sixteen 'eye-witness' articles, "under the Iron Heel" by George Warrington Steevens warned "Germany will keep her hands free to deal with us. Let us make no mistake about it. For the next ten years fix your eyes very hard on Germany."

Then in the Boer War, German newspapers published lists of alleged British atrocities to Boer women;³ British newspapers replied by publishing similar lists from the 1870 Franco-Prussian war headed "Gentle Germans".⁴ They also claimed that 300/600 Germans were joining

1. Tom Mann, Tom Mann's Memoirs, (Labour Publishing Co.), 1923, pp.49-50.

2. Daily Mail, 24 Sep.1897.

3. M. Express, 4 Jan.1902 ("filthy lies!")

4. ibid. 27 Nov.1901.

Boer troops every month.¹ The final rift of diplomatic relations was reached in January 1902, with Chamberlain's famous speech at Lodge Road, Birmingham, which was applauded loudly in the Press:²

I came to speak to you on non-political and non-controversial topics...We are going to discuss domestic business...We see every day, evidence that we are the most liberal nation the world has ever seen... that we are also the best hated, that other people are envious of us, that they libel us in the most outrageous, abominable, discreditable manner, that they misrepresent us, and that they gloat over what they think is our approaching downfall...We have the unfortunate feeling that we have to count on ourselves alone, and I say it is the duty of British people to count on themselves alone, as their ancestors did.

I say alone. Yes! in a splendid isolation, surrounded and supported by our kinsfolk. We are bound to make the sacrifices which are necessary to secure these results. Much as I deplore war, much as I regret the sufferings and the loss of life which war almost always (sic) entails, and brings in its train, I prefer war itself, with all its evils and its horrors, to a mean surrender of the position we have gained, and the rights and privileges we have inherited. 3.

This fine prediction of approaching Armageddon by the Colonial Secretary was carried boldly in all Unionist newspapers. The German Yellow Press screamed revenge; the German Chancellor attacked Chamberlain in a speech two days later, to which Chamberlain classically replied:

Gentlemen, what I have said I have said.
I withdraw nothing. I qualify nothing.
I defend nothing. 4.

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1. Midland Express, 30 Nov. 1901.
 2. This is quoted at length because it is so eloquently the point of a major rift in Anglo-German relations, upon which so much anti-Germanism developed.
 3. M. Express, 7 Jan. 1902.
 4. ibid. 13 Jan. 1902.

The newspapers agreed; Chamberlain had put "Von Buelow (sic) in his proper place", and there was talk of the "boastful Prussian rolling in the dust."¹ They echoed Chamberlain:

No one has slandered our troops more than the German; no one has encouraged the Boer in bloody strife more persistently than the German; no one has triumphed more in our defeats; no one has made less of our hard-won victories; no one is waiting more eagerly to take advantage of our triumph when the final effort of the war is made, and the curtain is rung down on the red drama in Africa...God send us a statesman big enough and bold enough to garner the harvest which has been watered by the blood of our soldiers. 2.

In May of that year began the theme that was to recur many tens of times down to 1914; an article entitled "Germans Hate Us" expanded upon the theme that "Germany is prepared to invade Britain."³ The anti-German crusade continued on to 1914, identifying as well, the German trade menace, naval menace, and military menace, and warning of Germany's impending seizure of African colonies. It was led by Northcliffe controlling the Daily Mail (and influencing the Times under Walter after its acquisition by Northcliffe⁴), and Leo Maxse of the National Review. Although Maxse's circulation was small, his Review reached important people; of Maxse it was said "his fanaticism was transparently sincere. Without something to hate he would probably have been miserable."⁵ The

1. E. Wingfield-Stratford, Victorian Aftermath 1923, pp.65/6.

2. Midland Express, Feb.5, 1902.

3. ibid. May 29.1902.

4. The Times had been anti-German for some years, and its "authoritative sources" showed German war preparations in a far from friendly light. When bought by Northcliffe, its editor was told he would be allowed unrestricted control "unless he should fail to warn the British people of the coming German peril. I insist on that duty being discharged" (Northcliffe to Times assistant manager in Pound and Harmsworth, op.cit. p.327).

5. E. Wingfield-Stratford, op.cit. p.70.

deterioration of relations between the two countries was thus in part due to the battles between the German and British Yellow Presses; in part it was due to the propaganda of the respective Navy Leagues (and Germany's was particularly influential) and other militant groups like the British National Service League. In part it was due to the efforts of the Tariff Reform League. In part it was due to periodic studies commissioned by the newspapers which showed just how much more efficient at everything Germany had become than Britain - production, housing, conditions of work, - indeed this respect often bordered on fear. But principally the deterioration of foreign relations was due to the instability of the power struggle between an established Imperial power and one struggling for European hegemony.

This struggle was summarised in the intense naval competition between the two countries.¹ Following German Naval Acts of 1898/1900, Germany had launched 14 battleships and laid down 12 more in the period 1900-05. Much reported in the newspapers, the clear threat of invasion was dramatised in novel form, beginning with August Niemann's "Der Weltkrieg; Deutsche Träume" (translated into English and entitled "The Coming Conquest of England"), and Erskine Childers' "Riddle of the Sands" - the prototype of many invasion stories later written.

In Dec/Feb 1905, a war scare that Britain was to invade originated in the German press. Both fleets concentrated in home waters and the Civil Lord of the Admiralty said tactlessly in public, that were war to be declared, Britain would "hit before the German public could

1. A.J. Marder, "From Dreadnought to Scapa Flow" (OUP) 1961. Information in the next several paragraphs is taken from this excellent study of British and German state papers.

read of it in the newspapers."¹ Germany experienced another scare in Nov.1905, and a report that "Fisher was coming" caused such a panic at Kiel in January 1907, that parents kept children away from school for two days, and the Berlin Bourse nearly closed.²

Germans were made aware, through their Press, that British admirals and generals were prepared for war; and Britons were made similarly aware of the threat from the Kaiser and his General staff. The 'Blue Water' school, led by Fisher, thought an invasion of Britain impossible whilst Britain maintained the two-power standard of naval supremacy. The B.D. Mail and 'Post at first supported this; and they attacked the Yellow Press's "popular love of sensationalism in raising scares" as a standing threat to peace.³ Lord Roberts' "Bolt-from-the-Blue" school envisaged a surprise attack on the coast by between 70-150,000 enemy supported by submarines. To repel such an attack required, not a Territorial Force, but a national conscript army. The National Service League, the centre of all these mens' hopes, was supported by the Birmingham Daily Gazette and (from 1904) nationally the Daily Mail.⁴

The first approach to war with Germany occurred in 1905, over the Kaiser's speech in Tangier, criticising French control of Morocco.⁵

1. Marder, op.cit. p.113.

2. Admiral Lord Kisher, First Sea Lord, to Lord Cawder for transmission to the Prime Minister, Balfour "Sir, if you want to smash up the German fleet, I am ready to do so now. If you wait five or six years, it will be a much more difficult job." (May.1905). Balfour declined this tempting invitation, to which Fisher replied "Very well, remember I have warned you". Marder, op.cit. p.113.

3. B.D. Mail, 11 Nov.1907.

4. Pound and Harmsworth, op.cit. p.326.

5. The purpose of which was to humiliate France, yet Britain supported France and Germany backed down. Great resentment then in Germany at what seemed to be British interference in German colonial designs.

Following this, contingency plans were laid for joint Anglo-French Continental operations against Germany,¹ details of which appeared in the German press in Oct.1905, along with hysterical demands for "punishing King Edward." The local newspapers dismissed all this as "yet another example of German arrogance."² What are quite confusing are the day by day changes in the attitudes of newspapers to the Kaiser himself - the Gazette, Express, Mail and Post - all at times said that he was quite insane, and yet at other times insisted "he has British blood in his veins and wears the uniform of a British Field-Marshal."³

But to Germany itself, there could be no doubt of newspaper attitudes. The increasing tension worried the Liberal Government, who reduced the Naval Estimates 1906/7, and again in Jan/Feb 1908. Yet the Germans had increased Krupps building programme in 1906, and Unionists led by Balfour claimed that by 1911, Germany would have 13 Dreadnought-class battleships to Britain's 12.

The mood of people in Britain became increasingly navalist as the Daily Mail, Times, Telegraph, Observer, Standard and all of Birmingham's daily newspapers campaigned for six new Dreadnoughts. Private intelligence available to Northcliffe through sources like F.W. Wile in Berlin, showed intensive activities at Krupps and the British public were thus informed. They learnt too, of the anti-British ravings of the German

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1. Fisher did not trust Alliances like this, and refused to comply with the 1906 war plan. He urged instead, the immediate smashing of the German fleet. Marder, op.cit. p.116-9.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, 12 Oct.1905: Editorial.
 3. Midland Express, 27 Jan.1902: the Kaiser's birthday.

Naval League. Thus was born the 1909 'Naval Scare', led by the Daily Mail's phrase "We want eight, and we won't wait." The Liberal Government eventually conceded eight, spurred by the news of Austrian and Italian building plans.

The Scares though continued, reinforced by William le Queux's "1912, Invasion of Endland", National Service League propaganda, and a host of plays and playlets. 6500 German spies were alleged to be in Britain, and Lord Roberts claimed 80,000 German Reservists were living here.¹ One newspaper "discovered" thousands of German rifles in a cellar at Charing Cross. On 8 May.1909, the Fleet began mobilisation upon a report that German Naval Reservists in London had been ordered to report back to Germany.

The January 1910 election again raised the ghost. Led by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, embittered at being ousted as Admiral of the Home Fleet and standing as Unionist Parliamentary candidate for Portsmouth, it was supported by a similarly embittered ex-manager of the Coventry Ordnance Works (H.H. Mulliner) whose correspondence of confidential information to the press became voluminous. On Dec.13, 1909, Robert Blatchford's "Germany and England" articles began in the Daily Mail:

Germany is deliberately preparing to destroy the British Empire...Germany is prepared to attack us because we stand in the way of her ambitions...World-domination! Conquest!... Germany will "strike-out" at the first sign of danger. She regards world domination as her destiny, and is ready to "strike-out" for it... The danger is very great and very near"... 2.

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1. Marder, op.cit. pp.179-187. See R. Roberts, Classic Slum...p.145, on how "Germans who came to 'work'" were supposed to be spotted by a special button worn in the lapel.
 2. Daily Mail, 13 Dec.1909.

Germany acts, we talk. Words count for nothing in the game of blood and iron. Arm or surrender; fight for the Empire or lose it. We can choose our alternative; no middle course is open to us. 1.

These articles continued to Dec.23rd, and were then published as a 1d pamphlet of which 1.6 million copies were sold and a further 250,000 were given away.²

All over the land, the Cassandra chorus was heard and soon no Unionist speech was complete without some reference to the gravity of the Naval situation. 3.

Thus Balfour, at a thirty-five minute oration at Henley spoke of "a struggle sooner or later between this country and Germany is inevitable and (according to the statesmen and diplomats of lesser European powers)...we are predestined to succumb."⁴ The Birmingham Gazette was "hawkish" throughout all the naval scares, but both the local 'Post and 'Mail changed attitudes frequently. In March 1909, the local 'Mail was attacking the German naval menace with two columns and a cartoon most days. From April to November 1909, it decided there was no danger;⁵ only a report in May that the Germans had carried out a mock invasion up the R. Humber upset its balance.⁶ By late

1. ibid. 16 Dec.1909.

2. ibid. 22 Jan.1910.

3. N. Blewett, op.cit. p.198.

4. Times, 5 Jan.1910.

5. e.g. Birmingham Daily Mail, 6 Apr.1909, 8 Nov.1909.

6. ibid. 11 May.1909.

December 1909, as the next crisis hatched, both 'Post and 'Mail volte faced again, warning readers that their "duty...in the present crisis" was to demand the "navy be strengthened."¹ All the scares were well supported by reports of speeches made by lesser known politicians in obscure areas of the Midlands, warning of (with hair-raising exaggeration) the "treachery" of Germany.²

To Northcliffe it was important people realised Germany's potential, the instability of its political leadership, and the direction of its foreign policy. Every German factory chimney was "a gun pointing at England". Yet on the brink of war, he imposed unofficial censorship.³ The public never knew during the Agadir crisis of German troop movements along the Rhine, of marshalling and patrolling of railway yards in Southern England, of the German Fleet in Scapa Flow. The scares themselves then were generated by statistical trivialities and speculative projections. It is doubtful whether Birmingham people were "scared", more likely confused by the political gyrations of their newspapers. Yet the great threat always loomed as a shadow. But if myths of German danger were generated, they were not the sole responsibility of the Unionists.

The Liberals too, were drawn into conceding the necessity of defence; indeed it was the Radical Lloyd-George who delivered the Parliamentary ultimatum over Agadir. And thus in one popular Liberal cartoon, a muscular John Bull announces:

1. ibid. 5 Jan.1910.

2. e.g. ibid. 15 Feb.1909, 20 Mar.1909.

3. Pound and Harmsworth, op.cit. p.423.

I'm not anxious to fight but never
felt fitter! Look at my arms. 1.

The Birmingham Labour movement's literature over the period, allocated sizeable space to 'Clarionish' defence policies. Certainly Blatchford was the most widely read of the socialist writers; besides his Daily Mail articles, his "Merrie England" sold over 2 million copies.² From this book and the "Clarion", many working class autobiographers claimed to have received socialist inspiration.³ Thus inspired by social imperialism, the S.D.F. writers in Birmingham journals proclaimed themselves "imperialists", in wishing to build up the stamina and national efficiency of the British people.

Let us have a sustained Imperialism
that will compel a citizen to be part
of its defence. We believe that every man
should learn to shoot, so that should any
attempt be made to invade our shores we
should be able to defend ourselves, but
on the other hand, let us resist the shoddy
Imperialism of Adventurers, Prospectors and
Company Promoters. 4.

A Standing Army was rejected as "the instrument of oppression and aggression in the hands of the dominant class."⁵ Others preferred "universal voluntary training in universal armament."⁶ The I.L.P. however, led by ~~Her~~ Hardie's "Labour Leader," opposed any arms expenditure, principally since it spent money which should have been used more wisely. Yet these latter attitudes

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1. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1910 B.R.L. f.2.
 2. L.V. Thompson, Robert Blatchford, Portrait of an Englishman 1957, and R. Blatchford, My Eighty Years, 1931, p.196, "Merrie England" was first published in 1894 at 1d, and 750,000 were sold in the first year. The "Clarion's" circulation in the late 1890's was said to be 60,000.
 3. J. Spenser Liney Breaks In, 1959 p.63.
 4. Labour Mail, August, 1906, Councillor William Parkes.
 5. Labour Mail, May 1907.
 6. ibid. See also Eldred Hallas, "Is Socialism Possible?" (Midland Socialist Pamphlets) 1903.

do not appear to have been voiced in local labour propaganda.¹ Indeed, the only anti-armaments pamphlet encountered in the Reference Library's collection was religiously framed, possibly the product of a Non-Conformist peace society of the Quakers or Primitive Methodists.²

In political propaganda then, the debate appears to have rested upon the most efficient method of defending Britain against Germany. The difference of opinion between conscriptionists and those advocating various home defence forces was based upon means, not ends.

Turning finally to the great clash between the Radicals and the House of Lords, it is perhaps difficult to see what nationalistic arguments could be mobilised to support the Liberal cause. Naturally, Unionist propaganda attacked the "peoples' budget" as pure socialism, it attacked the Irish connection as pure treason, and reasoned that the answer to social reform lay in Tariff Reform:

The Child's Answer:
Don't tax the land that grows the CHILDRENS' BREAD
but tax the foreigner who takes Dad's work
instead. 3.

The Liberal and Labour attack on the aristocracy would appear at odds with traditional nationalist "deferential" attitudes. Yet it was precisely in this clash that the Liberals developed upon the atavistic theme of "Free Born Englishman", giving life to the traditional and egalitarian patriotism of the seventeenth century Levellers, and Tom

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1. In the I.L.P. Conference in Birmingham though, the complete abandonment of all armed forces was advocated. See W.C. Anderson, Address to the I.L.P. Conference, Birmingham, 1911 B.R.L. 456467 p.4.
 2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1910 B.R.L. f.7. Anon.
 3. ibid. f.28. A Card, "Election Series No.19" issued in South Birmingham by the Imperial Tariff Committee.

Paine. It separated the "People" from the aristocratic "hangers on" - as symbolised in one colourful poster where John Bull is seen battling with a Peer - "Whose England Shall It Be?"¹ It anticipated a new national socialism in the struggling identity of the "People":

(To the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne')
 Too long, too long our land has borne
 The Peers' despotic sway,
 Their insults, contumely and scorn
 Their words and acts display,
 The people's voice, the people's will,
 They treat with selfish pride,
 For their own order striving still,
 Unheeding aught beside. 2.

To assist in a nationalistic perception of their cause, cartoons eagerly painted the peers with distinctively Jewish and foreign features. The "people" included both bourgeoisie and proletariat, united and purposeful.

Unlike all of the other issues examined, this last did not critically rely upon the appeal of the nationalist myth. Indeed the clash between nationalism and social reform in policies 1902-10 was both climaxed and accommodated in this issue, for in the Liberal propaganda an attempt was made to marry together these apparent opposites.

In conclusion then, about half the business in Boer War elections oriented on the war itself, with Unionists attacking the loyalty of the opposition, and with Liberal and Labour candidates both eulogising the conduct of soldiers and speciously justifying the defence of Uitlander liberties. The initial crowd celebrations and newspaper idiocies gave way to an increasing disillusion; local elections became less involved in war irrelevancies.

1. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1910 B.R.L. f.8.

2. ibid. f.7.

From 1902-14, new nationalist myths were mobilised by the Unionists and their associated pressure groups, and these too formed an important part of Liberal and Labour propaganda. Indeed, there appears to have been a general assumption by propagandists of all political shades of opinion, that a certain level of latent nationalism naturally existed among working people. It was their role to reinterpret political policies to mesh with and extend that nationalistic opinion.

The propaganda sought to relate this nationalist myth to the physical realities of unemployment, poverty, housing and general life expectations of the working class; it formed a significant part of the political education of the newly enfranchised in Birmingham.

The nationalist myth presumed the nation to be under attack or threat of attack; such an assumption gave immeasurable force to arguments. From without came the attack by foreign "dumpers" calculatedly taking the working man's job, causing unemployment, wage reductions and poverty. At the same time, that foreigner grew bigger, augmenting his army and navy, increasing his Empire, and waiting his chance to attack. Poised on the fringes of our shores too were the disloyal Irish nationalists, hating Britain, encouraging the deaths of worker-soldiers, and consorting with our American economic enemies. From within came threats of the unrestricted import of foreign labour, posing not only economic but distinctively ethnic and cultural malice, and the propaganda expanded this in awful detail. From within too, came the attack by socialism, a "German made canker" breaking up families and jobs, insulting monarchy, ignoring religion, abandoning Empire. If things were bad now, people were told, consider the dreadful anarchy of socialism.

The nationalist myth extended to solutions: "Treat the Foreigner As

He Treats Us"; "War Against the Foreign Foe"; consolidate and increase our defensive forces; keep out miserable foreign "wastrels"; build up and consolidate the Empire to provide riches for all, and perhaps somewhere, like South Africa, to send surplus unemployed; stamp out socialism, conform, and support whole heartedly Imperialist Unionism to preserve the great British culture.

The nationalist myth invaded the propaganda of the Liberal and Labour parties and attendant pressure groups. In answer to Tariff Reform, men were reminded by the Free Traders of German black bread and horse flesh. The attack on Chinese labour scorned the pigtail, bemoaned the loss of Imperial employment possibilities for British artisans, slandered the Jewish Rand magnates, and suggested Chinese alien immigrants were en route to Britain. The record of all parties over the anti-alien controversy, as will be shown, was not measurably better than the Unionists; the myth of the alien had too strong a hold. Nor did either party in Birmingham champion the cause of pacifism, but supported in varying degrees the necessity for national defence, and increasingly national defence against Germany. In Birmingham, nearly all candidates refused to be associated with Home Rule. And they were sensitive to Tory allegations of anti-patriotism, which they were normally quick to deny.

The rationale of the nationalist myth of course, did not support all of the Liberal and Labour policies. It proved difficult to stretch it in support of Budget proposals, Old Age Pensions and artisan housing. It was totally inappropriate to the Trade Union legislation debates over the Taff Vale and Osborne judgements. Yet it must be accounted an important aspect in these parties' electoral appeals.

The impression is that the myth was more effectively mobilised in support of Liberal and Labour policies down to about 1910, as a defensive ploy to the fiercely nationalist bias in Unionist propaganda. But from 1910, with the national collapse of tariff reform and growing labour agitation, the appeal of this sort of propaganda was gradually becoming inappropriate and being discarded by Liberal and Labour, in favour of the arguments of social reform.

The years 1899-1914 were then the ideological battleground of nationalism and imperialism against social radicalism. The national picture saw the eventual ascendancy of the latter ideology, but the appeal of the former was clearly large as seen in the national voting figures. And the educational efforts of the myths so created in this violent and unscrupulous battle of propaganda machines no doubt remained long after.

Chapter 9

Political Aspects (4): Anti-Alienism.

Anti-Alienism, although a policy directly associated with the Unionist party, achieved support right across the political spectrum. The various movements to restrict Jewish immigration originating in the 1890's, appear to have reassumed importance with the twin events of an upswing in unemployment and the shock of military setbacks in 1900. They receded into insignificance with the passing of the Tory 1905 Aliens' Act, but were dragged out again as bogeys in the 1906 election.

Birmingham's Jewish population was about 5,000,¹ of which at least 1100² were first-generation Russians and Poles and of which a further 250 were casual paupers, not registered by the Census as resident in Birmingham.³ They were but a fraction of the 250,000 Jews who settled in Britain for a short period at least, between 1870 and 1914, and their communities have recently become a major source of historical interest.⁴ Jewish poor settled mainly in St. Thomas,

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1. Birmingham Hebrew Congregation Year Book, Annual Report of the Chevra Kedusha, Feb. 1907, p.32.
 2. Census 1911 loc.cit. Chap.27.
 3. Royal Commission on Alien Immigration 1903 Vol.IX, Cd 1742 (Minutes) q 16605. In 1901, 290 "old cases" of paupers in Birmingham, 236 "new cases - of whom most were professional beggars, persons in search of work, those who wish to try their luck in a new locality", and were included in the Census returns of other towns.
 4. More recently B. Gainer, The Alien Invasion 1972; J.A. Garrard, The English and Immigration 1880-1910 (OUP) 1971. See also V.D. Lipman, Social History of the Jews in England (Cambridge) 1964, and P. Foot, Immigration and Race in British Politics. 1965. Two useful local studies are: E. Krausz, Leeds Jewry (Cambridge) 1964, A Levy History of the Sunderland Jewish Community, 1956.

St. Martin and St. Davids, within half a mile south and West of the Bull Ring; there they established Hebrew schools, a synagogue and Kosher food suppliers.¹ The new immigrants who arrived 1890-1914 had fled from successive pogroms in Russian and Poland; these movements were given particular emphasis by the Kishiniev Massacres and consequent persecutions of May.1903.² They arrived in poverty, unable to speak English, frequently unhealthy and unaware of Western customs. Many were unskilled and were quickly absorbed into low class tailoring, shoemaking and rag-picking.

The new immigrants found a total lack of sympathy from the major political parties or in the newspapers. One Birmingham newspaper campaign analysed at length below most adequately summarises the components of the anti-alien message.

It began in 1901 with a cartoon entitled "Undesirable Imports" illustrating the disease carrying propensity of the "undesirable riff-raff and pauper sediment of other countries."³ The newspaper proclaimed, echoing a general belief, that the prominence it was to give to the "alien menace...received the emphatic approval among the working classes and all others who knew how the shoe pinches...Nobody has a word to say for the unrestricted admission of the rubbish...the rag, tag and bobtail

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1. Special Housing Inquiry 1914 Birmingham Corporation p.86; evidence of S. Jacobs, Secretary to Hebrew Board of Guardians.
 2. J.A. Garrard, op.cit. pp.40-41; L.P. Gartner, The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914 (1960 and 1973), p.46.
 3. Midland Express, 20 Nov.1901.

for which other nations have no use." The East End particularly was filled with unpatriotic foreigners who hated and despised Britain...

they are of no use...criminals, political agitators and anarchists, sweaters, idle and fruitful propagators of disease, vermin and filth...They might as well sanction the free importation of diseased cattle, hydrophobic dogs, or the germs of cholera and plague.. 1.

All this introduced two articles by Arnold White,² who announced that

the destitute alien,..the burgling alien, the corrupt alien, the diseased alien, and the pauper alien still pour into this country (We shall soon be full with) an unclean crowd of moneylenders, middlemen, peddlars, idlers, professional charity hunters, beggars, tailors, furdressers and sweated bootmakers from Wilna, Cracow, Kieff...and other Russian towns where stenches and dirt are not unpopular with the inhabitants. 3.

These foreigners were altogether different, hardly human. They could live on a "soused herring, a piece of black bread, a few gherkins, a drink of water, and be content with the slimiest cellar infested with vermin." Indeed there was a conspiracy by their fraternity to become Census enumerators and disguise their true numbers from the census returns. Unless the government did something soon, the "people would take matters into their own hands." The Jewish communities only lived apart because

1. ibid. Nov 24.1901; other leaders on 22nd and 23rd similar.

2. One of the most vehement, articulate and capable anti-Semites of the period. His first organised group (1886) "Society for the Suppression of Immigration by Destitute Aliens", was, as all his future groups, supported by the right wing of the Tory Party, including Meath, Beresford and Sir Howard Vincent.

3. Midland Express, Nov 24, then Nov 25.1901.

they look down upon us, they despise us and habitually refer to us in a language which should not be employed on British soil towards British citizens.. Their highest ideal is to become a money lender and parasite on British soil. 1.

Powerful stuff indeed; the next day another article introduced the idea that a Jewish financial conspiracy was plotting to import even more Jews into Britain.

This sort of propaganda repeated to a greater or lesser degree in all the Birmingham papers, and most national dailies other than the Daily News, reflected graving political agitation for restriction of immigration. Agitation had first begun during the late 1880's and 1890's following Bismarck's expulsion of Poles from Prussia in 1886, but was rejected by various select committees of the 'Commons and the Lord's. Despite three anti-alien resolutions by the T.U.C. (1892, 1894, 1895) and a Tory amendment in Parliament to restrict alien immigration (1894 - defeated 234/119), the Liberal Government resisted the pressure. In the late 1890's, with falling unemployment and the upswing from the Great Depression, with the Irish Home Rule crisis and then wars in South Africa and China, the whole question was forgotten; two Private Member's Bills of Jan.1897 and July.1898 were given little publicity.²

From 1901, Russian expulsions from Rumania quickened, and at the same time unemployment figures swung up; agitation became renewed. The Boer War, in its neurotic patriotism, gave added impetus to anti-Alien propaganda. Jews could be accused of cowardice and of disloyalty:

1. ibid. Nov 25.1901.

2. J.A. Garrard, op.cit. pp.24-46.

Did they find the foreigner to whom they had given shelter helping them to fight their battles at Spion Kop or Colenso? (Applause) Did they find them becoming naturalised British subjects? 1.

Conversely, opponents of the war could fashionably quote the names of the Jewish Rand magnates, for whom it seemed the war was being fought.

In 1903, Joe Chamberlain added his support, reviving the long standing connection between anti-Alienism and Protection. Thus Chamberlain reiterated

you must in all cases treat the two subjects of Tariff Reform and protection of labour as being on the same level. 2.

Outside Parliament a number of organisations were formed, for instance by the Pall Mall Gazette - the Pink Ribbon League, whose avowed intent was to keep out the scourge of "leathsome wretches who come grunting and itching to our shores."³ In the East End a right wing working class movement, the "British Brother's League" attracted up to 6000 people at its active meetings. Born of an energetic ex-Indian army major, William Eden Evans-Gordon in 1901, it was formed into "sections" of 100 men and "wards" of ten sections. It had no oaths, exacted no fees or dues. Its packed and overflowing audience was marshalled by 260 brawny dockers who also dealt summarily with protesting aliens. Sections

1. Eastern Post, May 11.1901; see B. Gainer op.cit. p.54.

2. "We've had too much of sweating Jews/Our trades they've ground to dust/So pause awhile before you lose/All else to Alien Lust//Free Trade has left you in the street/Now help with all your might/For "Joe" won't cheat, there's "food to eat"/when he's won the Fiscal Fight. Eastern Post, Jan 7. 1905.

3. B. Gainer, op.cit. pp.142, 148. J.A. Garrard, op.cit. pp.38/39. The Primrose League also got involved, and organisations like "Radical Working Men" and the "British Brothers League" - the latter was the most influential. Account of this organisation following is taken from B. Gainer op.cit. pp.67-73.

would march to meetings, led by banners and patriotic marches. Inside, national songs and imperialistic choruses were sung to emphasise the "Britishness" of the League, and to encourage 'esprit-de-corps'. Harangued by Tory M.P.'s and rabble raisers, the crowds could be whipped to a near frenzy, uttering cries of "wipe them out" etc. In the first eighteen months of its life, the League collected 45,000 signatures in the East End of London, and its branches spread to Leicester, Bradford and Kettering. Even the middle class began to join - Marie Corelli, Conan Doyle, M.P.'s, clergy and other public men. But its chairman, James Johnson, was a labourer.

A Royal Commission under Lord James¹ reported 5-2 in favour of restriction in 1903 and in 1904 (in the face of further pressure from East End groups) an unworkable Bill was introduced, but was 'talked out' by Liberals. Nearly losing the Mile End bye-election in 1905, the Tory Party decided to force through an Alien's Act; fearful of losing support from the rich Jews who contributed to its funds, the Act was comparatively mild in its operation. The Bethnal Green Conservative Club celebrated the occasion with a massive display of fireworks, bonfires and 10,000 telegrams.

In deciding which horse to back as it were, the Labour party and other left-wing movements were "balanced on a knife edge."² It was generally believed that the working class were anti-Alien,³ but anti-

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1. Royal Commission on Alien Immigration 1903: Report Cd 1741, Minutes of Evidence Cd1742, Analysis Cd1743, Appendix Cd1741-1(1904).
 2. J.A. Garrard, op.cit. pp.9/10.
 3. T.U.C. Resolutions 1892, 94, 95 (loc.cit.) Howard Vincent's 50,000 signature "working man's petition" of 1905 (J.A. Garrard, op.cit. p.54) Reynolds News continually volte-faced on this from 1895-1905 (ibid. p.7).

alienism was hardly in sympathy with the fraternalistic principles of socialism. To be in particular anti-Semitic was anathema; and in all the newspaper propaganda and in the anti-immigration speeches of Labour, Liberal and Conservative politicians, and even in the Report of the James Commission, the word "Jew" was always studiously avoided. Agitators came very close to exploiting anti-Semitism directly, but also feared to be charged with it for anti-Semitism was a "disreputable activity possessing the same sort of reputation as witchcraft."¹ Only Arnold White and some of the more outspoken of the British Brother's League called aliens "Jews", but even White constantly denied his anti-Semitism before the Royal Commission.

Only the Liberals attempted significant Parliamentary opposition. Yet for the Liberals and for Labour, anti-Semitism in attacking the rich and wealthy Jews in Park Lane was quite acceptable. During the Boer War it was fashionable to quote the names of the Rand mineowners;² during the Chinese Labour controversies of the 1906 election, the same names came up again.

Thus the Liberal candidate for West Birmingham attacked the Aliens Act as a fraud "because it did not keep out the Aliens in Park Lane, who introduced slavery into South Africa."³ The Lib/Lab candidate for East Birmingham criticised his Tory opponent for "not only swallowing

1. ibid. p.57.

2. "Wierner, Abrahams and Beit/Sutro the Amaletite/Joseph, Joel, Judas Joses/ (claiming a descent from Moses)/Sturdy Britons to the core/Having manifold possessions/Naturally wanted more. Man in the Street, Feb.1902.

3. B.D. Mail, Jan 4.1906; speech by Mr. Outhwaite.

the Chinaman, pigtail and all, but the German-Jewgang as well."¹

The Jewish elders of Birmingham gave their electoral support to J.V. Stevens, Lib/Lab candidate for South Birmingham;

the epithets thrown at you openly,
or under disguise are probably still
in your memory viz "Scum" "Undesirables"
and other similar terms...Support J.V.
Stevens. 2.

- but Stevens still had to appeal to the rest of his working class electorate:

they were told that the Aliens Act would
prevent sweaters coming into this country -
nothing of the kind - it would prevent the
diseased, the criminals, but not alien
sweaters. 3.

Over in Edgbaston, the Liberal Lionel Holland was less concerned with unemployment, for his area had fewer working class voters; he was worried about other alien 'virtues':

What is the truth on the Aliens Question?
Are there not four things. English workmen
want to get rid of, Alien Crime, Alien Vice
and Disease, and Alien Sweating? (for the
Tory Aliens' Act...will not stop a single
undesirable Alien from landing in England. 4.

Thus both Liberal and Labour candidates in 1906 were tarred with the brush of anti-alienism. At Unionist meetings, applause was always

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1. ibid. 5 Jan.1906, James Holmes of the A.S.R.S. Capitalistic Jewry was always a legitimate target e.g. "The rich Jews who have conquered England mean poverty...our poverty" Forward (Rotton Park Socialists) Feb.1913 Vol.I. No. 8.
 2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L. Poster "To the Jewish voters of Birmingham" written in both English and Hebrew, c.1906.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 4 Jan.1906.
 4. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L. "What do you think; some notes for an Edgbaston elector." p.15.

allegedly loudest when the Act was mentioned, and the newspapers carried cartoons showing Balfour protecting honest artisans from dirty Jews.

Immigrant Jews were set apart at work and in housing. At work, skilled Jewish locksmiths, coachbuilders and blacksmiths found "some little jealousy and prejudice" among the Birmingham working class, and such occupations were not open to them.¹ Indeed the local skilled-worker Trades Council sent a resolution to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, that "legislation is urgently needed to prevent the unrestricted immigration of destitute aliens into this country."² Thus immigrants worked in sweatshop trades, even more unpopular with the indigenous working class for these drove down wage rates.³ To the Jews though, the sweat-shops were said to give each piece-worker

individualistic illusions...his, to all appearances, 'his own master'. He is entitled to demand as much as he can produce...(of the boss) 'He is one of us' is the feeling...4.

In Birmingham "practically every street had its public house where men sat the whole evening to escape the home."⁵ Of the 2030 pubs,⁶ the greater number were in the poorer areas - those areas including the immigrant communities.

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1. Special Housing Inquiry, 1914, (Birmingham Corporation) Evidence of S. Jacobs, q.1127.
 2. Birmingham...Trades Council Annual Report 1903, p.5.
 3. L.P. Gartner, The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870-1914. 1960, p.93. 66 'sweatshops' in Birmingham in 1888 alone.
 4. W. Goldman, East End My Cradle 1940, pp.113-4.
 5. V.W. Garratt, Man in the Street, 1939, p.65.
 6. Birmingham Daily Post 31 Jan.1907. St. Mary-ratio of pubs to inhabitants, 1:177, St. George 1:239, Saltley 1:1822. Special Housing Inquiry, 1914. p.296.

But the Jews in these areas were mostly abstainers:

for Gentiles this established beyond doubt the miserliness of the Jew. Our people were unmoved by their contempt. To us they were obscene animals who squandered hard-earned money that should have been spent on their homes. 1.

Due to the querulousness and drunkenness of their neighbours, Birmingham Jews kept "as far as possible to themselves."² Their peculiar food and cooking smells, and religious practices set them apart too. And it was in this sort of atmosphere that myths grew. One given strong credence was that Jews would only stand upon toilet seats previously used by Gentiles, and were thus responsible for the filthy state of toilets in racially mixed courts, (like Inge Street) for example.³ Friction was always present in small measure, but seeming ever ready to burst into more violent confrontation. Birmingham Jews complained of "objectionable street cries e.g., 'I had a bit of pork' and similarly objectionable actions and attitudes, crossing the fingers and spitting over them as a passing Jew."⁴ In Salford the Jews were said to pose the menace of hungry foreigners seeking a share in charities...Old Jews who strayed into the village were driven out at once. 5.

On the music hall stage, the Fagins and Shylocks, the Jewish pawnbrokers and unprincipled Jewish businessmen were all seen to creep

1. W. Goldman, op.cit. p.21.

2. Special Housing Inquiry 1914: S. Jacobs, q.1096.

3. ibid. Evidence of A.T. Wallis, organiser of working-mens' adult education classes, pp.379, 386.

4. E.L. Levy, Birmingham Jewry 1870-1929 (Birmingham) 1929, p.52.

5. R. Roberts, Classic Slum, p.137.

loathsomely from the wings in many plays and playlets. They symbolised the grasping, mercenary, evil and cut-throat image of the Jew.¹

Birmingham Jewry was careful to avoid friction. "The police" reported the daily paper, "have had their eyes on the foreigners for many years" but they cause little trouble - "this fraternity looks after its own".² For all the Jewish immigrants that arrived in Birmingham were issued with sheets of regulations printed in English and Yiddish by the Hebrew Board of Guardians. They were ordered to clear rubbish, not to inhabit bad rooms, take frequent baths, change underclothes, not to oversleep people in one room, to keep windows open at night, and to respect the landlord's property. It took "some little schooling and pressure to get them up to English ideas and requirements" but until they came up "to the standard of cleanliness and healthiness required by the law and common sense" they were refused any assistance including Jewish Poor Relief by their Guardians, and the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society.³ This discipline and social control exercised by the community elders was designed and intended to avoid at all costs, friction and tension with the indigenous working class.

Our parents constantly reminded us:
One bad Jew gets the whole race into
trouble. The Gentiles don't judge us
by the best but by the worst among us. 4.

The Jews showed a more profound respect for the law than the rest

1. Developed in Chapter 15.

2. B.D. Mail Jan 1.1906.

3. Special Housing Enquiry (1914), evidence of S. Jacobs, loc.cit.

4. W. Goldman, op.cit. p.19.

of the working class.¹ In the destitute areas, policemen needed to walk in pairs. Large numbers of working people were locked up for drunkenness²; large numbers of police were assaulted in return.³ Perhaps policemen were viewed by the indigenous community as working men who had deserted their own culture and returned to enforce bourgeois values. In a sense, it is possible that worker perceptions of immigrants and police were similar, for both were immediate obvious and alien intrusions into working class society.

There began efforts to Anglicise (perhaps bourgeoisify) the immigrant culture. The Jewish Lads' Brigade for instance, formed upon the muscular Christianity of the Church Lads Brigade, taught Jewish boys to be "orderly, clean, self reliant and manly."⁴ Some of its Birmingham officers were in the Territorial Force, and it engaged in military manoeuvres. Other sorts of clubs with a similar aim sprung up in London.⁵

It is in the close social control by the elders of the community, rather than through evidence of violent hostility in Birmingham, that one must seek the true relationship between the Jews and the working class. From the "instruction sheets", "keeping to themselves", to the

1. ibid. pp.17-18.

2. 1904: 4138 locked up drunk. Birmingham Police Court Mission Annual Report, 1904, p.2.

3. 1890-99, 4462 charged with assault on the police Birmingham Daily Post, 30 Jan.1900.

4. Year Book of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation 1913, VII, Report of the J.L.B. (1911-12) p.112.

5. L.P. Gartner, op.cit. pp.174-5.

Jewish Lads Brigade, the elders were clearly aware of the evident tensions; without this control, the epithets and occasional brawls might have degenerated into the violent confrontations so common in London.¹ The Jews trod softly; the spectre of working class racial violence was always just round the corner.

The Irish community did not live under this pressure, though at one time it probably had done. In the mid-nineteenth century they had been in much the same situation as the Jews of the 1900's. Dispossessed, starved and diseased

we were battered, threatened, elbowed
back to the door of our kennel amid boos
and jeers and showers of small missiles. 2.

But Warwickshire was an area of declining Irish settlement in the latter nineteenth century, unlike Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow (where 22%, 13% and 18% of the population were Irish born).³ By 1901, the number of Irish in Birmingham was less than 1% of the total population,⁴ living in St. Mary's⁵ and St. Bartholomews,⁶ - the two poorest wards. The Irish Roman Catholic immigrants in all northern cities formed, according to Roberts,

the lowest socio-economic stratum.
A slum Protestant marrying into the
milieu suffered a severe loss of face. 7.

-
1. 'James Commission Cd 1742 min.9389-90. Regular Saturday evening beatings being meted out to Jews "by the boys".
 2. Tom Barclay, Memoirs and Medleys. Autobiography of a Bottlewasher. (LEICESTER) 1934, p.5.
 3. E.H. Hunt, op.cit. pp.292/4.
 4. J. Denvir, Irish in Britain, 1959, pp.417,422.
 5. B.D. Mail, Jan 1.1906.
 6. Labour Mail, Oct.1906.
 7. Roberts, op.cit. pp.8/9.

Birmingham Irish however, appear to have been somewhat more intermixed and intermarried than was usual.¹

It is clear many lived in poverty as casual and unskilled labourers, indulging in the drinking and wifebeating common in the poorer areas. "The men considered it a traditional duty to beat their wives...and the wives...traditional to accept..."² But other than a few drunken brawls, the only evidence of actual friction in Birmingham between communities, is that it at times existed between Protestant and Catholic schools. Gang fights would occur infrequently, involving whole schools, bricks, buckles and blood.³ One Catholic boy, the son of a skilled artisan living in Selly Oak

was genuinely scared because so many of them (the older boys) were antagonistic to my Catholicism. 4.

As with the Jews, the leaders of the Catholic community - the Church - were concerned to socialise the Irish into British society. Thus as noted above,⁵ children could receive deliberate education into British nationalism. Mercurial Irish were known to have fed the flames of political activism among labour movements;⁶ again the Church exercised strong control. Its magazines carried long, arrogantly dogmatic, didactic and often pedantic anti-socialist articles, accusing for instance the

1. Denvir, loc.cit.

2. Pat O'Mara, Auto-biography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy, 1934, p.34.

3. James Spenser, Liney Breaks In 1934, p.13.

4. ibid. p.4.

5. Chap.4.

6. T. Bell, Pioneering Days, 1941, pp.26-8.

T.U.C. of meandering towards "the dangerous tendency to go beyond its briefs."¹ Indeed

if every Briton would only realise that he is an essential unit in the wellbeing of the nation...and the glory of his country...half the difficulty would be smoothed away. 2.

The answer to social problems lay in "Catholic Moral (i.e. Social) Reform"³ led by the Church. Trade Unions were filled with "cranks". Marx was but "a German renegade Jew."⁴

The Church promoted a number of intellectual movements, inspired by the Jesuits, to discredit Marxism (and particularly "its materialist conceptions of history"). Thus in 1906 a Jesuit priest, John Wheatley, began the "Catholic Socialist Society" in Glasgow, which gained a large following among young Catholic workers and kept them out of the mainstream of militant activism.⁵

The reaction of the Birmingham working class to the Irish who lived among them could not have been profoundly different from their reaction to others who lived in the poorest parts of town. To some extent they formed the lowest social strata, tended to congregate together, and were particularly set apart by their religion. Culturally and racially they were not much different - the Jews replaced them as whipping-boys,

1. Birmingham and District Catholic Magazine Aug.1914, p.763.

2. ibid. July.1912 pp.277-8.

3. ibid. p.287.

4. ibid. Aug.1914. p.763. "Capital and Labour. It is a crime to divorce them; it is a sin for one to take away the rights of the other, and it is a lie to tell men that all the goods of the world are due to labour". Ibid. June.1912, p.244.

5. T. Bell, op.cit. pp.78/80.

and they posed no great threat to jobs or living standards.¹

The third identifiable community were the Italians. The census shows only 280 first-generation in Birmingham,² but this is probably an underestimate. Italians were known to be illicitly bringing over children to use them as sweated labour;³ again, the high birth rate would probably mean that, with a second generation, the community would be much larger.

The community lived in St. Bartholomews;⁴ only four of them were enfranchised.⁵ They were the colourful characters of the local society, and their ice-cream carts and barrel organs appear in nearly every working class biography. They were set apart by their eccentricity:

"Wy, even 'ere in Mugsborough" chimed in Sawkins - who though still lying on the dresser had been awakened by the shouting - "We're overrun with 'em! Nearly all the waiters and the cook at the Grand Hotel where we was working last month is foreigners!"

"Yes," said old Joe Philpott tragically, "and there's all of them Hitalian horgin grinders, an' the blokes wot sells 'ot chestnuts; an' wen I was goin' 'ome last night I see a lot of them Frenchies sellin' hunions, an' a little wile afterwards, I met two more of 'em comin' up the street with a bear!" 6.

-
1. Except in their role as "roughs" to break up meetings (see above Chap.7 on Lloyd George's meeting), and as paid strikebreakers. The National Free Labour Association was alleged to have used large numbers of Irishmen in the 682 actions - most major, and most of which it won - all over Britain 1893-1913. W. Collison, Apostle of Free Labour, 1913.
 2. Census, 1911, loc.cit.
 3. B.D. Post, Jan 5.1907. Court case of Frank Melvisi, organ grinder's son found sleeping rough on canal bank.
 4. Labour Mail, Oct.1906.
 5. B.D. Mail, Nov 1.1905.
 6. R. Tressell, op.cit. p.22.

Occasional friction was inevitable. One Italian boy found

I was a boy like the rest of the boys, and
I was so unfortunate that I was chased
about and spat at and treated like a
wild beast - all because I was a foreigner. 1.

Indeed in Wigan, where an Italian had in self defence, killed a local knife sharpener, thousands of people "armed with sticks, bottles, bricks, stones and anything they could get hold of" set upon wandering Italian troupes at the time, intent on "killing these murderous Italians."²

In Birmingham, four Italians (two of whom could speak no English) were accused of attempting to murder two Englishmen. One of the Englishmen had asked what "brought those foreigners over here." The Italians, apologizing that they had done no wrong, were challenged to a fight and called "Italian bastards"; knives, and later a flat iron were said to have been used in self-defence.³ Again then, the tension was just under the surface, waiting upon any excuse to burst forth. Luckily the Italians were too small and amusing enough a community to trouble the indigenous population overmuch. Like the Irish, they too would have been subjected to Catholic social control.

What, finally, of coloured people? From 1900-14, the black population of England was

miniscule and fragmented...depressed
people,, eking out a living on the
poverty-stricken fringes of society,

formed of music hall comics, acrobats, mulatto sailors and demobbed soldiers from West Indian regiments.⁴ A Parliamentary committee found the communities

1. Cagliardo Coraggioso, Wandering Minstrel (OUP) 1938, p.37.

2. ibid. pp.75/76.

3. B.D. Mail, July 19.1899.

4. J. Walvin, Black and White. The Negro and English Society 1555-1945 (1973) pp.202-205.

in London, Bristol, Cardiff, Hull, Liverpool, West Hartlepool and Glasgow to be suffering blatant discrimination.

To intellectuals, the Darwinian theory of polygenesis combined with Spencerian theories of natural selection and Benjamin Kidd's "Social Evolution", underlined the important differences between racial groups and supported the belief of survival of the fittest. By dubious measurements of skull size, jaw angle and physical structure, the mental and moral superiority of the white races could be definitively proved.¹ A profound cultural ignorance overlay all this - thus Encyclopaedia Britannica

No full blooded negro has ever been distinguished as a man of science, a poet or an artist, and the fundamental equality claimed for him by ignorant philanthropists is belied by the whole history of the race throughout the historic period. 2.

It was as colourful oddities that the working class saw negroes; troupes of performing "darkies" visiting the courts, the "Black Mammy (An African Servant)" and "Pete (a Figaninny)" of the music hall stage.³ It was in this black caricature that the roots of popular racialism were formed; the moulded figure of the negro as a

swift, supple fellow, a merry hearted, grinning, dancing, singing affectionate kind of creature... 4.

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1. C. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race 1971 pp.207ff; B. Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform, 1960. Chap. on "Social Darwinism".
 2. Ency. Britt. XVII (1884) p.318 in C. Bolt op.cit. p.209.
 3. Metropole Posters, Aug 17.1908.
 4. Thos. Carlyle "Discourse on the Nigger Question" in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays 1872 vii p.86; Walvin op.cit. pp.160-171.

was compounded, with the "sexual, stupid, untrustworthy and violent" myth of eighteenth century slavery.

The negro could be regarded as something less than human - just like the Jew: one negro visiting Birmingham had his watch stolen and "another spat at me for a nigger".¹ But to other coloured people, working class individuals could show "rather a protective pity which sprang from half a century of appeals for support for foreign missions."²

Thus foreigners who lived among the working classes were always in a state of potential friction. The indigenous community was sensitive to ethnic, racial or cultural differences, the Irish people in this respect being the least noticed. It was alert to threats to its jobs, housing and living standards. The newspapers and political parties played no part at all in reconciling differences; in the case of the Jews they openly encouraged racialism. Racial myths were reinforced by caricature in working class entertainment. To avoid friction, the communities tended to have strict internal discipline and social control with strong roots in the promotion of nationalist ideas. No serious racial violence was therefore seen in Birmingham.

1. Rev. T.J. Bass, "Hope in Shadow Land" (BIRMINGHAM) 1903.

2. C Stella Davies, op.cit. p.186.

Chapter 10

Political Aspects (5) Voting,Power Groups and Political Society Membership.

At Parliamentary elections, voters had to be male and of 'full age' and to 'occupy' (either by way of residence or business) for a period of twelve months preceding the drawing-up of the Register in July, land or a tenement of a "clear yearly value of not less than ten pounds."¹ Alternatively, lodgers actually living in the same lodgings for a complete year were eligible, providing the lodging was rented unfurnished for at least £10 p.a. (c 3/10½d per week).² This excluded many for the average lodging rent in most provincial cities was 3/1½d.³ Owners of property worth over £15 p.a. were not required to reside in the constituency.⁴

Large numbers of potential voters were disqualified by the high removal rates in urban constituencies. Lodgers and others not placed on the register by rating had to apply in person at the hopelessly administered registration courts; working men could rarely spare the time. In consequence only 3.6% of the national electorate in 1910 were lodgers.⁵ Lunatics, aliens and those on Poor Relief could not vote,

1. Representation of the People Act (R.P.A.) 1884, 48 VICT CH.3 s.5.

2. R.P.A. 1867 30 + 31 VICT CH.102 s.4.

3. N. Blewett, British General Elections of 1910. U/pub. D. Phil Thesis, Oxford, 1967. p.656.

4. R.P.A. 1884.

neither could those bachelors living with parents and servants with employers. In Birmingham the total number of men over 21 years enfranchised was but 62.03%,¹ in Parliamentary elections.

Voters in municipal elections either had to qualify in respect of the "burgess" requirements, or the £10 "occupancy" requirements above.² "Burgesses" were those of full age, who for twelve months had been in joint or several occupation of a house or business premises in the borough, and had for twelve months resided in, or within 12 miles of the borough, had been rated for Poor Rates, and had paid all other rates if and when required.³ Aliens and those on Poor Relief were excluded, but women were given the vote from 1882.⁴ In the C.B. of Birmingham, in 1908, 13749 women were enfranchised - 13.5% of all voters, but only 8.92% of all women over 21 years - most probably businesswomen and the affluent ladies of Rotton Park, Edgbaston and Harborne.⁵ Lodgers were in theory excluded, unless they paid Poor Rates. The number of voters in the County Borough was inflated by business and shop owners residing outside but voting in Market Hall and St. Marys.

Thus the total number of men enfranchised in municipal elections

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1. in 1910. Census 1911 loc.cit.; Numbers of voters in Cd4975 (1910) lxxiii685, Parliamentary Constituencies - Electors.
 2. County Electors Act 1888. 51+52 VICT CH.10 s3.
 3. Municipal Corporations Act 1882. 45+46 VICT CH.30 s9.
 4. ibid. s63.
 5. 1908 (36+) xcii 533, "Return showing number of women in England and Wales who are qualified to vote for County Councils and for Councillors in Municipal Boroughs." Aston Manor had 1,866 women voters. Women could also be elected on to Borough and County Councils from 1907. 1907 (297) iv 57 cap 33. In the three wards noted the male to female ratio was 1:1.33 but in Birmingham generally it was 1:1.06.

was 62.26% over 21; although similar to the Parliamentary figure, it hides the business vote. In settled middle class wards, the percentage of the total adult population enfranchised was of course much higher than working class residential areas, and so too was this the case with 'higher' and 'lower' working class residential areas. In the central wards though, the figures were inflated by 'outside' voters particularly businessmen, and smallmasters. (Table 10.1, Column (b)).

Table 10.1 Estimated percentage of total adult population in selected wards enfranchised for municipal elections, 1902-10. (a) Residential areas (b) Central working class residential, and "business" wards.¹

	a		b
	%		%
Edgbaston and Harborne	42	Market Hall	87
Balsall Heath	31	St. Mary.	37
Saltley	26	St. Bartholomew	31
Nechells	19	Deritend	27

Therefore the disenfranchised included very many poor, most women, those regularly moving house and lodgers, and numbers of unmarried men living with parents or relatives. The electorate broadly represented the

1. 'Estimated' because (i) Figures for voters are drawn from the local press, who were rarely exact and who never printed all the figures each year - thus various figures printed 1902-10 have to be used.

(ii) Census (loc.cit.) 1911. County of Warwick, p.28, - not exact on the numbers aged 21 and above in wards; assumed at 64.37% of the ward population.

middle and lower-middle class, highly skilled and skilled men, and the more settled (therefore perhaps slightly older) semi-skilled.¹ Table 10.2 shows the numbers enfranchised by constituency; the numbers are again lower in predominantly working class areas, and the size of the business vote in Central Division is clear. It shows too that at Parliamentary elections, the turnout varied from 56% to 86% (though more normally, between 70-80%). Those not voting, besides the genuinely undecided, would have included groups of people with high removal rates and the potentially apathetic. The numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled people in the latter two categories is likely to have been much higher than the relatively more settled and perhaps articulate skilled workers and above.

Thus the voting preferences in working class constituencies and wards reflect skilled and some semi-skilled workers' votes, both by the system and the degree of intellectual involvement. These results inform generally about voters' acceptance or rejection of candidates based upon their individual personalities, their records, the records of their parties and those of the opposition, and expectations of the quality of future government.

1. To take a conjectural example: if 25% of adult Birmingham males were non-working class and most - say 23% - were enfranchised, then [62-23] the 39% remaining would be working class. This knits with calculations in Chapter I, where c 35% were skilled and highly skilled.

	% of Males 21 yrs. + enfranchised	% Turnout of Voters				Unionist % of Vote			
		1900	1906	1910	1910	1900	1906	1910	1910
				Jan.	Dec.			Jan.	Dec.
Birmingham North	59	-	71.8	68.9	-	-	80.4	84.0	-
Birmingham South	59	-	70.5	74.6	57.0	-	67.7	71.5	71.0
Birmingham East	59	59.9	78.0	86.0	68.0	63.8	52.6	68.0	67.5
Birmingham West	61	-	74.4	-	-	-	77.4	-	-
Birmingham Central	(75)	-	72.8	72.4	56.8	-	73.0	78.0	76.5
Bordesley	61	-	70.5	74.9	-	-	66.1	72.5	-
Aston	60	-	78.7	76.4	-	-	74.5	79.5	-
Edgbaston	66	-	78.3	81.0	-	-	70.1	73.6	-

Mean: 62.03

69.1 74.2 71.0

Table 10.2 Enfranchisement, Turnout and Unionist Voting in Birmingham
Parliamentary Elections 1900-1910.

In terms of candidates, "deference" was probably an important (though not exclusive) base for Unionist party voting. One recent study identified "deferentials" as those preferring leaders of superior social status; they would confirm the right of the traditional elite to govern, believing in their inherited capacities for leadership. They tend again, to accept the monarchy and aristocracy as legitimate and essential symbols of British nationhood. They regard the Tory Party as a national institution different from other kinds of political parties, and view Conservative social policies essentially as a consequence of the generosity of politicians of elite origins.

The study¹ measured deference as an important factor in about half of working class Tory voters. They found that older voters (44 years +) who were classified as 'lower working class', were more likely to be deferential and this they ascribed to the political ideas of voters some years ago, rather than ageing. If deference was at least as important in 1900-14 as in the 1960's, then it would partially explain the acceptance of the clutch of undynamic M.P.'s that represented Birmingham in these years. They included five aristocrats or beknighted men - Sir Henry Meysey-Thompson (Handsworth), Sir Benjamin Stone (East), Lord Morpeth (South), Sir Francis Lowe (Edgbaston) and Evelyn Cecil (Aston). For of all the M.P.'s, only two - Evelyn Cecil and Joseph Chamberlain - can be thought to have gained votes from the energy of their canvassing and the charisma of their personality. Cecil, second son of Lord Salisbury, barrister and educated at Eton and Oxford² fought tremendous campaigns in Aston in 1906 and 1910, and the attractive posters still extant evidence energy and originality. Chamberlain's fight in the 1906 election against lacklustre Liberal Mr. Outhwaite was a pure formality; in 1910, nobody bothered to oppose him.

But little can be boasted of the rest. Jesse Collins (Bordesley), although a long standing member of the caucus and ex-Mayor, was on his own admission poor at addressing urban audiences.³ Born in the West Country, his consuming interest in Parliament was the plight of the agricultural worker, and outside Parliament he was President and Founder

1. R. McKenzie and A. Silver, Angels In Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England. 1968 Ch.5, esp. pp.166-7. Also see I. Nordlinger Working Class Tories, 1964.

2. Aston and East Birmingham News, 6 Oct.1900.

3. J. Collings and C. Green, Life of the Rt. Hon. Jesse Collings 1920, pp.91,100,120,190.

of the Rural Labourers' League. Sir Benjamin Stone (East), as discussed above, was also a poor speaker, a bad organiser, and it was his failure to inspire party workers that explains the near defeat and collapse of party organisation in the 1906 election. J.T. Middlemore (North) appears to have held few meetings; described cynically as a "shadow of a shade...his intellect is virgin soil as regards the topics of party warfare",¹ his posters, were unimaginative and his appeal (having to guess from the few reports of his meetings) minimal. Lord Morpeth (South) also held few meetings, just producing pedestrian posters and propaganda.² Thus even the local 'Post reported five of his opponent's meetings (J.V. Stevens) in January 1906, but could only find one of Lord Morpeth's.³ Neither Ebenezer Parkes (Central) nor Sir Francis Lowe (Edgbaston) had much to fight for in these bourgeois safe seats.

It was partly because of this poverty of talent that Joseph Chamberlain attracted so much attention. If cynics could claim that

The worship of Mr. Chamberlain is quite extraordinary. I had thought there was some exaggeration about this. There is none. 4.

it was possibly because there was nobody else to be so revered. Of course Chamberlain was a very able man; he needed to be. It was his talent that he could prop up political paraplegics like Stone and Middlemore.

Working class Unionist voters might have been tied by some tradition

1. Daily Argus, 26 Sep.1900.

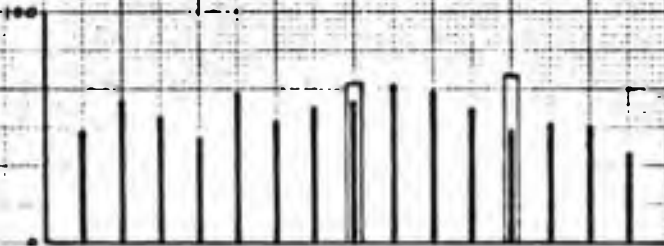
2. Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1892-1906 B.R.L.

3. Birmingham Daily Post, 3,4,5,6,12 Jan.1906.

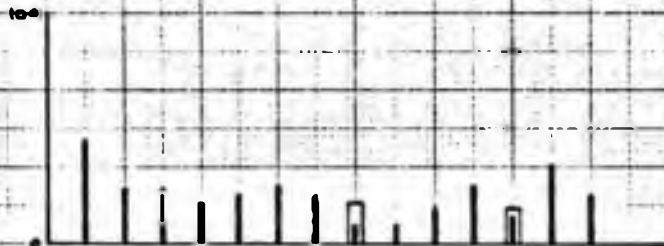
4. Man in the Street, Jan.1905. Quote from Rev. James Adderley of Saltley.

Graph 10A Annual percentage share of votes by political party, in Birmingham and Aston municipal elections 1899-1910, and in corresponding wards 1911-1913

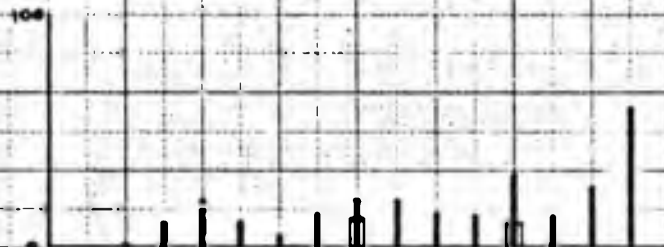
(i)
Conservative and
Liberal Unionist



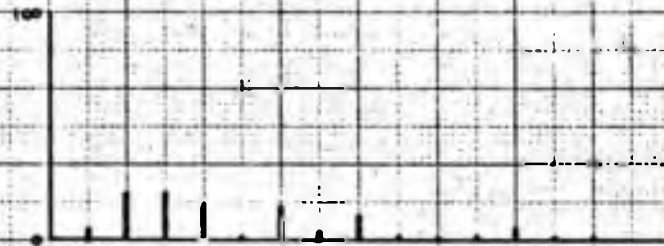
(ii)
Liberal



(iii)
Labour and
Socialist



(iv)
Independent



(v)
Unemployed



1899 00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 1913

Block histograms show 1906 and (mean) 1910 General Election statistics
National unemployment figures from Labour Gazette

and some deference to Chamberlain. But the image of Chamberlain itself was inextricably tied to his policies, past record and future policies. And it was Joe the Imperialist, Joe the Tariff Reformer, as well as Joe the Great Leader that men voted for. It is important not to overestimate Chamberlainism in Birmingham at the expense of ignoring his promises and policies.

Voting also depended upon the energy and conviction of individual campaigns in each constituency. Thus the lowest turnouts of 1906 (table 10.2) were (apart from Central Division where many voters lived scattered in the provinces), in undynamic Lord Morpeth's and unimpressive J.T. Middlemore's constituencies (South and North), and in Jesse Collings' Bordesley. The highest turnouts occurred in Aston and Birmingham East, where much energy was expended by the Unionist and Labour parties respectively, and in Edgbaston where, with a larger number of middle class voters, political interest was naturally more intense.

Turning to the support given to the Unionist party at municipal and national elections, first the general level of support will be considered chronologically and related to the introduction of policies and propaganda. Then different constituencies and wards will be considered, to see whether Unionist voting was related to social class.

Graph 10A. shows the percentage share of votes by political party in Birmingham and Aston municipal and general elections 1899-1913, including material already presented in Chapter 8. The graph shows a distinct fall-off with war disillusion, in the support given to Unionist and Liberal parties 1900-02. By 1902, the ground would appear to have been ripe for a Radical 'take-off' Yet in 1903, Chamberlain launched Tariff Reform, which was immediately introduced into municipal elections,¹ and it is clear that

1. Birmingham Municipal Elections 1901-6 B.R.L. J.B. Arter in St. Martins Ward, 1905.

the Unionist party received an immense fillip to its electoral support (10.Ai). This support slackened through 1904, but grew through 1905 with the passing of the Tory Aliens Act, 1906 with the General Election, up to 1907 with the immense anti-Socialist activity of the party against local L.R.C. competition in nine out of ten wards.

The gradual decline of the Unionist share of the vote shown in the graph for 1908 and 9, must be set against increasing social legislation introduced by the Liberals, in particular Old Age Pensions. Yet the swing to Unionism in the General Election of January 1910 - one repeated nationally¹ - is possibly explained by the Naval Scares and more probably by the appeal of Tariff Reform to restore jobs lost during the very high employment levels from 1908 up to Jan 1910. The national swing to Unionism also was closely correlated to unemployment levels in constituencies.²

In the General Elections, it will be seen from Table 10.2 above that in those constituencies where the Unionists were weakest in 1906 (South, East, Bordesley) the turnout in Jan.1910 increased by between 4% and 8% over 1906, and so too did the Unionist share of the vote. In Aston and North Birmingham - the stronger areas of Unionism - the turnout actually fell, although the Unionist share of the vote likewise increased. The pattern then was possibly that in safer seats in 1910, Liberal and Labour voters were not bothering to register their votes; and further, that the increased Unionist vote in less safe seats came from the mobilisation of relatively apathetic Unionist voters rather

1. N. Blewett op.cit. p.710 - 4.4% swing nationally over 1906.

2. ibid. pp.13, 740. The most spectacular victory was in Sunderland, where work was particularly scarce.

than capturing Liberal and Labour men. This indeed was the pattern with municipal voting down to 1910, for in graph 10A it is clear that it is really the Liberal and Labour schedules that are reciprocal. The solid core of anti-Unionism was therefore relatively constant in numbers, choosing either Liberal or Labour alternatively and not voting Unionist.

From graph 10.A, Unionist support appears markedly to fall away after 1910. The increasing irrelevance of Tariff Reform in a situation of declining unemployment, and the hawkish anti-German defence policy of the Liberals as demonstrated at Agadir robbed the Unionists of any positive policies. In these years to 1913, Unionists concentrated upon anti-Socialism, yet these were the years of increasing labour militancy and worker awareness of direct action. That anti-Socialism was being rejected by the working class voters is clear from the falling Unionist and the increasing Labour party shares of the vote 1910-13, in graph 10.A.¹

Liberal fortunes too began to improve, first with the activities of the Young British Liberals from 1910 on,² and then with the capture of the 'Gazette and 'Evening Despatch in 1913.³ In May-June 1914 alone, the Liberals held 117 meetings with 60,000 attending.⁴

The strongest centres of Unionism in the 1906 and 1910 elections were the North, Aston, West and Central Divisions. These included many of the poorest and most depressed wards, as well as business dominated

1. This theme is returned to below.

2. Young British Liberals 1909-14, B.R.L. collection.

3. Man in the Street, May.1913.

4. Birmingham Liberal Association Annual Report, 1915.

Market Hall; of course many such wards (see 10.1 above) were influenced by outside small-master votes. The weaker areas of Unionism were in the South, Bordesley, Edgbaston and the East. The South included, besides the poorer Deritend area, the larger élite working class zone of Balsall Heath. Edgbaston was principally middle class. The East was marginal because organised skilled labour was particularly articulate and radical in Saltley, but remained Unionist because of the vote in poorer Duddeston and Nechells.

It is possible then to broadly hypothesise that the strength of Unionist voting in working class areas was positively related to the poverty status or depression of that area. This could be checked against municipal voting figures.

Such a calculation would need to be treated guardedly, for at many local elections the turnout was very low and at others erratic - thus the turnout at St. Marys in 1899 was 35.8%, but at Nechells 73.1%. Usually it varied from 30% to 50% of the electorate. Again local campaigns were inevitably more caught up in local issues and with local personalities - thus again in St. Marys, the vote swung wildly year after year as affected by the large Irish poll and the competition between Irish and Unionist mob-orators. Consequently in the poorest wards of St. Bartholomews and St. Marys, the Unionist percentage share of the vote ranged from 39.2% (1905) - 80.2% (1909) and 36.7% (1899) - 74.4% (1903) respectively. Finally, it is difficult to allow for the effects of certain industrial concentrations in different wards; certain industries would be more disposed to Free Trade say - like the Saltley carriage works,¹ while again

1. Export business to non-tariff countries like S. America.

the smallmasters of the jewellery industry would favour tariffs.¹

Taking death-rate as a measure of poverty status, table 10.3 draws together the mean Unionist share of the poll in constituencies 1906 and 1910, the overall Unionist share of the poll 1899-1910 in each municipal election, and the mean death rate by ward.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Constituency	Mean Unionist Share of vote General Elections 1906, Jan. 1910	Ward	Death Rate/1000 1899-1902	Constituency Mean Death Rate	Unionist % share of poll Municipal Elections 1899-1910
North	82.2	St. George	23.1	)	72.7
		St. Mary	27.7	) 25.1	56.1
		St. Stephen	25.4	)	66.9
West	77.4	All Saints	19.4	)	61.5
		St. Pauls	20.9	) 19.1	69.2
		(Rotton Park ⁺	17.3	)	71.2
Central	75.5	Ladywood	18.8	)	58.7
		St. Thomas	20.7	) 19.6	67.0
		Market Hall	18.2	)	72.6
Edgbaston	71.9	(Rotton ⁺ Park)	17.3	) 16.6	71.2
		Edgbaston	15.9	)	66.1
		St. Martin	20.1	)	70.1
South	69.6	Deritend	22.9	) 19.8	(54.9) [*]
		Balsall Heath	17.4	)	61.1
		St. Bartholomews	26.0	) 18.4	50.9
Bordesley	69.3	Bordesley	15.4	)	62.5
		Duddeston	21.8	)	(54.9) [*]
		Nechells	20.5	) 18.9	(29.2) [*]
East	60.3	Saltley	17.1	)	35.0

10.3 Unionist Voting and Death Rate by Ward and Constituency 1899-1910.

1. Birmingham Daily Gazette, 13 Dec. 1905.

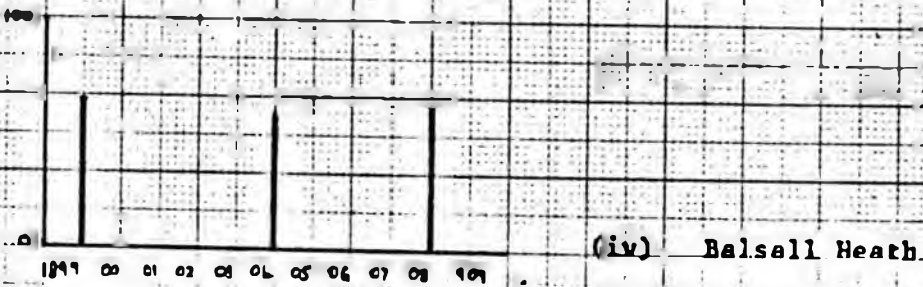
* These were fought only once and are considered unreliable measures.

+ Rotton Park is roughly split $\frac{1}{3}$ in West, $\frac{2}{3}$ in Edgbaston: this is the statistic used in calculating column (5).

Sources: Votes from local newspaper reports: Death Rate from Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1899-1902. Aston is not included here because its M.o.H. did not publish separate death rate figures by ward. Again, its claimed death rate (14.8) was even lower than Edgbaston and it was thought that perhaps Aston's measure was made upon a different basis - perhaps excluding infantile mortality; this was not obvious however, in comparing Birmingham and Aston Reports. Report of the M.o.H. for Aston, 1899-1902.

Graph 10B Unionist percentage share of poll in

selected wards 1899-1909



Comparison of columns (2) and (5) in Table 10.3 does broadly show a positive relationship between Unionist voting at Parliamentary elections and the relative economic deprivation of areas. A closer examination of columns (4) and (6) however, adds the complicating factors of each single local contest. Although Unionist voting appears higher in a number of depressed wards (St. George, St. Stephen, St. Thomas) than in fashionable skilled worker areas and above (Bordesley, Balsall Heath, Ladywood and Saltley), it is clear that St. Marys and St. Bartholomews - the most depressed - are also the most marginal.

Looking more closely at these two latter wards, graph 10B (i) and (ii) shows that the percentage Unionist share of the vote peaked in 1900 (with khaki propaganda), 1903 (launching of Tariff Reform), and in 1906 and 1909 (with the influence of Parliamentary election propaganda). Thus although these wards were the weakest of Unionist seats, they do give the impression of rising to the nationalist bait on each occasion it was proffered. Such violent swings do not appear to have occurred in the skilled and highly skilled residential areas of Bordesley and Balsall Heath (graph 10B (iii) and (iv),).

The general hypothesis appears credible then, that the consistent non-Unionist vote, small though it was, came from skilled workers living in relatively affluent areas such as Saltley, Balsall Heath, Bordesley, to whom the more intellectual approach of social reform policies posed a more rational appeal. In poverty ridden areas, where a greater number of less educated and less articulate voters resided, the myths of Unionist social-nationalist policies appear to have been more accepted, and given a deeper credence at times of intense Unionist activity.

Few of the Councillors and none of the M.P.'s for whom the working

class voted were themselves working men. In the first Greater Birmingham Council (table 10.4), only three Unionists were perhaps working class - W.E. Lovsey (a postman), T. Brown (a policeman) and A.R. Jephcott (engineer). There were also six shopkeepers - butchers, bakers and a cafe owner - and six smallmasters - jewellers, brassfounder and builders. Up to 1910, there were few other working class candidates put up.

	Unionist	Liberal	Labour	Independent
Professional	14	4	1	1
Manufacturers, Merchants	20	5	-	-
Builders, Smallmasters	6	1	1	1
Clerks, Managerial	1	1	-	1
Shopkeepers	6	3	-	-
Working Class	3	2	4	-
UNCLASSIFIED	8	2	-	-
Total	63	18	6	3

Table 10.4 Occupations by Party of Councillors elected to Greater Birmingham 1911.¹

1. Source: Birmingham Evening Despatch and Birmingham Daily Mail Nov 2 and Nov 3.1911: Kellys Directory, Cornishes Directory, Birmingham Red Book. These figures do not quite tally with E.P. Hennock "Composition of Borough Councils 1835-1912" in H.J. Dyos ed. Study of Urban History 1968. First, because he also includes City Aldermen; second because he uses obscure "small" and "large" business categories; third, because many professional men also had manufacturing interests and are here therefore counted as manufacturers.

Not only were working people unlikely ever to come to the attention of local selection committees,¹ but recent evidence suggests that working class Conservatives actually mistrust as leaders men from their own social origins.² As a local Socialist Party branch secretary bemoaned of working class political predispositions:

they will tell you they like to be represented (as they have told me many a time) by gentlemen! 3.

The Unionist leadership on the City Council remained firmly behind the manufacturers and merchants, and these also formed the largest Liberal section too. The next largest group was also upper-middle class - professional men. Thus the local leadership responsible for the propaganda was a capitalist and bourgeois caucus, and its association with and control over the local newspapers has already been noted. Such a group would not wish to encourage large numbers of working class candidates, and in encouraging any movements they would wish to maintain strict control. Thus although the Unionist caucus initially encouraged Conservative Working Mens' Clubs and Trade Union Tariff Reform Association branches, they failed to continue support as it became clear that growing proletarian articulate discussion could lead to dissension with traditional Conservatism, and perhaps to a challenge to traditional leadership.

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1. The only reference to involvement of working men at local Unionist Executive Council level, was that Trade Unionists were alleged to be on Lord Morpeth's South Birmingham Unionist Ward Executive Committee for the 1904 bye-election. Birmingham Daily Mail, 13 Dec.1905.
 2. R. McKenzie and A. Silver, op.cit. pp.153-62. Again, as noted above, Conservative mandarins profoundly mistrusted working men in political power. Thus they refused to accept engineer Alderman Jephcott as Unionist candidate for Bordesley, when Jesse Collings retired. Times, 25 March.1914.
 3. Torch (Kings Heath Socialist Party) Aug.1912 - Norman Tiptaft, branch secretary.

The Working Mens' Clubs were begun in the 1880's on the advocacy of Lord Randolph Churchill;

Let Birmingham lead the way...Birmingham had done good service to the Liberal Party in political organisation. Let Birmingham be a little impartial and do good service to the Conservative Party. 1.

Edgbaston, Ladywood, Deritend, Duddeston, Sparkbrook, Small Heath, St. Paul's, Balsall Heath, Rotton Park - all were 'agog' (sic) with these clubs before the Boer War, and united to form the Birmingham Union of Working Mens' Clubs. Many of these clubs were in skilled worker and elite residential areas. Collections of documents² from these clubs show expensively produced hard-card posters with designs in relief, advertising Soirées, Balls, Smokers and conveying a definite impression of richness and opulence quite different from the traditional image of a working man's club. They were, of course, aimed at the increasingly prosperous and powerful skilled worker groups. Yet they failed, for "one by one they fell apart due to political, social and financial circumstances."³ There were so few working men's clubs of any description in Birmingham⁴ that the only "social" circumstances which could have broken the clubs up would have been their bourgeois alienation from working class culture. Financially it is clear, the clubs received after an initial grant, no money from Conservative central

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1. E.L. Levy, Midland Conservative Club 1883 and after (1909) pp.37-8.
 2. Duddeston Ward Working Mens' Conservative Club 1889-1900. Collection of documents. B.R.L. 535024.
 3. E.L. Levy, op.cit. p.38.
 4. In 1905, 37 clubs with a membership of 3000. Birmingham and District Social Clubs Union Annual Report, 1905: Birmingham Social Clubs' Handbook 1904/5.

funds. Thus the Conservative Working Mens' Club opened in Aston in Nov.1907 "as a strong weapon in the fight against socialism"¹ was split by constant internal disagreements in committee over policy, and was dumped by the party to face bankruptcy proceedings just fourteen months afterwards.²

This "cuckoo-in-the-nest" syndrome afflicted the T.U.T.R.A. branches too - as witness the evidence in Chapter 8. The Midlands branches were begun about 1904 and were flourishing by 1905 with a district council centred upon Birmingham. The branch sizes were small - one of the largest being Dudley with 400 members.³ From 1907 though, there appear fewer and fewer references to Midlands branches; from Dec.1907 to June 1908, although there were 188 meetings in the South West, there were only 17 in the Midlands.⁴ Apart from Wolverhampton and Dudley, the Midland's branches faded away as the T.R.L. redirected its efforts onto Free Trade Lancashire. There, in only one year up to Jan.1910, it formed 20 branches.⁵ The local Unionist power group in Birmingham withdrew support when it became clear that first, the organisations posed threats to their authority and second, the need for such organisations in the securely held Midlands was minimal.

1. Balfour, Birmingham Daily Mail, 15 Nov.1907.

2. ibid. 11 Jan.1909.

3. K.D. Brown "TUTRA 1904-13". In Journal of British Studies, May.1970.

4. Monthly Notes on Tariff Reform T.R.L. edition July.1908 p.148.

5. M.N.T.R. (TRL) Jan.1909, Jan.1910.

Even more short-lived was the Working Men's Constitutional Association, seen in Aston in 1906 and "formed to encourage the spread of sound political doctrines amongst working men, and to resolutely oppose the spread of socialistic doctrines."¹ The Unionists also began a "Junior Imperialists' League" to train young men in public pro-Imperialist speaking; by Sept.1914 it claimed 300 members - although it was not especially directed at the working class.²

Despite the disinclination of the Unionist parties to intimately involve themselves with the working class in the Midlands, they received, through the ballot box, overwhelming support because the nationalist policies they advocated appeared convincing and attractive and because the leaders they offered appeared, for deferential or pragmatic reasons, competent and able.

Until 1910 at least, these results show the practical failure of the alternative ideology of political radicalism. From the disillusion of the Boer War as noted, 1901/2 offered good prospects for Labour party action. Yet the local Trades Council failed to act for direct labour representation; indeed in 1900, it advised workers in St. Marys to vote for the Unionist postman, W. Lovsey.³

It was composed (Table 10.5) of a large number of small craft unions - e.g. Glass Cutters, Horse Collar Makers, Bedstead Workers - and a few larger skilled unions - e.g. A.S.E., Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, National Union of Gasworkers. It had virtually no representatives of unskilled labour (unless one counts the City Parks Attendants Union) and few semi-skilled (except two A.S.R.S. branches).

1. Labour Mail, June 1906.

2. Straightforward, Sep.1914.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 30 Oct.1900.

YEAR	SOCIETIES	BRANCHES	ESTIMATED NUMBERS IN AFFILIATED SOCIETIES	GENERAL FUND £	POLITICAL FUND £
1899	68	93	-	173	-
1900	67	94	-	162	-
1901	65	100	-	186	-
1902	67	100	-	144	-
1903	61	100	-	135	-
1904	67	105	-	141	-
1905	65	95	-	157	-
1906	66	108	31,000	147	-
1907	72	115	31,500	170	-
1908	71	112	32,500	196	81
1909	67	111	30,000	199	15
1910	65	108	30,000	151	6
1911	72	127	30,000	143	3
1912	77	134	40,000	202	6
1913	81	161	45,000	329	-
1914	81	160	45,000	416	34

Table 10.5 Growth of the Birmingham and District Trades Council 1899-1914.¹

The Trades Councils' members were less affected by recession than, than the general mass of semi- and unskilled workers, and down to 1908 disputes were few and insignificant. The political activities of the Labour and Socialist parties in the 1906 election, as seen in Table 6.2

1. Source: Birmingham and District Trades Council Annual Reports 1899 (33) - 1915 (48).

attracted little money in support from these unions and indeed, there is little reason to believe that even a substantial minority of Trades Council members believed in direct labour representation.

The deepening recession of 1908/9 however, began to spark trouble. The Brass Makers Association demanded a 10% cut in wages, and the National Society of Amalgamated Brassworkers replied by demanding a rise in minimum pay from 4½d to 6d per hour.¹ The Board of Trade arbitrator, Sir J.T. Woodhouse, recommended that no change be made either way and the brassworkers' leader, socialist W.J. Davis, attacked and terminated the arbitration agreement, claiming arbitrators were

middle class motivated...without exception selected from the capitalist class, and the award always, so far as the brass trades are concerned, in favour of the employers. 2.

In the next month, the gunworkers at B.S.A. Small Heath had their hours of labour increased from 48 to 53. Early in the new year, a third big Union, the Bedstead Workers, struck over the withdrawal of their bonus of 7½%. Blacklegs were introduced, fights broke out; outside the larger of the 26 (from 57) firms employing non-Union labour, large crowds of workers assembled violently picketing the works and occasionally singing "Britons Never Shall Be Slaves".³ In March 1909, two more of Birmingham's large skilled-worker unions, the A.S.E. and Machine Toolmakers, were faced with a wage reduction of 1/- per week; because they controlled only half the men in the industry (6000 out of 12000 skilled men), the

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 11 Feb.1908.

2. ibid. 5 Mar.1908.

3. ibid. 5,18,20,21 Jan.1909, 4 Feb.1909.

unions were unable to strike effectively.¹ From 1908 to mid-1909 then, in the face of economic recession, the principal skilled unions of Birmingham were shaken out of their comfortable complacency, and began to think no longer in terms of employer accommodation but direct action and confrontation. The fruits of this awakening were soon seen, in the support - financial as well as moral - given by the large unions through the Trades Council to the strike by sweated Women Chain Makers at Cradley Heath, the first such support given by that Council.²

Meanwhile, increasing depression was stimulating ad hoc organisation among the unemployed unskilled and semi-skilled in Birmingham. In early 1907, 500 disillusioned men unsuccessfully chasing 4 jobs met in the Bull Ring, and elected a committee of four to represent grievances to the Town Council.³ By January 1908, the "Right to Work Committee" was organising big demonstrations and a march on London. With increasing numbers of unemployed, its ringleaders were being arrested,⁴ its organisation condemned by the Unionist press.⁵ In February, the Committee embraced socialism, deciding that "every man had a right to work" and applauding George Lansbury as he told them "Private enterprise has absolutely no remedy for unemployment."⁶

1. ibid. 23 Mar.1909.

2. Birmingham and District Trades Council, Annual Report, 1910.

3. Birmingham Daily Post, 19 Feb.1907.

4. Birmingham Daily Mail, 13 Jan.1908.

5. ibid. 25 Jan.1908.

6. ibid. 10 Feb.1908: Birmingham Right to Work Committee Annual Report 1908-9, It also aimed at respectability too - organising v.g., Church Parades.

With improved economic prospects in 1910, Birmingham industry was poised for a period of labour disturbance having as its roots, the developing activism among the re-employed unskilled workers, and increasing class conscious militancy of the larger skilled unions. The first major dispute though, was precipitated at a national level, as in August 1911 the railwaymen of Birmingham and Bilston struck work, and troops were moved in to guard Snow Hill and escort food convoys from Lawley Street depot. Apart from a police baton charge, the situation never became as serious as in Liverpool, where troops opened fire, killing two demonstrators.¹

Two months later the B.S.A. workers at Small Heath and Redditch struck over pay. The strike, organised by the A.S.E., Brassworkers, Toolmakers and Allied Trades, with 4000 men was the "biggest fight ever in Birmingham."² It was not solely concerned with skilled workers' pay but, as one brassworker wrote to the newspapers, it was about

the poor, underpaid semi- and unskilled workers, who have not been receiving wages sufficient to allow them to pay into the trades clubs. 3.

The unions organised collections for the non-union members among working men for "it is the poor that help the poor."⁴ At a meeting of 5000 in the Bull Ring, the men were told

they were dealing now not only with the grievances of organised workers, but of the unorganised people (Hear, hear). One result of the conflict had been to bring

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 15-18 Aug.1911.

2. ibid. 2 Nov.1911.

3. ibid. 6 Nov.1911.

4. ibid. Letter from an A.S.E. member.

together people who had not been united before, people who had not been able to formulate their own grievances. Their case was an unanswerable one (Hear, hear) 1.

At a meeting of Engineer and Brassworker representatives, it was decided to encourage the growth of the unskilled Workers' Union under socialist J. Beard.² And it was in this strike that one detects the positive growth of a class-conscious solidarity among the skilled workers, spreading to their encouragement of increasing militancy among the previously repressed unskilled men.

Thus in 1912, seven major trades gained an increase in wages, including by a concerted effort forcing up the City Council's minimum wage to 26/-. The Workers' Union, and the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers struck in Selly Oak; and the Workers Union, supported by skilled unions, shut down the large firm of Avery's Ltd.³ National strikes by the railwaymen, transport and coal workers also occurred. In 1913, with the "continued awakening of the unskilled worker",⁴ a large number of disputes rocked Birmingham of which the "Great Birmingham and Black Country Strike" by the Navvies' Union⁵ over a minimum 23/- wage was the most impressive. This latter demonstrated the enormous solidarity of support from skilled unions, for £3500 was gathered in strike funds.⁶ The Bakers' Union forced the withdrawal of an advert for

1. ibid. (major article, p.3.)

2. ibid. 1st and 2nd. Nov.1911. Contributions only 1½d-9d/week.

3. Birmingham and District Trades Council Annual Report, 1912.

4. ibid. 1913.

5. sic, in the Trades Council Report, They mean, presumably, the Workers Union. See R. Hyman, The Workers' Union (Oxford) 1971 for a discussion of this strike. pp.33-60.

6. ibid. 1913.

"non-union men"; and the newly amalgamated Gold, Silver and Electroplate Workers Union embarked upon "the organisation of the Jewellers in Birmingham... a very much needed operation." In class-conscious language, the Trades Council Report warned workers

the capitalist classes are still the ruling classes, and are prepared to use all the civic and military forces to drive men to work under any conditions, and to manipulate the laws to their own advantage. 1.

By the World War, lists of major member unions in the Trades Council had been expanded to include the Workers' Union (15 branches), the National Union of Shop Assistants (6 branches), Insurance Agents (9 branches) and the National Union of Railwaymen.² Thus it had added to it, both substantial unskilled unions, and militant "white collar" organisations as well. Of the skilled unions, many had amalgamated and thus become more powerful.

To summarize then, the grip of Conservative and Liberal Unionism on Birmingham, strong down to 1910, became weaker both in terms of electoral strength and growing labour militancy. The hold, down to 1910, maintained by a powerful Tory employer caucus, relied upon the myths of Unionist nationalist propaganda; these appear to have been most successful in poorer areas. The consistent care of anti-Unionism appears to have resided in the skilled and highly skilled workers. Attempts by the Unionists to establish political control over the skilled workers by means of sponsored clubs and societies however failed, partly because the caucus mistrusted articulate workers, partly because the clubs,

1. ibid. 1913.

2. ibid. 1914. 1911-14 saw a spectacular national growth of the Workers' Union, from 5000 to 143,000. R. Hyman, op.cit. p.33.

being sponsored, were too bourgeois for the working class. And it was from the leadership of the skilled workers, alienated from the employers in the depression years of 1908-10, that there came the impression of Radicalism upon the mass of the unskilled and semi-skilled. Independently, some of the most depressed municipal wards had already elected Radical councillors, and during the depression years the unskilled had themselves formed an ad hoc organisation to directly articulate grievance. Upon the leaders of such grass-roots radicalism possibly hung the growth of the large unskilled unions which by 1914 so swelled the ranks of an increasingly class conscious Trades Council.

Chapter 11

Military Aspects: (1)The Regular Army and the Militia.

In the summer of 1898 the British Army consisted of a Regular force including a Reserve of ex-Regulars, and an Auxiliary army composed of Volunteers, Yeomanry and Militia.

a	Regular Army overseas	124,000
b	Regular Army at home	131,000
c	Army Reserve Section A	5,000
d	Remainder of the Army Reserve	73,000
e	Militia Reserve	31,000
f	Militia.	113,000
g	Yeomanry	10,000
h	Volunteers	231,000

Table 11.1 Disposition of Army Forces 1898 Source: General Annual Return of the British Army 1898 C9426¹.

The Regular and Regular Reserve (a-d) were to be used overseas; group (e), although a part of the Auxiliary force (f-h) comprised Militia volunteers who for an extra £1 p.a. were also available for such service. Otherwise the Auxiliary forces were for home defence

1. General Annual Return...shortened hereafter to G.A.R.B.A.

against invasion only.

Recruitment to the Regular Army and to the Militia are considered together below because of the very close relationship which existed between them. 35 per cent of Militia recruits eventually joined the Regulars'; the social class from which both sets of recruits were drawn was essentially the same. The Militia, the old "Constitutional Force", although a part-time volunteer army, differed from the Volunteers proper in three important ways.

First, in its constitutional position; it could trace its history back to the Commission of Array of 1122¹ and by a complicated series of enactments since, Parliament could authorise selective conscription of the civil population into the Militia by ballot.² Pressure groups like the National Service League continually urged that this course be taken to counter the conscription of population in Germany and France; the N.S.L. scheme would have exempted Volunteers from the ballot. Again, enactments allowed an ordinary militia unit to be used on overseas service with the consent of 75% of its membership;³ this happened in the Boer War when 68 battalions volunteered and were sent to South Africa (59), Malta (5), St. Helena (3), and Egypt (1).⁴

Second, the militia differed from the Volunteers in its training and its pay. The recruit signed on for six years. Initially he would undergo three months training with the Regular Army at a depot, receiving

1. Col. C.J. Hay, "History of the Militia: Constitutional Force" 1906.

2. Esp. Act 43 Geo.III 1803, Act 43 Geo.III 1808, 15 + 16 VICT. 1852.

3. 61 + 62 VICT. c9. 45 + 46 VICT. o 48.

4. Col. J.K.D. Dunlop, "Development of the British Army 1899-1914", 1938.

a bounty of £1.10s. and Regular rates of pay (c. 1/- per day before deductions). His only obligation then was to complete 27 days camp each year and in return receive £6 bounty (being paid £3 at camp, and £1 on 1st October, 1st December and 1st February each year).¹

The Volunteers received no pay (except at camp during the Boer War) as of right down to 1908, and consequently took no training obligations.²

Third, the Militia differed from the Volunteers in its social composition. As detailed below (Chap.12), the Volunteer army attracted considerable support from skilled workers; the militia drew its recruits, like the Regular Army, from unskilled and casual workers.

	%
Artisans	11
Miners	10
Fishermen (including boatmen and seamen)	4
Mechanical labourers	21
Agricultural labourers	22
Other occupations (including docklabourers)	32
	100

Table 11.2 Occupations of the Militia Infantry, Aug.1903

Source: NC Cd 2064 p.210 q.2

The largest number of other-ranks were thus unskilled labour;

1. Report of the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers, 4 pts.1904
Cd 2061 xxx 175, Cd 2062, Cd 2063 xxx 259, Cd 2064 xxxi 587
Hereafter referred to as "N.C." - Norfolk Commission.

2. ibid. Appendix LV

converse ly, the officers were drawn from the aristocracy and upper middle class. The social gap between leaders and led was much more pronounced than in the Volunteer Force, and much closer to the Regular Army. 58% of militia officers were "gentlemen of independent means" and 24% were prospective candidates for Regular Commissions.¹

Recruits to the Regular infantry in 1898 were enlisted for six years service with the Colours and six years with the Reserve, or for three years and nine years respectively.² Any analysis of figures shows that they were generally underheight, underweight, underdeveloped and that the standard had been deteriorating steadily down to 1898.

1880	1890	1898
56.2	65.7	67.8

Table 11.3 Percentage of N.C.O.'s and other ranks with Chest Measurements less than 37 inches. Source: G.A.R.B.A. 1898 C 9426.

The army was prepared to accept the lowest standards for they were continually under establishment; yet even then they had to reject over half the applicants as unsuitable on medical or "moral" grounds:

1898	Served with Notice Papers	84,626 ³
	Finally Approved	38,890

Pay was bad, conditions were bad; the low standards of the raw recruits were reflected in the army's crime and desertion figures. For

1. ibid. Cd 2064 p.208.

2. G.A.R.B.A. 1898 C 9426 pp.28-9 (Army circular 1874 Ch.67. Gen. Order 18 of 1878, Army Order 60 of 1898).

3. G.A.R.B.A. ibid.

many who failed the Regular army medical, the Militia - with even lower standards - offered the possibility of a second chance. After three months training, recruits became fitter and heavier and could just scrape the standard. But the Militia had an even lower reputation; of every twenty recruits joining between 1894-8:

7 joined the Regular Army
 4 Deserted
 5 were discharged before time
 4 only, completed the six years

Table 11.4. Militia Recruits 1894-8. Source: Dunlop op.cit. p.48.

Such large numbers deserted the Militia that they were difficult to apprehend; it was common for militiamen to join a succession of units up and down the country to gain the bounties. Men were discharged before time through crime; in 1898 alone, 846 were court-martialled and of these 706 imprisoned (half for desertion), and 21,519 minor punishments were awarded by Commanding officers.¹

The image of the army generally though, had improved since the Cardwell reforms of the 1870's. Its common image for centuries had been epitomised in Falstaff's words:

Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt
 the legs, as if they had gyves on for,
 indeed, I had the most of them out of
 prison.

The introduction of short service for peace time recruitment afforded possible short term prospects for boys not yet ready to settle down to a trade. The increased popularity in and participation by the

1. Army Militia Training Establishments Return 1898 C8729,

civil population in Volunteering had also helped, in part, to improve the army's image.¹

For many, the army was an alternative employment when young; of course, it recruited within the competition of the civilian labour market. Pay was very low, consequently army recruiting in peacetime was usually better in times of economic depression when civil competition for labour was limited. It is not generally true to say however, and this point will be clarified below, that men were driven into the Regular Army by unemployment. Hungry, workless men could join the Militia instead and in consequence many urban units were often well over strength. It was a very drastic step indeed to sign away even six years to the army. It is therefore suggested that most men who joined the Regulars were influenced by reasons other than unemployment, but that being without work could well provide, and often did provide, the final incentive.

It is useful to hypothesise at least four separate reasons that could motivate men to enlist in peacetime. It is possible to provide a wealth of quotes to support each reason; the chapter will then test some of the hypotheses against available statistical evidence.

First, army peacetime recruiting stressed the attractions of travel. Some posters read like advertisements for less than scrupulous holiday travel firms. The exotic East, India, China, Hong Kong and Canada - the list provides endless alternatives to the grey streets and crowded factories.² Thus one warehouseman explained his reasons

1. see R.L. Blanco "Army Recruiting Reforms 1866-7" Journal for Society of Army Historical Research Vol.46, 1968 and B. Bond, "Recruiting to the Victorian Army 1870-92" Victorian Studies (1961-2) pp.331-8.

2. 3 Bn. Somerset LI. Recruiting Poster c 1864 in NAM (ES.1).

for enlisting (not in peacetime, but in the Boer War):

I expect the best part of the men who went out at the time I did left England for the same reason i.e. the monotony of their surroundings. Here was I cooped up in a city warehouse a strong fellow full of high spirits and a desire to see the world. What more to the taste could there be than a few months in a different land...I seized the opportunity at once and...I did not care tuppence about the merits of the dispute, and the rubbish about 'fighting for the dear old flag', and our desire to kill Boers or anyone else, for the glory of old England. 1.

Many men joined not only for the excitement of travel, but also for the excitement of conflict. This is a crucial point. For seventy years the British army had been continually at war; in some years there were three, even four colonial campaigns being simultaneously conducted.² The aggression of military imperialism into China, India, Afghan, West, Central and South Africa began in the 1830's and ran unchecked and rampant. Each battle gave extra honours to the Colours of the Regiments and extra prize money to the pockets of the soldiers. Generals like Wolseley, Roberts, Gough and Kitchener became popular heroes in the press and stories of courage and bravery made useful scripts for music hall drama. So the recruiting posters used by regiments down to 1900 and beyond, make impressive use of all these campaigns. Pictures of soldiers in action, stories of exciting adventure and noble carnage are flanked by appeals to all "red blooded young men" to join and share the joys of Imperialistic slaughter. A poster of the

1. "A South African Trip" Club Life. 4 May.1901, quoted in R. Price, "An Imperial War and the British Working Class", 1972, pp.231/2.

2. B. Farwell, "Queen Victoria's Little Wars", 1973.

Hampshire Regiment of 1901 talks of the "cool and dogged persistence of the British soldier", by which institution "the Afghans were compelled to accept a ruler pledged to maintain British interests."¹

As one soldier claimed:

(My father) would also describe to me the horrors of the Battle of Waterloo, thinking in that way to turn my mind from a soldier's life; but instead of turning me, this only made me more anxious to become a soldier; I was never so happy as when I was listening to him talking about it. 2.

And so too, could another ex-South African soldier claim in his local Birmingham club paper

(the) soldier loves to fight; the nearer he can get to the enemy the happier he is. His sole idea then, in the thick of battle, is to gain honours for his company and regiment. 3.

It is important to remember the underprivileged working class origins of many recruits: coming from the tough, hardened and violent culture of the ghetto, it is possible that many had been "peaky blinders", gangs who terrorised whole areas of Birmingham with knives, belts, and gang warfare.⁴ In the army they would participate in a different form of sanctioned violence.

A third reason for enlistment - certainly more apposite for peacetime - was to join for the ceremonial, dress and display. One Birmingham

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1. N.A.M. Hampshire Regt. Poster, 1901.
 2. Ryder Cpl. "Four Years Service in India. By a Private Soldier" LEICESTER 1853.
 3. Nelson Street Adult School Magazine, June 1903; "there is no other career" says a recruiting booklet, "that offers a man the same chance of glorious distinction" The Army and What It Offers, H.M.S.O. Jan.1914. p.10.
 4. One terrified vicar, marooned in the ghetto of St. Bartholomews, wrote fearfully "Awful is the vengeance of this blackguard king to those who refuse obeisance". Rev. T.J. Bass, "Every Day in Blackest Birmingham, Facts not Fiction", 1895, p.9. See Chap.14.

man, enlisting in the Saaforth Highlanders at the age of 16 in 1891, wrote:

the next day we went to Fort George... and fitted out with our gorgeous Highland uniform, with kilt, sporran, feather hat and red tunic etc, which I really think was the attraction to boys of our age at the time. How proud we were, the first time we were "allowed out" on pass. 1.

Finally, it is possible that men joined the army for reasons of pure patriotism i.e., they cherished notions of service and duty to the Empire and to its monarch. But before W.W.I., there are few references in common soldier memoirs which would support such an hypothesis. Of course, when soldiers mention the monarchy their words usually tend to eulogy and, indeed, the training of the army could change and modify soldiers' attitudes. Thus Corbett² could talk with pride of "avenging Gordon" at Omdurman, but that is not why he joined the army. Peacetime recruiting posters do carry notions of service to the monarch and of course always end "God Save The Queen". But on the evidence of memoirs, it is an appeal which was only a lesser strand in the web of recruiting in peacetime.

Naturally these four hypotheses do not exhaust the range of possibilities; it is easy to discover even more bizarre reasons for recruitment:

Once a patient in a military hospital told me that he did so in order to have a military funeral, an honour which the poor fellow soon obtained... Another man gave me his reason that he wanted to learn to read. He had escaped so successfully the School Board Inspectors and had been such a truant as a boy, that he grew

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1. A.F. Corbett, "Service through Six Reigns, 1891 to 1958", Privately Printed, 1953. Norwich. pp.6-8.
 2. ibid. p.23. "Everybody (the Regiment) cheered like mad when learning they were to go to Khartoum to avenge Gordon" and p.34 - a eulogistic poem of revenge.

up quite illiterate. Being ashamed of his ignorance, he thought he would learn something quietly in a military school. 1.

Of the four principal possibilities, the first (travel) can in no way be described as nationalistic. But the other three attitudes are, in differing ways, related to the myth of military nationalism. The second reason - in order to participate in the excitement of fighting - nurtures and conjures imperialistic notions of aggressive racial superiority. Frank Richards, joining the Royal Welch Fusiliers in April 1901, chose that regiment rather than the South Wales Borderers because besides having a battalion in South Africa "they had one battalion in China, taking part in the suppression of the Boxer Rising."² Certainly the record of the British Army in India shows a common myth of innate superiority over the natives to have existed at all levels.

My God, its scandalous the way things are going in this country. The blasted natives are getting cheekier every day... We have to be very careful these days. If we punch them in the face, they have marks to show, so we punch them in the body. Most of the natives on the Plains have enlarged spleens, a good punch in the body hurts them more than what it would us...what is won by the sword must be kept by the sword...Old Curzon is no damned good, this country wants a Viceroy who will keep the bleeding natives down. 3.

The third reason, that of the desire to wear military uniform,

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1. E.J. Hardy, Chaplain to the Forces, "Mr. Thomas Atkins" 1900, p.22. Only 1.8% of the army's recruits could not read at this time, however.
 2. F. Richards, "Old Soldier Sahib", LOND: Faber and Faber, 1966 p.21.
 3. ibid. p.75. Veteran soldier to Richards.

is closely linked to the whole ceremonial of Empire; the pomp, circumstance and majesty of great State occasions feeds the myth of splendid nationalism. The fourth reason, pure patriotism, is self evidently nationalistic.

Available statistical evidence can clarify whether nationalistic events or occasions significantly affected recruiting figures. The evidence is drawn from computer analysis of an Army Book 303¹ kept by the Birmingham recruiting office in Digbeth, of all soldiers² who joined the Regular Army in Birmingham from February 1908 to 18th August, 1914. A synopsis of method and results is given in Appendix 2. The clerks keeping the books were careful to state, as precisely as possible, the recruit's occupation and because of the very many Birmingham trades, over 500 separate occupations were identified. Using a number of sources, occupations were classified by industry and by skill. Industries were grouped into primary, secondary (manufacturing), retail and other service industries and a general labourer category. From these, 23 sub-groups were created, identifying specific trades like the brass industry (including bedsteads) and separating the newer sectors of engineering (like motorcycles and cars) from traditional sectors (like machine tools). Four categories of skill were ascribed; unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled. The classification evolved was in line with the methods used throughout this thesis. Very broadly, unskilled men (as adults) would have earned up to about 25/- per week, and be doing a job requiring little or no training; in a

1. MS 200ff. Kept in Archives of Worcester Regimental Museum.

2. 7040 individuals.

depression, they would be the first to go.¹ The distinction between semi-skilled and skilled lay in skilled men requiring a form of apprenticeship and earning (as adults) a time-rate of over about 30/- per week;² their job would have been relatively more secure. This distinction proved difficult to maintain. Most of the recruits were below "full age" anyway, and displayed a propensity for upgrading themselves - most popularly, describing themselves as "turners", where it was most likely that (not being old enough even to have served a full apprenticeship) they were employed on simpler semi-automatic machines.

One crude method of testing the reliability of these first three gradings was to check for statistically significant population differences in height and weight. Whereas the unskilled population was found to be significantly smaller and lighter than the rest, no significant difference could be found between semi-skilled and skilled.³ For the purpose of the following analysis then, these latter two are considered together as one general grade of semi-skilled. Only in Chapter 16, on the recruitment in the first weeks of World War One, will an attempt be made to separate these groups, for here the differences in recruitment pattern appear most noticeable.

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1. The largest group being "town labourers" at an adult time-rate of c.22/- in engineering, but including trades like "iron dressers" (time rate 21/9d) where a minimal degree of training was reflected in the wage. Cd5814 (1911) LXXVII i Report of an Enquiry into the Earnings and Hours of Labour, 1906, pt.VI pp.77-8, 147.
 2. Thus operatives on semi-automatic machines like planers, borers, (wage 27/5d) were semi-skilled, and those on lathes - fitters, turners, (33/4-33/9 Time) were skilled. A flexible approach was necessary, in the railway carriage industry, fitters and turners earnt only 25/- to 29/- time rate. ibid. pp.77-8, 132-3.
 3. Appendix 2.

Thus the fourth category, highly skilled, was restricted to adults only, claiming the occupations of workers with pay in excess of 37/- (piece rate) and including, besides the accepted grades¹ of high status, smallmasters and foremen too. Very few of this group were recruited in peacetime, more in wartime. Their population height and weight figures were very much greater than the rest.

Additional categories were created for clerks and middle-class occupations. A list of occupations by skill is given in the Appendix 2, together with the sources from which this was compiled.

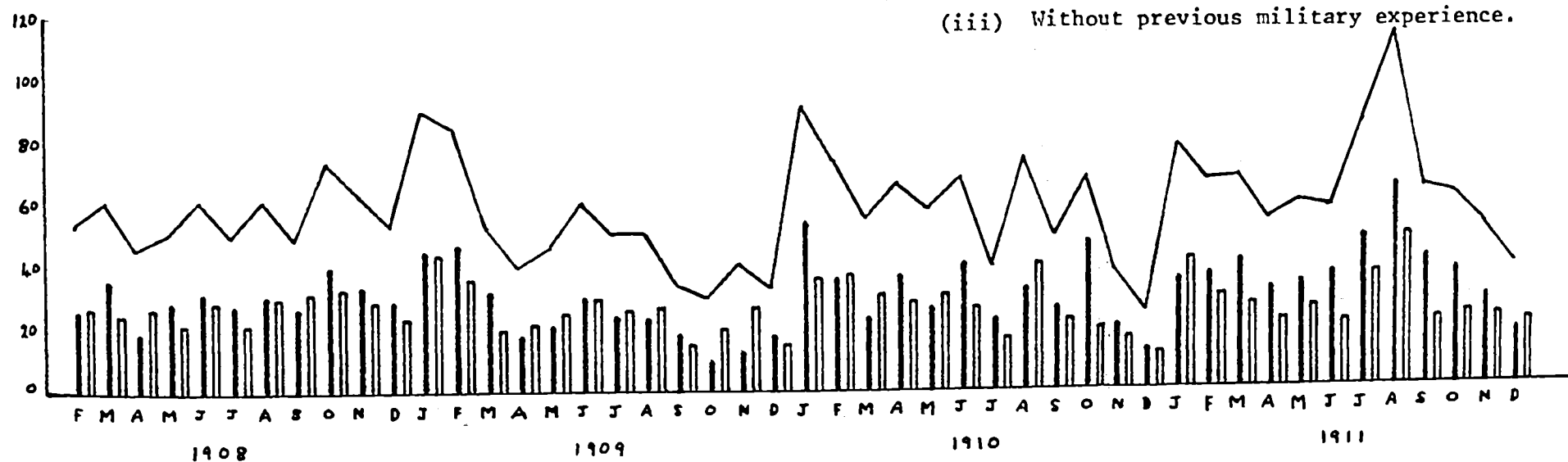
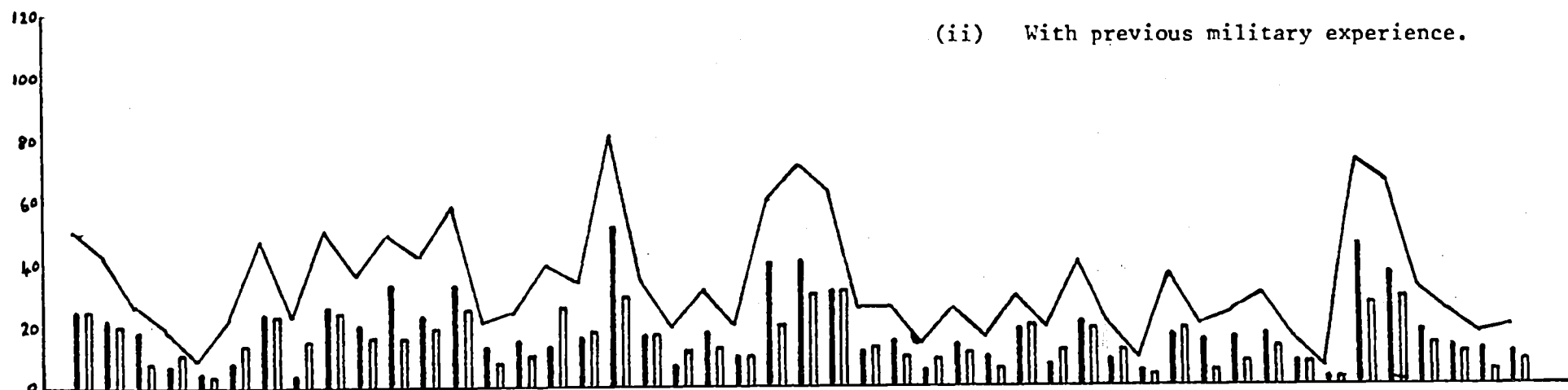
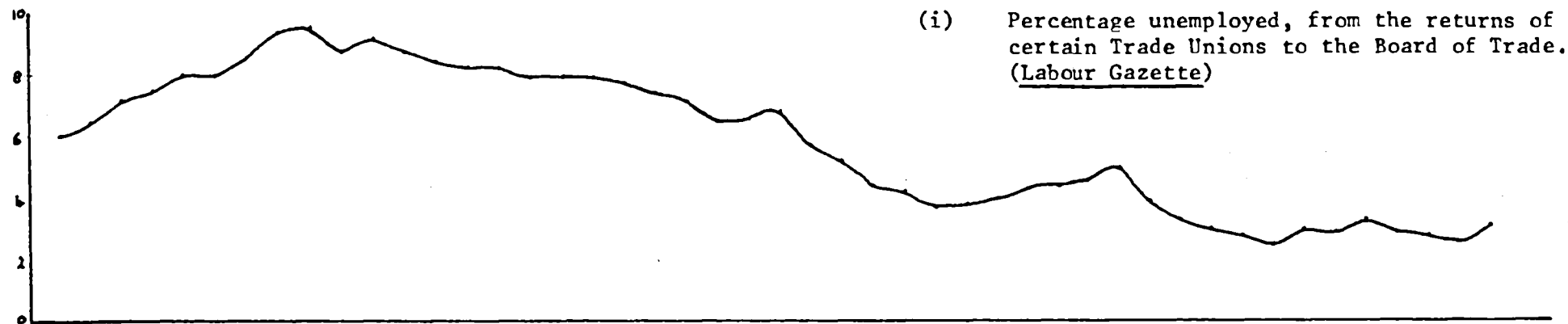
Next, those recruits with no previous military experience in the Militia or Volunteers were grouped into a separate population; from mid 1909, both the ex-Militia and ex-Volunteers were also separated.²

Graph 11.A sets out the monthly recruiting figures by skill and in populations either having, or not having, previous military experience (11A(ii) and 11.A(iii) respectively).³ 11.A(i) is a measure of national unemployment collated from statistics supplied by certain Trade Unions to the Board of Trade.⁴ It is an unsatisfactory measure for it is incomplete data, and because it is not specific to

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1. Patternmakers and turners particularly. Patternmakers were the highest paid, and always on short supply. R.S. Smirke, Report... (Engineering) (K) 1916.
 2. Because of the Haldane Reforms in mid-1908, and the consequent changing of Regiment Numbers, it is not possible to distinguish Militia (which became the Special Reserve) from Volunteers (which became the Territorial Force) before this time.
 3. Down to Dec. 1911. Labour Gazette.
 4. Published in the Labour Gazette.

GRAPH 11.A RECRUITING TO THE REGULAR ARMY IN BIRMINGHAM FEB 1908-DEC 1911, AND NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT.

= UNSKILLED
 = SEMISKILLED



Birmingham industry. It is used in the absence of more definitive statistics.¹

Table 11.5. Total Regular Army recruits in Birmingham 1908-13 and national unemployment percentage.

	Nos.	Unemployed %.
1908	1116 ²	7.8
1909	1097	7.7
1910	1078	4.7
1911	1167	3.0
1912	828	3.2
1913	546	2.1

Table 11.5 shows that recruiting over the long term was only partially related to national unemployment statistics, and then with a considerable lag in Birmingham. From the end of 1909 on, local unemployment steadily declined,³ yet in 1911 - the year of labour troubles - recruitment was highest of all. No correlation between monthly recruiting figures and national unemployment figures exists at all.⁴

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1. An attempt to use local charity returns failed because (a) they constantly changed their systems of accounting and (b) they constantly "expanded" their work out of the city. Birmingham Charity Organisation Society Annual Reports 1895-1913. Local Poor Law returns of out-relief proved insensitive, the amount paid out linearly increasing (with a few occasional falls) from 1895-1911. The figures for in-relief peaked in January 1909 (3937 cases), and are relatively more sensitive, but finish in 1911 with the Local Authority change-over to Greater Birmingham. No further reports were published until 1919, and then these only covered the previous six years, and over a wider area. Parish of Birmingham Financial Statements 1895-1911, 1919.
 2. Jan. 1908 figure not available: the mean January figure (113) for 1909-14 was used instead.
 3. Distress Committee at Aston: November 1909=275 names
November 1908=756 names
Birmingham Daily Post, 3 Dec. 1909.
 4. Coefficients: for people with no military experience, $r=+0.1706$
for people with previous military experience, $r=+0.3440$.

78.6% of all recruits were aged 18-20 inclusive. In 1911, the annual take represented 4.29% of all male youths 18-20 years living within Greater Birmingham.¹ Of the whole population recruited, 52.6% were unskilled, but of the 18-20 year olds, 80.0% were unskilled. From Chapter I, it was calculated that unskilled workers accounted for between 12% and 20% of the total population. Of course, the percentage of unskilled in the 18-20 yrs. age group is likely to be very much higher, but if one for the moment accepts these figures then in 1911:

numbers of recruits unskilled, aged 18-20 = 537

12%-20% of male youths aged 18-20 = 2600-4265

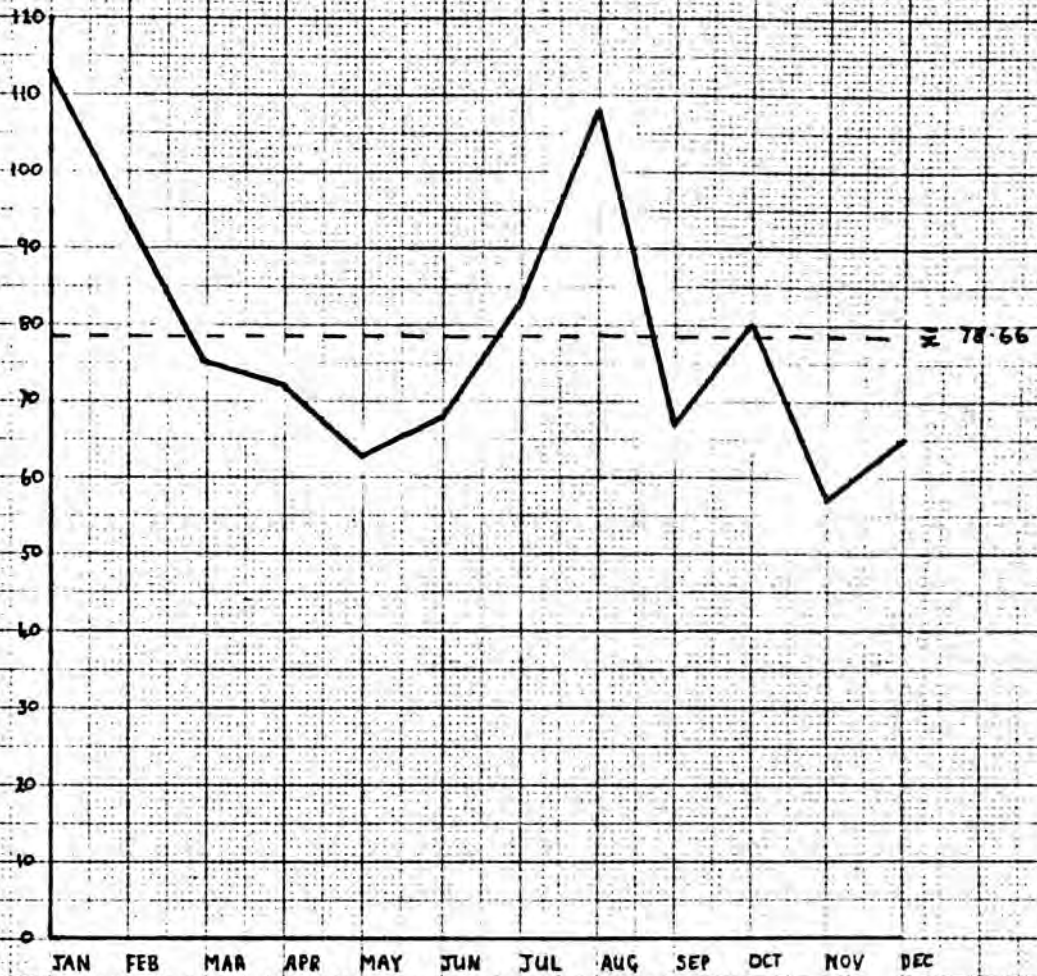
Ratio: 4.8-7.9:1

In other words in 1911 alone, the army took between one in every five and one in every twenty-three (4.29%) males 18-20 years in Greater Birmingham, depending upon skill and social class.

Graph 11.B gives the mean monthly figures for recruiting in an average year 1908-14. This shows peaks in January and August, and these coincide with seasonal swings in local business activity - the first being post-Christmas and the second the "summer slump". The August depression was regularly noticeable in the cycle trade, some firms dismissing from 50% - 100% of their workers, and in the brass trade with 25% lay offs.² Yet as noted in Chapter I, the seasonal swings of many individual industries neatly dovetailed together. Brass workers would move to the electroplate industry which, though slack from January to June, would be on overtime working from June to

1. Census 1911 loc.cit. County of Warwick, p.11.

2. P. de Rousiers Labour Question in Britain, 1896, p.282.
R. Smirke, "Report on the Birmingham Trades...Brass" p.7.



Graph 11B Mean monthly (total) recruitment to the
Regular Army in Birmingham, Feb 1908 - Jul 1914

December.¹ Cycle workers would move into the watch trade.² Little evidence that much distress was caused by these seasonal swings has been discovered. Certainly, there was no rush of the hungry to join the army; out of 15,000 brass workers, the maximum that joined in any August was 12. The option was always open to the unemployed to join the Militia for three months instead. It seems most likely then, that the individual decision to join the army was precipitated by other considerations, but that being temporarily between jobs afforded the most convenient time to enlist.

It should also be noted from Graph 11.A that the schedules of the two populations (with and without military experience) are somewhat different. The correlation by month between the two is only +0.5575. It seems then, that different factors affected the enlistment of the two populations.

If Graph 11.A is examined for unseasonal monthly swings, the most significant of these occurred in July 1909 (11.A.iii). For those with no previous military experience the numbers slightly declined, and there was nothing unusual in this - the peak months for lay-offs being August. Perhaps what one is seeing is a resurgence of business confidence following the very severe depression of 1908, for even the August figure is well down. Yet for those with previous military experience in the Militia or Volunteers, the graph in July rises to a peak never before or again reached for any month in the whole period under study. The trend is most marked in unskilled workers. It cannot

1. J.H. Muirhead, Social Conditions in Provincial Towns: Birmingham (not published: BRL) p.14: R.S. Smirke, loc.cit. - Electroplate 1913. p.7.

2. P. de Rousiers, op.cit. p.282.

be explained by bankruptcies, strikes or recession. It is not localised to any one industry.

The explanation, it is suggested, must lie in the principal event of that month, the visit of the King and Queen to Birmingham to open the new university buildings. For months, preparations had been laid by the city council; fêtes, fireworks, "treats", massed bands,¹ assembled choirs of children singing patriotic airs on the Bristol Road² and soldiery everywhere. The whole town centre was packed with triumphal arches presented by proud industrialists, and at nights crowds held in by crush barriers³ could see the 22,000 candle-power naval searchlights sweeping the grey skies over Birmingham.⁴ There was clearly something in this vainglorious display of pomp and splendour which attracted to the army men who had already shown some disposition towards the military. And most noticeably, this reaction was strongest among the unskilled labourers.

The same phenomenon is detected at the Coronation celebrations of July 1911. The figures for June-July-August in fact, are altogether unusual. For all recruits, the schedule rises dramatically in July 1911. These figures were not inflated by any one particular industry, and no major industrial "crashes" were reported in the press. The July figures are most easily explained by the effect of the Coronation festivities,

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1. 50,000 in Summerfield Park, listening to the 7 Worcs. Regt. band, Birmingham Daily Mail, 7 July.1909.
 2. 37,500 children in stands. ibid.
 3. 540,000 feet of timber. ibid.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, 22 June.1909.

celebrated with remarkable gusto by the City Council, the army in Birmingham, and given wide coverage in the newspapers and cinemas. Again most affected were the unskilled workers with previous military experience. (table 11.6).

Yet the numbers in August of those without military experience rose again, reaching the highest peak of the whole analysis 1908-14. The numbers of those with military experience fell slightly, but still remained inflated well above any expected figure for August 1911. The most significant event of that month was the Birmingham and national railway strike. "Several thousand" troops were put to guarding Snow Hill and New Street stations, and escorting food convoys from Lawley Street depot.¹ In Liverpool, a troop of the XVIII Hussars fired on strikers, killing two. The strike only lasted three days, but this was due to the unexpected intervention by Lloyd-George and the Agadir crisis. Industrialists expecting a longer stoppage, would have begun laying-off labour on the first day by dismissing casual and unskilled workers. In Table 11.6, although the figures for unskilled workers are

	Previous Military Experience			No Previous Military Experience		
	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	JUNE	JULY	AUG.
UNSKILLED	3	46	37	37	49	65
SEMI-SKILLED	3	27	29	21	37	49

Table 11.6 Recruitment to the Regular Army in Birmingham June-August 1911.

unprecedentedly high, so too are the figures for semi-skilled workers. It is possible, then, that the lay-offs over those three days only partially account for these figures - if at all. The distribution of recruits by

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 16-19 August, 1911.

by industry does not reflect any particular emphasis - the distribution is much as normal. It is suggested that apart from the continuing influx after the July coronation, August recruiting was profoundly affected by the very large numbers of troops in evidence on the streets of Birmingham. The spectre of troops firing upon and battering rioting strikers appeared not to act as a disincentive to enlist, indeed quite the reverse. Recruits came from the "Transport Industry" group too, - 8.3% of all recruits, whereas the mean figure for August recruiting 1908-9-10-12-13 was 8.9% in this group, i.e., no appreciable change. Thus lured by the excitement of active service, albeit against fellow workers, the appeal of social class-solidarity was meaningless and this offers a further reflection upon the psychology of recruits to the Regular Army.

It is possible then to say that, for one part of the working class, recruiting to the army was inextricably woven together either with the spectacle of the carnival of Empire, or the excitement of active service, or both. Unskilled workers and particularly those with previous military experience, appear most motivated by the dress, ceremonial and drill and thus perhaps with some inchoate sense of duty and service. It is possible that such recruits initially joined their Militia or Volunteer units for essentially similar reasons, or again it is possible that their participation in part-time soldiering profoundly affected their sense of nationalism.

To test another hypothesis, inspect Graph 11.A at March 1909 and December/January 1910, at the time of the Naval Scares. The schedule shows that in March 1909, recruiting fell following high winter unemployment. At this point, the Birmingham press mentioned the Naval "crisis" but with little enthusiasm, and a whole series of patriotic

"invasion" plays ran the boards of the Birmingham theatres.¹
60,000 Territorial Force pamphlets were distributed, and 20,000 National Service League leaflets. None of this activity affected recruiting statistics.

In December 1909, prior to the General Election, the "Scare" was revived. From March, the German bogey had been kept in public attention by best-selling spy stories, films and exaggerated alarms in the popular press. From December, the activities of Beresford, Mulliner and the Unionists anxious for office were boosted by Blatchford's hair-raising articles in the Daily Mail, and received support of the Birmingham press.

Graph 11.A does show high recruiting in these months. First, for those with previous military experience, the Dec.1909 peak is unusually high and the Jan.1910 figure is clearly above any other except for those achieved during the Royal visit to Birmingham, the Coronation and railway strike. For those without previous military experience, the gross figure for January exceeds even the Coronation enlistments. The great bulk of all these increases comes from unskilled labour (Table 11.7).

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
No previous Military experience	13	18	54
Previous service in Militia/S.R.	6	31	28
Previous service in Territorial Force	4	9	13

Table 11.7. Recruiting to the Army in Birmingham by Unskilled Workers, Nov.1909-Jan.1910.

1. This is discussed in Chapters 12 and 13.

Of course, recruiting was always high in winter, but if anything, the previous years' figures ought to have been much greater, for 1908/9 was a time of very severe economic distress.¹ Recruits were again drawn from all industries; there is no "bulge" in any sector to suggest a particular bankruptcy or strike. The figures then are much higher than would normally be expected.

It must be added however, that although the figures are unusual, one is talking of perhaps only 70 recruits in excess of the expected total for December and January 1909-10. As a relative figure, this is significant; as an absolute figure related to the total Birmingham working class, it is marginal. Yet if at the margin, up to 70 people (principally unskilled workers) could become influenced by the naval and invasion scare to the extent of enlistment, then surely many more could have been equally credulous in varying degrees but taken no action.

It remains to explain why the winter "scare" was so successful whilst the March "scare" apparently was not. As is clear from the above evidence, a lack of employment appears to have provided a final incentive to men who were already partially disposed to enlist for other reasons. Graph 11.B showed that March-May were seasonally good employment months in Birmingham. Second, as will be noted in Chapter 12, the March 1909 "scare" had about it all the makings of a good Whitehall Theatre farce. The plays and films which were intended to horrify, tended to parody; the popular press were not so well disposed to capitalise. By January, the Yellow Press, Unionist Party,

1. Footnote 2 to Table 11.5.

and individuals like Blatchford and Beresford gave the 'scare' bolstered authenticity.

If it is true that the "Cassandra Chorus" provoked enlistment, then it is possible that recruits joined either because they believed Britain as a nation was in imminent peril, or because they believed that the excitement of battle was soon to dawn. The latter attitude is more likely. First, because the attraction of exciting conflict appears to have stimulated the Aug. 1911 figures, and because war itself always has and still does prove a good recruiter. Second, because were this a reaction purely and altruistically based upon the desire to defend the homeland then recruits could have joined the Territorial Force. There was no mention in the press of any greater inflow during these winter months into the local T.F. Units. Either way, it seems possible and likely that press propaganda was successful in provoking some description of aggressive nationalistic activity from, principally, the unskilled working class.

It is dangerous to rely too heavily upon statistical proofs and of course, random factors which are not evident from the sources studied could profoundly affect the analysis. But taking the findings together with the quotes of ordinary and erstwhile soldiers, it does seem then that nationalistic attitudes played a great part in Regular Army recruiting.

The A.B.303 study tells something about Militia recruitment too. Militia joining the Regulars were drawn from a lower social strata and were younger than ordinary recruits or those from the Territorial Force.¹ The Militia was not popular among men with a steady

1. Appendix 2.

job; the initial three months training and one month annually was discouraged by employers,¹ and thus men from the "wandering labourer class"² were more likely to join. The militia's unskilled-worker reputation acted as a disincentive to skilled men; those who joined were apt to understate their occupation. During the Boer War, when pay was given to skilled tradesmen, trade tests showed that men who had claimed to be labourers when joining were in fact carpenters, bricklayers etc. Many were said to have given as their reason "because it is not the correct thing for an artisan to enlist in the Militia."³

Nor was the Militia either an efficient or effective fighting force. Its training was insufficient without several month's embodiment, to match it against an invasion of England; its officers were inadequately trained and it had no field services v.g. artillery, transport or Engineers. The Norfolk Commission concluded in 1903 that

the Militia, in its existing condition,
is unfit to take the field for the
defence of the country. 4.

Thus in the Haldane "Reforms" of 1908, the Militia became only a "Special Reserve" whose job it was to provide drafts for Line battalions overseas in time of war. The new S.R. battalions were no longer for home defence, and no longer would take the field as operational

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1. N.C. q 5178-5202. W. Johnson Galloway, Managing Director of Galloways of Manchester.
 2. ibid. q 5728 Yorkshire R.G.A. Militia.
 3. ibid. q 16803. Col. Lord Raglan, C.O. of R. Mon. R.E. Only one unit claimed to be an 'artisans' unit - the C.O. refusing to take men without good references, q 18364. Col. Healey. 3 S.W.B.
 4. N.C. Report, para. 33.

units.¹ The initial training was increased to six months.

Looking to the post-1908 Militia then, the Special Reserve men could hardly have joined in order to be ready to defend their country in time of invasion. That was not their rôle. Nor could Militia/Special Reserve units have been social clubs. Meeting only once a year and then in a Regular Army barracks, the battalions lacked the mess life, the smokers and soirées, parties and regular club activity that was essential to the Volunteers.

A major reason for enlisting was to survive unemployment. Thus the principal Birmingham units were over strength in depressions and under strength in booms:

	1904	1905	1906
5 Bn. Royal Warw. Regt.	934	751	593
6 Bn. R. War. Regt.	953	758	614
Unemployment %	6.0	5.0	3.6

(National figure from
Trade Union Returns)

Table 11.8. Unemployment and Recruitment to major Militia Units in Birmingham 1904-6. establishment authorised for each unit, 902 (Sources: Labour Gazette 1904-6; Army (Militia Training Establishments) Return 1906 [1907] Cd 3364).

1. The Militia were at first offered status as senior members of the new Territorial Force, in which case they could have kept their individual identities. Cd 3366 (1907) Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill, Memorandum from the Secretary of State for War. Their Commanding Officers rejected this, scorning the T.F. as unworthy and unprofessional and submitting instead, eleven demands to the Secretary of State which, in effect, gave their units equal status with the Regulars. Cd 3513 (1907) Report of the War Office Committee appointed to discuss certain Militia questions with Representative officers of the Militia. The C.O.'s, too proud to bend and unwilling to admit the decadence of their units, saw them disbanded.

A second reason for joining the Militia was to either sample Army life, or to attain the physical standard necessary to join a Line battalion. One estimate¹ claimed that 60-70% of Militia joined for these reasons. Of the Birmingham units, well over half of the annual total of Militia recruits joined the Regular army; in the statistical AB 303 study, 22% of all recruits in Birmingham from 1910 to 1913 were drawn from the Militia or Special Reserve.

	1902		1903	
	Recruits	Join Regulars	Recruits	Join Regulars
5 Bn. R. War. R.	516	267	246	209
6 Bn. R. War. R.	600	386	276	194

Table 11.9 Numbers of Recruits to the Major Birmingham Militia Units, and numbers joining the Regular Army from these Units. Source: N.C. Appendix LXII.

Such recruits to the Militia would already thus have shown a disposition to join the Regular Forces. Notice that during the Royal visit and Coronation celebrations, and even the naval scare, the bulk of the increase in Regular recruiting figures came from the Militia. The disposition to join the army then, strongest among the lower working class, was fed by the temporary spectacle of grand military display or by the possibility of conflict but it was based upon a bedrock of previous and enduring commitment to army. Among the lower working class it seems, existed a group for whom the army had

1. NC q 20027. Col. H.A. Walsh, C.O. Lancashire Fusiliers.

become an acceptable and attractive career proposition. Joining the army had become a tradition in some lower working class households; children, regaled by stories of excitement and adventure from erst-while soldier relatives, had their patriotism "fed in the main by pictures of the King and British soldiers that they saw on some of the films."¹ Some unskilled parents were noted in one study, of being extremely proud of their children wearing the King's uniform,² (no doubt a contrast to the rags and tatters) and seeing the marked physical improvement in height and weight gained on an army diet.³

The similarity between reasons for joining the Regular and Militia armies extends to the possibility of becoming engaged in battle. For this reason, 68 Militia battalions volunteered for service overseas in the Boer War - making 45,566 men who went to South Africa.⁴ In his study of Boer War working class recruitment, Richard Price⁵ ignores the Militia; he claims (mistakenly) that 35 battalions stayed at home, that the militia were principally agricultural labourers and thus not truly urban working class (again incorrect), and that the Militia were obliged to do as they were told anyway. To go overseas, 75% of each unit were required to volunteer (the other 25% being allowed to stay at home if they wished), and

1. A. Freeman, "Boy Life and Labour. An enquiry undertaken at the request of the Birmingham Education Committee" 1914. p.134.

2. ibid. p.69.

3. Frank Richards gained 3" in height and 3 stone in weight. op.cit. p.336.

4. Dunlop. op.cit. p.90.

5. Price, op.cit. esp. p.181.

according to emphatic evidence given before the Elgin Commission,¹ no pressure was brought to bear. It may be noticed too, that from late 1901 and 1902, when the Militia went abroad, its recruiting figures soared.

	1901	1902	1903
5 R. War. R.	366	515	246
6 R. War. R.	415	600	276

Table 11.10 Recruits to the Major Birmingham Militia Units 1901-3.

Source: N.C. Append LXII.

Three forces would have been at work here. First, overseas travel was an attraction in itself. Second, like the Yorkshire Light Infantry Militia of Sheffield, they went because "they loved soldiering."² Third, if they were easily inspired by ceremonial then they would have been inspired by the displays of crowd jingoism and eulogistic send-offs to troops.

It is not possible to state the number of militiamen in Birmingham exactly, for numbers fluctuated with unemployment and Regular recruiting and men were also not restricted to joining local regiments. Out of 1017 militiamen recruited in the AB303 study, 36% were R. Warwicks Regt., 20% were Staffordshire Regt., and 35% were Worcester Regt. In 1904 the six militia battalions of these three regiments held 5212 soldiers;³ to guess, probably some 3500 maximum would be from Birmingham. The age distribution of militia was quite wide - 81.7% being 18-35

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1. Royal Commission on the South African War. q 5255 Maj. Gen. H.C. Barrett.
 2. N.C. q 4063/4. Col. Lambert, 3 Bn, Connaught Rangers.
 3. Return of Militia 1904 (1905 Cd2697).

years.¹ In the County Borough and Aston then of 75570 men aged 18-35,² some (2860) 3.8% would be Militia. But since militiamen were mostly unskilled labourers, the involvement would be with a population of c.9070 (12%) to c.15110 (20%). Theoretically then, between 31.5% - 18.9% of the unskilled labourers aged 18-35 would have been militiamen.

Regular Army (and hence militia) training was in drill, dress and firearms, with great emphasis placed upon regimental tradition and upon the authority relationship between the leaders and the led. The organisation of corps into regiments, each with their own badges, emblems, music, Colours and distinctive histories was critical in focusing the allegiance of the individual soldier. Military histories note how, in battle, appeal was rarely made to the soldier's patriotism but nearly always to regimental honour. Within the close proximity of death, something very close, obvious and almost tangible would be needed to motivate individuals to supreme acts of self-sacrifice, and patriotism was all too distant, too lofty a conception. The 'esprit de corps' of that regiment; - the complex interaction of human relationships between the leaders and led, gave soldiers an identity, a cause, and a motivation to fight.

British army training stressed this; one soldier receiving recruit training at Aldershot in 1891 noted how he was given lectures by commanding officers on "esprit de corps" twice in as many weeks.³ A handbook for British officers, a positive bible of decorum and

1. Army Militia Training Establishments Return 1899 C 9152 and Cd 84.

2. Census 1911, loc.cit.

3. Anon. "Experiences of a Soldier" MS 24ff. N.A.M.:7008-13 c.1899.

correctitude, advised its readers:

No troops who had not been animated by the loftiest feelings, among which pride of race and esprit-de-corps take a foremost place, could possibly have accomplished what the Regular Army has done of late; we must be careful to foster and encourage the growth of these and kindred sentiments, and we must ever bear in mind that esprit-de-corps especially is a plant of the most tender growth. 1.

The regimental tradition, in many ways unique to the British Army in its operation, was the agency for the translation of nationalism to the working class soldier. Each regiment owed allegiance to the sovereign; its successes in battle were landmarks either in the defence of Britain or in the expansion of Empire. Its traditions, symbolised in the pomp and circumstance of ceremonial, were interwoven inextricably with and enshrined essential strands of nationalism and imperialism. Its leadership was drawn from the aristocracy and upper middle class, to whom it was expected soldiers would deferentially adopt instant obedience:

No one is quieter than Tommy Atkins at spotting the 'gentleman'; it may sound snobbish, I dare say it is snobbish to say so, but the fact remains that men will follow a 'gentleman' much more readily than they will an officer whose social position is not so well assured. That this is the case no one who knows our soldiers will dispute for a moment. 2.

Soldiers thus participated in a 'second hand' nationalism; the focus of their allegiances was translated from distant and abstract national loyalty to temporal institutions with tangible symbols of

1. A British Officer, "Social Life in the British Army", (LONGMANS) 1900 p.x.

2. ibid. p.xvi.

British dominion. It has been noted too, that British soldiers' attitudes to natives in India were often both authoritarian and racist; army training would reinforce this:

In India, (the young officer) is the representative of a conquering race, which holds by the sword the possessions which the sword has won... in moulding the character of the young soldier, even in the humblest grade, (this) doubtless contributes largely to acquiring the habit of command and the air of authority which so soon became part of the nature of the British soldier in the East. 1.

The army was therefore a powerful tool for the education of nationalism among the working class. Soldiers who served for six years, including a term in India, left the army without the option (in most cases) of continuing their service. Old soldiers often appeared as great supporters of nationalism - thus Blatchford, Frank Richards and the Birmingham soldier, Corbett, who wrote

What officers we had then, gentlemen a soldier could look up to with respect and admiration...At that time, if any Englishman was publicly insulted in any part of the world there would have been war had no public apology been forthcoming. 2.

But for many, the different authority relationships of the factory or shop floor were confusing; employers claimed that, without the strict discipline they had grown used to in the army and without the outdoor life as well, they often made bad workers.³ Those joining

1. ibid. p.74.

2. A.F. Corbett, op.cit. p.48.

3. N.C. q 6629: R.W. Burridge, General Manager of Harrods. See Birmingham Daily Mail, 28 Apr.1909 - three letters from ex-soldiers, complaining that employers were biased against soldiers and that they could therefore not find work. If they did get a job, employers were apt to take whatever small pension the soldier had into account, and reduce his wages.

the police force felt more at home, no doubt.¹ But many soldiers became (without industrial training) unskilled workers, wandering labourers² and finally workhouse inmates.³ Perhaps that was why the army tradition was strongest among the unskilled and casual labour working class.

This tradition, wrapped in the myth of military nationalism, was inspired and given new life by ceremonial, by war and by possible conflict, even with fellow workers. Recruits to the army then, were not necessarily propelled by unemployment; being temporarily out of work precipitated enlistment, but for many the decision rested upon appeals which were, in one sense or another, nationalistic, and which touched upon chords and traditions in working class culture of its involvement with the military.

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1. "The Army and What It Offers", Recruiting booklet, January 1914, p.10. Police and public services held a quota of vacancies open for ex-soldiers.
 2. Frank Richards Old Soldier Sahib, found he could not get used to the mines again after the army, and set off 'tramping'.
 3. Birmingham Daily Post, 19 Nov.1909: letter from President of British Anti-Militarist Association, that 20,000 ex-soldiers were workless in the U.K. Birmingham Daily Mail, 8 Jan.1908: at a recent Indian Mutiny celebration it was found that most veterans were in workhouses. Lord Roberts then set up a Patriotic Fund, and claimed that (Jan 23.1908) there were over 1000 military veterans in workhouses. In Birmingham, half of the "veterans" were kept out of workhouses by the Military Veterans' Association, a private charity begun in 1894.

Chapter 12

Military Aspects: (2) The Volunteers.

The strategic rôle of the Volunteer army was to provide home defence against an invasion of England, should the Regular Army be overseas. Formed ad hoc at various periods of history to meet national crises, it finally achieved permanence in the early 1860's. Its number of members rose to a national total of 288,000 in 1901; by the beginning of the First World War, it had fallen to 223,000.¹

A Volunteer Corps was formed in Birmingham in Nov. 1859. Men were recommended and supported by the employers, who often paid for the uniforms and equipment.² The gunmakers for instance, subscribed £1000 towards the expenses of their own men in 1860, yet individual expense could still be high for 100 men attested at that time were required to pay 20/- each for clothing and essentials.³

These early Volunteer Corps, unlike their successors from the mid '80's onwards, tended to be drawn from the middle class. The first seventy to enrol in 1859 for instance were all prominent townspeople, merchants, clerks to the Council, bankers, the three Webleys and George Kynoch of the gunmaking firms. Initially the movement was stirred and inspired by the fierce defensive patriotism from which it was born;

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1. Annual Return of Volunteers 1906 (Cd3357 1907) Annual Return of the Territorial Force 1913 1914 Cd7254.
 2. As had happened in 1778, when £2000 was raised; again in 1794-8 when £10,000 was raised and again as will shortly be noted in 1908 - the employers provide considerable and indispensable support. BIRMINGHAM MERCURY JAN. 27 1900.
 3. Birmingham Morning News, July 18. 1871.

there was something faintly ridiculous in its pretensions both to military efficacy and sacrificial patriotism.

In defending Britain against attack, these middle class Volunteers claimed to defend a cause far greater than country or soil - the heritage of pacific liberalism:- (The Warwickshire Volunteer Song, 1853).

O not for vain and idle pomp
The soldier's plume we wear,
And not to feed a boastful pride,
The deadly rifle bear,
But still to keep this grand old Isle,
The strong, the brave, the free;
To guard our rights, our laws preserve,
And hold our liberty.
O God with peace our country bless,
Watch o'er her from on high!
But Oh! if war his standard rear,
Then teach us how to die. 1.

The appeal of this brand of defensive nationalism was threefold. First, it perpetuated a traditional belief among that section of the community that Volunteered, found in the songs and poems of the 1790's and even before, that the Army rather than posing a threat to the Constitution could defend the freedom and liberty of individuals from foreign oppression. Linked to this then, came a belief that foreign political systems were indeed illiberal even amoral. Finally and principally, the Volunteer army lacked aggression; its role was to defend, not to embark upon imperial conquest. These three aspects of defensive nationalism could thus appeal to all shades of political and religious opinion within the community. Note too, the invocation of the Divine and again, the implicit assumption that the fight will be won.

Down to the 1890's, two things happened to the Volunteer units. First they became, supported as they were by local industry and the

1. Birmingham Morning News, Aug.8 1871.

local aristocracy and in the absence of any apparent invasion, high class social clubs for retired army officers, local nobility and manufacturers anxious for entry into local society. Then, from the 1860's, they grew unfashionable with the middle classes, and the ranks became increasingly filled with working class recruits.¹ Yet even in 1890, being a member of the local Volunteers could be expensive; with a government grant of only 12/- p.a. per capita, the local Birmingham battalion found itself needing some £5000 for clothing and equipment.² The working class that joined then tended to be skilled and relatively wealthy.

The numbers of Volunteers in Birmingham rose from about 1100 in the 1860's,³ to over 2000 in 1885.⁴ During the Boer War they exceeded 3000 and stayed static at just over that number (3300) until the Haldane Reforms of 1908. The effects of these reforms were dramatic; by 1910 the new Territorial Force (as it then became) nearly reached 6000.⁵

The occupations of Volunteer infantry nationally in 1903

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1. See R.Q. Gray, "Styles of Life. The Labour Aristocracy and Class Relations in later Nineteenth Century Edinburgh" in International Review of Social History, 1973, XVIII p.439, for growth of artisan volunteering in Edinburgh (1859, 2 companies, 1868, 8 companies).
 2. Col. C.J. Hart, "History of the 1st VOL. BN. R. WAR. REGT., 1782-1906" B'HAM 1906. pp.196/8.
 3. Birmingham Morning News, Sept 5 1871.
 4. Birmingham Gazette, Dec 20 1885.
 5. Annual Returns of the Volunteer Force, 1898-1907; Annual Returns of the Territorial Force 1908-1913. Cd titles given in bibliography. Based upon units with H.Q.'s located inside Birmingham; not including South Staffs, regiments located in Handsworth and Walsall.

are given below.

	%
i. Professional Men	1.8
ii. Clerks	9.6
iii. Shopmen	5.3
iv. Artisans	35.3
v. Men in business on their own account	3.2
vi. Agricultural labourers	4.2
vii. Town labourers	8.6
viii. Miners	6.0
ix. Factory or Manufacturing hands	12.9
x. Men in private employ (gardeners)	2.0
xi. Men in government employ	2.9
xii. Other occupations	8.0
	100%

Table 12.1. Occupations of the Volunteer Infantry, 1903.

Source: N.C. Appendix VIII VOLS (INF) p. 253. q.2.

The greatest numbers were drawn from the wealthier working class - (iii), (iv) and (v) - 43.8%. Distinctively unskilled or casual workers (vi, vii) only number 12.8%, and there was a lower ^{-middle} class element of 11.4% (i,ii).

In general, promotion depended upon social ranking. The non-commissioned officers of the units were drawn from the foremen or overseers of the factories.¹ 'Officer material' was generally drawn from the middle and upper middle classes; in 1903, 29% professional,

1. N.C. q.10027. Where a unit was drawn from one occupation and class, e.g. colliers, the N.C.O.'s were "really useless, because the private will punch his head when he gets him down below." q.8069: Welsh Vol. Inf. Bde.

35% businessmen, 22.6% employees, and "gentlemen of independent means" only 6.5%.¹

The principal group composing the rank-and-file were "artisans", defined as 'men in continuous skilled employment', and more affluent individuals like shopkeepers and smallmasters on the fringes of the working and middle classes. This was true of Birmingham itself, for most of the 1st Volunteer Battalion were "artisan." The Commanding Officer, Col. Hart, claimed however that no one would object to the "labouring classes" joining the companies "as long as they behaved themselves".² In Manchester, where Volunteering attracted greater numbers, units included "clerks, porters,...and a large sprinkling of casual labourers."³ In Sheffield, where the numbers Volunteering were similar to Birmingham, the force was composed largely of artisans again.⁴ London apart, where the tradition of middle-class Volunteering was very strong, it seems that although the firm base for Volunteering was rooted in the skilled artisan, yet growth of the Force in local areas proceeded by attracting elements from other working class strata. This is of importance for the expansion of numbers in Birmingham in 1909 rested upon the enlistment of increasing numbers of labourers and factory hands, as discussed later.

1. N.C. Appendix, VIII Vols. (INF) p.253.

2. N.C. Col. Hart's evidence q 10357 - 10440. Replies to the questionnaire circulated by the Commission's Secretary, which would give far more detailed evidence, are not traceable in the F.R.O.

3. N.C. q 5580, q 11926.

4. N.C. q 5580.

It may seem strange that this organisation should attract any working class support; certainly, its senior officers were hardly in sympathy with what were, to the broad mass of working people, focal points of their culture. In his evidence to the Norfolk Commission, Col. Hart of the 1st Volunteer Battalion appeared quite angry with "shiftless workers":

when I see reports of these football matches, I know exactly what it means, that some 20,000, 30,000 or 40,000 men are simply looking on at a football match played and this largely means betting. I wish I could get hold of them to go for a ten mile march somewhere! 1.

Neither was the C.O. of the new Territorial Battalion (formed in 1908) of any different opinion:

Passing on to consider the many advantages men derive from drill and discipline, Col. Ludlow spoke scornfully of the 'miserable cigarette smoking monkeys' whom he had seen squeezing into the music hall. 2.

These senior officers and others in the Territorial or Volunteer Force sincerely believed that national character, physique, and morals were in rapid decay. One purpose of the Force was to inculcate drill and discipline into the working classes, in the drive to National Efficiency.

Again, unlike the early Volunteer Corps of the 1860's but following the use of the Volunteers in South Africa, came strong hints of a wider and Imperial role for the Force. Arising out of an uncertainty of Empire, was a growing, fiercely militant and aggressive attitude to Imperialism

1. N.C. q 10283.

2. Birmingham Daily Post, April 1 1908.

which saw a need for a united, trained, disciplined even quasi-Prussian nation state. Thus Col. Ludlow again, speaking at a recruiting meeting:

...only this morning I read of the Viceroy of our great Indian Empire being stoned within a few miles of the capital. When such insults are openly offered to the representative of the greatest Empire in the world, we may at any moment be called upon to defend India, the 'brightest jewel in the British Crown'. 1.

With the formation of the new Territorial Force, Birmingham needed to recruit one new infantry battalion (8th Bn R. War. R. - based in Aston), and new artillery, engineer, service and medical units. On the 1st April, 1908, 3,140 extra men were needed.² For reasons discussed below, many of the old Volunteers refused to transfer to the new units; of the 2700 Volunteer Infantry in Birmingham before reorganisation, only some 810 had transferred to the Territorial Force by 30th April, 1908.³ To reach Establishment figures then, perhaps up to 5000 new soldiers were required. By June 1909 they had enlisted.⁴ By any measure this was a remarkable achievement, and it is instructive to consider the methods by which the recruits were raised.

One means of recruiting familiarly using drill and ceremonial, was to march through the streets with bayonets fixed and Colours blowing and with the band playing patriotic and regimental marching tunes. This ritual of military display formed a vital element in

1. ibid.

2. Birmingham Daily Mail, April 1st.1908.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, May 5th.1908.

4. Birmingham Daily Mail, June 23rd.1909.

attracting working class volunteers; it was a traditional and popular method that had proved effective many times. Thus in 1904, the 1st Vol. Bn. needing some 700 men to meet new War Office Establishment figures, had paraded 2000 Volunteers through the streets of Birmingham.¹ Clearly, the new Territorial regiments needed to first attract large numbers of recruits before they could actually parade them, and consequently this method tended to be used more from early 1909 onwards (by which time, the deficiency in numbers had fallen to 1,148).² Thus Col. Ludlow paraded 500 men to

a magnificent reception at the hands
of enormous crowds that witnessed their
march through the streets. 3.

and the 5th and 6th Bns.⁴ had 5000 onlookers to a drumhead service of 1200 men, paraded with fixed bayonets, in Calthorpe Park.⁵

The parade was so good a recruiter that some officers bitterly resented War Office moves to make the Force more efficient by limiting drill, and emphasising field manoeuvres. The President of the Institute of Volunteer Commanding Officers complained to the Norfolk Commission:

I believe the ordinary Volunteer is best got at by a certain amount of ceremonial drill, because I think it not only appeals to him, but to all the boys who stand round the barrack square and watch, and I think that driving us out into the field to be always doing manoeuvres has this year rather reduced the popularity of Volunteering. I think actual discipline drill is not only conducive to making a better man and a more disciplined Volunteer, but I think they like it, and I hope that this sort of thing will be returned to more than it has been lately. 6.

1. Col. C.J. Hart, op.cit. pp.320/4 and p.336.

2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Feb 12th.1909.

3. ibid.

4. Successors to the 1st Vol. Bn. R. War. R.

5. Birmingham Daily Mail, June 21st.1909.

6. N.C. c 7695 Col. F.W. Tennet-Walker, C.O. 3 Vol.Bn.W.Yorks, Regt. of Leeds.

A second method of recruiting, really quite new, was to stage-manage impressive indoor displays and meetings. But of course, one needs a captive audience and on occasions where Commanding Officers' lack of savoir faire of working class culture made them choose dates and times coincidental with local football matches, meetings had to be abandoned.¹ Where these meetings were patronised, they seem to have been most impressive affairs; bunting, bugles, songs, hymns, special lighting and fervently patriotic speeches brought over 1000 people into Aston Town Hall, which only held 750. Under the benevolent gaze of the Lord Mayor, a General, Col. Ludlow and a clutch of local worthies men flocked forward to sign on.² As such, the Territorial Force was making use of techniques which religious revivalists both before and since have found most advantageous.

A third recruiting method was to promote plays, or sketches in the music halls or local theatres. To some extent, the music-halls reflected the current themes of popular interest anyway; for instance, the American singer Dorma Margan was a "distinct hit" at the Aston Hippodrome in April 1909, with her popular song

"Terri-Terri-Territorials".³

But in early 1909, coincidental with the Naval Scares, appeared a profusion of plays and playlets on the boards of Birmingham (and London - where they often appeared first). Thus in March 1909, the 'Grand' showed a military sketch "Drummed Out" - "as an aid to the effort which is now being made to encourage the military spirit."⁴ The 'Empire' showed

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, March 12th.1908. Lord Mayor at Victoria Hall, Aston: meeting abandoned - Aston Villa at 'home' .
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, April 1st.1908; Birmingham Daily Post, April 1st.1908.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, April 6th.1909.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, March 28th.1909.

"Wake Up, England"¹ (a version of Norman Wrighton's play, "Britain's Awakening"), - an imaginary invasion of England, the plotting and intrigue of which is learnt of just in time by a British officer. But without equal, was the famed "An Englishman's Home", at the Theatre Royal. The Germans invaded Britain, smashed middle-class Mrs. Brown's dining room furniture and sent shells registering through her walls, only to be checked by the Territorial Force and finally defeated by the Regular Army. The Birmingham Mail was not impressed, and described the play as a "direct insult to every officer and man who has served or is serving in our civilian forces."² Yet it was used as a direct effort to recruit for the 8th Bn Territorial Force, for the audience were treated to pictures of the Territorials before the actual performance and in Birmingham, 60,000 recruiting leaflets were coincidentally distributed.³ Additionally, the National Service League distributed another 20,000 of its own pamphlets.⁴

The I.L.P. in particular, took exception to this play; of the London production, Ramsey MacDonald complained

the people trembled in their shoes
because an army officer bred ideas
of invasion by bringing an invader
in whiskers on the stage of a London
theatre, and not telling them where he
came from. 5.

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, Mar 9th.1909.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Mar 10th.1909.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, Mar 11th.1909, June 23rd.1909.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, Oct 26th.1909.
 5. Birmingham Daily Mail, Mar 15th.1909.

- which was doubly untrue, for not only were people told that the invader came from Germany, but they also failed to tremble in their shoes. Of the 60,000 leaflets distributed, the net result was the enrollment of five recruits;¹ to the 20,000 N.S.L. leaflets, not a single reply was received.² Yet the play was so popular, it returned again in October. At the first performance, the manager addressed his audience:

He felt deeply the urgent and vital necessity of putting our national house in order. If we did not do so we should be at the mercy of a thoroughly unscrupulous foe - a foe that had always shown itself absolutely relentless in the pursuit of its predetermined policy...They had all emphasised the danger to which we were exposed from modern Germany...On the other hand, Germany never moved until she was quite ready; she waited for the psychological moment. She never made a mistake, 3.

- continuing on to call for more Dreadnought battleships, the N.S.L., an awakening of national awareness, and receiving "hear-hears" and applause at appropriate points.

But people went to the play to be both amused ["the audience treats the genuinely tragic scenes as lightly as the farcical"⁴] and thrilled. Like Alfred Hitchcock, the manager was really setting the scene and "warming up" the audience. Perhaps the plays actually damaged the N.S.L.'s cause by making it seem so fictional. But again, along with the gradual intrusion of other anti-German propaganda, the plays helped

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, June 23.1909.

2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Oct.26 1909.

3. ibid.

4. ibid.

to frame a growing myth of the invading Prussian, which later so motivated recruitment in August 1914.

A fourth and popular recruiting method was to diversify social activities and forms of training within units, for clearly the best recruiter was the satisfied and enthusiastic soldier, who convinced his workmates. From time to time, the Volunteers had published posters in the workshops and factories "displaying the social side of Volunteering".¹ Several of the Volunteer battalions had already formed cyclist companies² for instance and in 1909, the Territorials succeeded in involving the St. John's Ambulance and Red Cross, in training the Volunteer Aid Detachments

with a view to training of the population to know what to do in the event of such a misfortune as an invasion of this country. 3.

In 1911, the South Midland Royal Garrison Artillery Battery at the Metropolitan Carriage Works over in Saltley, registered itself as a Working Men's Club, and affiliated to the Birmingham Social Clubs Union.⁴ And of course, Territorial units formed football and darts teams, and promoted concerts and smokers. It was doubtless the case that for many, joining the Territorials was an alternative to joining another social club - from cricket, football, cycling, even the public

1. Col. C.J. Hart, op.cit. p.320.

2. Handsworth Herald, July 25th.1903.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, August 23.1909. Col. Sir Herbert Parrot, Secretary of the St. John's Ambulance. Voluntary Aid Detachments were similar to the late Civil Defence Force; the close links between the St. J. Amb. and the T.F. are clear from posters and pamphlets: v.g. "War Office No.30 - with a view to obtain equipment necessary for Mobilisation for War "St. John's Ambulance Association, Posters, leaflets, reports 1913-70 (B'HAM REF. LIBRARY) f.1. dated 20 Mar.1913.

4. B.S.C.U. Handbook 1911/12.

house. Why these other alternatives were not chosen and what indeed, was attractive in the training of the units will be discussed further below.

The final and certainly the most effective recruiting method, was to involve employers of labour, large and small firms, in the formation of units within their companies or industries. Col. Ludlow of the 8th Bn., tilling new soil, certainly made considerable use of this; as recruiting flagged, time after time, he rewrote to and circularised employers and appealed to them even in the columns of the local newspaper; and with each effort, new recruits were gained.

Some employers needed no writing to, often because they themselves or their families had close connections with the Regular or Volunteer armies. Five months before the T.F. became formally organised in mid-1908, the chairman of the directors of the Metropolitan Carriage Works at Saltley had offered to raise a battery of heavy artillery, - six officers and 233 men, out of the 5,500 men and boys employed. At a meeting of the workers the proposal was very "cordially received", and the firm proceeded to supply money, drill areas and accommodation for its battery.¹ Not to be outdone, the Patent Shaft and Axletree Company of Wednesbury, Saltley and Oldbury announced five days later that it too, proposed forming one heavy battery.²

About this time, the brewers Mitchell and Butlers formed a section of infantry specifically as "an initiation of the co-operative movement between employers and the Volunteer Force".³

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, Dec 2.1907.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Dec 7.1907.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, Jan 17.1908.

Within the month, applications from firms began to flood in; the wholesale and retail drapers (led by J.N. Townsend of Newbury's Ltd.) proposed forming a company of infantry,¹ as did the jewellers;² and Col. Ludlow appealed to the banks and insurance companies ("a superior class of disciplined and educated men"), the jewellery and allied trades ("an intelligent body of men"), the Corporation Gas Department ("fine physique") and the railway companies (who had offered without success, years before) to form companies of infantry.³

Within a further month, more success. The Corporation Gasworkers, meeting at Saltley (the meeting being convened by Councillor Bowater - the brewer later to become C.O. of the 5th Battalion and Lord Mayor - members of the city council and a Major-General) agreed to form an infantry company of the 8th Bn.⁴ The Dunlop Rubber Company followed suit.⁵ Next came Ansells, spurred by the examples of other brewers,⁶ and on Feb 15th the Birmingham Jewellers and Silversmiths announced that not one, but two companies of infantry (5th and 8th Bn.) were to be formed.⁷ The B.S.A. gun factory at Small Heath, at a meeting of employees and managers, followed three weeks later. Already having their own rifle range, the B.S.A. firm agreed to supply mess rooms and set aside an area of the shop floor where their infantry company

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, Jan 11.1908.
 2. " " " Jan 17.1908.
 3. " " " Jan 20.1908.
 4. " " " Feb 12.1908.
 5. *ibid.*
 6. Birmingham Daily Mail, Feb 14.1908.
 7. " " " Feb 15.1908.

could drill.¹ And so the list continued to mount; on April 1st the Aston Town Council - very much under the aegis of the Ansell family (who appear most of the time to either provide the Lord Mayor, the Town Clerk, or both) began to encourage its employees to enlist;² then came Cooper and Goodes of Deritend³ and so on.

Firms were clearly anxious to help recruiting. It could be (though it is perhaps not very likely), that the rhetorical Col. Ludlow and his colleagues really convinced the employers that their lives, homes and property were in peril, and needed an army to defend them. For instance, Col. Ludlow speaking at a Drapers' dinner:-

There was...not in fact, anything outside the fleet to prevent a foreign army landing, marching to London, and dictating terms of peace in a week. It was a crisis in our history, and he appealed to them all to come forward and join the Territorial Army and make this country absolutely secure against invasion. 4.

Employers stood to gain two things from their men being members of the Territorial Force. First, it could increase the physical energy and "moral" health of their employees. Of course, many firms were concerned that the majority of their workers were physically unfit and undernourished. Cadbury's, as noted above, made physical exercise classes compulsory for all youth employees.⁵ But given the current

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, Mar 10.1908.

2. Birmingham Daily Post, Apr.1 1908.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, Apr.18 1908.

4. " " " March 21.1908.

5. R.G. Ferguson, "Educational Scheme Conducted at the Bourneville Works", in "A Handbook for Birmingham and Neighbourhood", ed. G.A. Auden, British Association (BIRMINGHAM) 1913. p.339.

bourgeois preoccupation with apparently declining "national spirit" and "moral decay", then the Force was seen as a suitable panacea to inculcate into the working classes discipline, drill, duty, diligence, perseverance and patriotism. Clear evidence of such beliefs is seen in the statements by employers of labour to the Norfolk Commission; one employer of 16,000 men in Sheffield for instance stated that

In France and Germany it is very desirable to graft in the people discipline, and there is not the slightest doubt discipline among the working classes is a most important feature, it would be a great advantage to this country; every Volunteer who has had any training at all is worth five per cent more to an employer of labour than an ordinary man who goes indifferently about his work, and does not know anything of discipline. 1.

Secondly, the pattern of recruiting by factory and firm, with the other ranks being drawn from the shop floor, the foremen becoming the N.C.O.'s and the management being the officers would work against class oriented ideas that promoted Trade Union militancy. It could help to compromise the position of the workers, give a secondary method of industrial discipline to the management, and reproduce the military structure of obedience to command upon the shop floor. Finally, it might have been thought to have led to deferential feelings for the officer managers from the worker soldiers.

For this reason the T.U.C. in 1909 instructed its members to boycott the Territorial Force.² The Birmingham Daily Mail military

1. N.C. q 9261.

2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Sept.6 1909.

correspondent, identifying himself both as a Trade Unionist and as a Territorial Force soldier, claimed that the "vast majority" of the Force were Trade Union members, and castigated the T.U.C. as representing "but a fraction" of the Trades Unionists in the country.

The root of the Congress's animosity to the military lies in the fact that the Territorial Force is a great Imperialiser, for no man can belong to it and be a Little Englander, and this is why it appeals to the instincts of the best manhood of the nation. 1.

It is quite possible then, that without all this employer support, Birmingham Territorial Force recruiting would have been much lower. Yet as a city, the target establishment set for the recruiters required an increase way in advance, pro rata, of any other in the United Kingdom. By January 1909, the units had reached 76% of their establishment (the highest national figure at that date except for Sheffield - which only required an increase of 655 men) and General Routt could say with justification

There is no doubt that the territorial scheme has been more successful in Birmingham than in any other town in Britain. 2.

There is reason to believe that the 1908 reorganisation broadened the social class distribution within the Force. It is clear that the 1903 Force was predominantly skilled artisan. The indications so far are that many artisans in Birmingham felt

1. ibid.

2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Jan 20.1909.

themselves to be socially something of a class apart. Col. Hart's tacit admission that labourers would be tolerated only "if they behaved themselves" reveals that, for the upper strata of the working class, the Volunteers had become an exclusive social club into which less affluent and less respectable working class elements would not be welcome. In areas like Manchester however, the Volunteers were much more popular and drew larger numbers because the Volunteer Force attracted casual labourers. In Birmingham before 1908, the Force was stagnant and indeed the Volunteer battalion of the South Staffordshires over in Handsworth was very much in decline.¹

The reorganisation of 1908 clearly 'shook up' the Force; less than 38.5% of the old Volunteers transferred to the new Territorials by the end of April 1908. The Force needed "shaking-up", for as the Norfolk Commission reported, it had become clearly militarily inefficient.² In particular the old Volunteers objected to the new training requirements of 40-50 periods and two weeks camp in the first year, with 10-20 periods in following years; they objected to increased government control of the Force and they objected to disclosing personal details about themselves (occupation and religion) on the new attestation forms.³

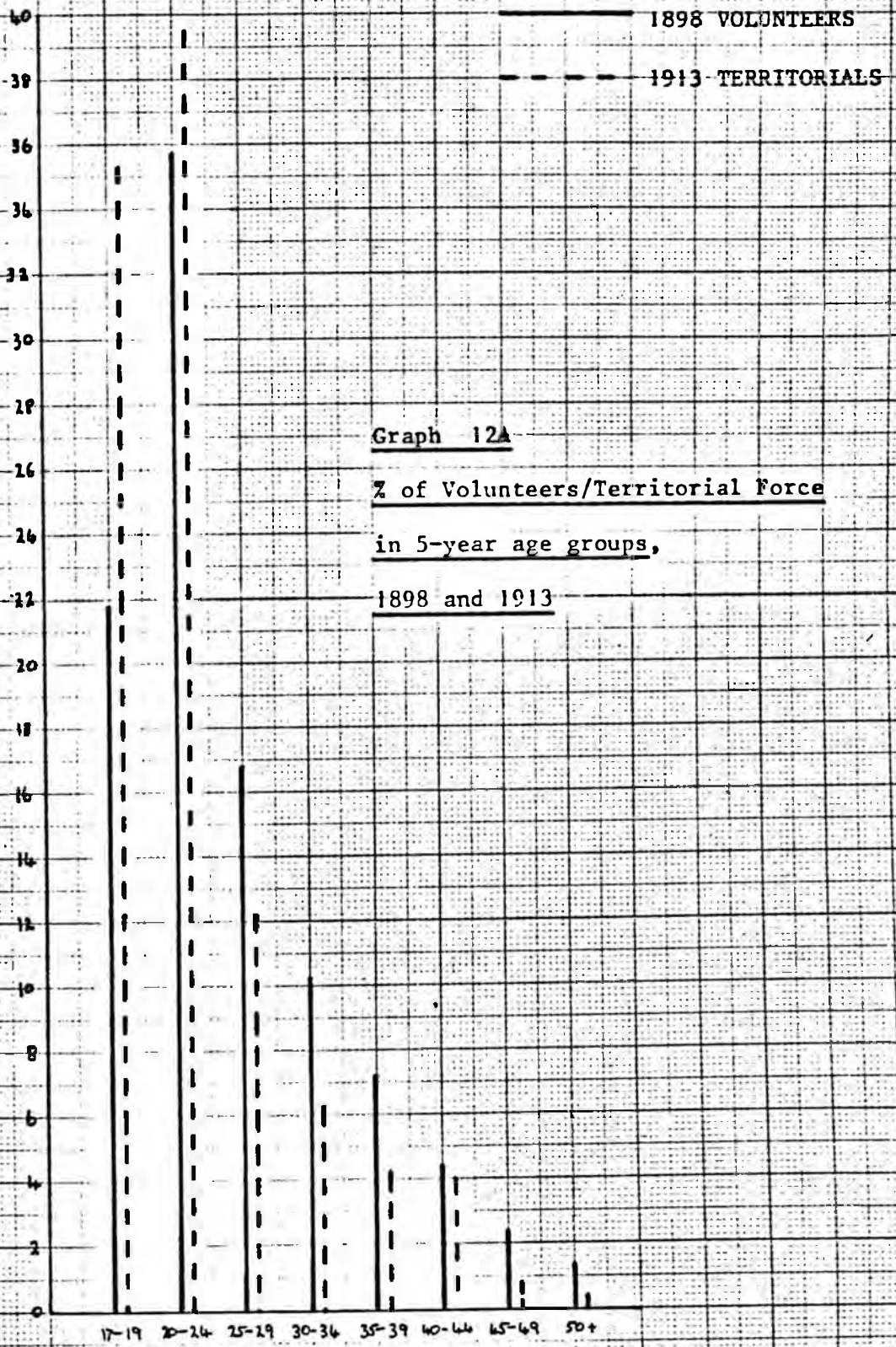
But it was now possible for a broader intake from the working class to contemplate joining. Previously the Volunteers had received little or no pay at camp.⁴ The new Territorials got full army pay

1. 1901=1215 men, 1907=803 men. Handsworth Herald, Nov 30.1901. Birmingham Daily Mail, Dec 11.1907.

2. N.C. Report, Para 49.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, Feb 12.1908.

4. N.C. Append. VIII, p.259. Depended on the C.O. of the unit; 58 Bns. gave no pay, others gave from 3d canteen ticket up to 2/6d per day and a few gave "separation allowances" for wives, of up to 10/- per whole camp.



for camp with separation allowance. In many cases they were not required to use up their annual holidays either, because sympathetic employers would grant extra holiday time for the camp.

The Territorial Force moreover became a much younger organisation; graph 12A illustrates this clearly for the whole schedule has shifted to the right, and in 1913 some 75% of the Force were under 25 years of age. The Birmingham Daily Mail noticed just two weeks after Territorial Force formation, that "large numbers of youths about 18 years of age were presenting themselves."¹ If 75% of the Territorial Force in Birmingham were aged 17-25 years then in 1911 the Force attracted 8.6% of the Birmingham male population between those ages.² This is likely to be an underestimate of social involvement, for the medical examination excluded a relatively large number of potential applicants.³ And again, the Force lost 20% of its members annually⁴ - voluntarily quitting or joining the Regular Army⁵ -, consequently the turnover would involve a very large section indeed of the working class community.

The new Territorial Force in Birmingham, with its emphasis upon respectability, tidiness and discipline, would still have found however that the support it attracted from the unskilled workers was limited. This group after all, still joined the Special Reserve/Militia. From the AB303 study it is clear that recruits to the Regular Army

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, April 18.1908.

2. 1911, 4193 in T.F. aged 17-25; 65174 in Greater Birmingham 17-25 CENSUS 1911. loc.cit. p.271.

3. 1903:25% of applicants rejected in Birmingham. N.C. q 10374.

4. Ann. Return of Volunteers 1906 Cd 3367 (1907).

5. 1906: 8.85% annual national turnover join Regulars, Navy or Militia. ibid.

from the Territorial Force were drawn from slightly more skilled groups than the general intake of recruits without military experience.¹

From 1910-14, 13.2% of Birmingham Regular army recruits came from the Territorial Force. Where the percentage of Territorial Force recruits enlisting from one industry was above the average, one either finds that industry to have more steady and stable employment - clerks or municipal workers v.g., or one finds that the recruits themselves were more skilled than the average (precious metal and jewellery, light engineering trades, new car and bicycle industries). The bias of these figures tends to indicate that the Territorial Force still drew considerable (though not exclusive) support from the artisan class, and those in continuous and stable employment.

The reasons for joining the Territorial Force were both nationalistic and hedonistic. In terms of the definition of the thesis, being attracted by displays and parades of soldiers, by drill, and involvement in stage-managed crowd patriotism are all aspects of nationalistic behaviour. In 1903, officers declared to the Norfolk Commission that their men were hardly at all motivated to join the Volunteers by pure patriotism.² By 1909, the deterioration of relations with Germany being reflected in the popular press and highlighted in the Naval Scares, and the prospect of war looming large in N.S.L. propaganda might have helped to modify attitudes. No significant change in Territorial Force recruiting can however,

1. Appendix 2.

2. N.C. v.g. q 15815, q 8835-6-7.

be traced to the Naval Scares and certainly the playlets of March and November 1909 added little.

I think the bulk of my men join because they like the show, the dress and they like the camp. ...Do you think your men join more for pleasure than for patriotism? - I think so decidedly. 1.

In stage managed events, provoked patriotism was a temporary phenomenon resting upon the creation of a charged and emotive environment. It is not felt that any enduring concern about the German threat was responsible for driving significant numbers of men into the Territorial Force. Men joined principally because they liked the training; through this may be investigated the psychology of Territorial Force soldiers.

Training included drill, weapons and elementary tactics and was provided by Regular army personnel attached to units, and N.C.O.'s from the Territorial Force itself trained on Regular courses. Drill was very important; its purpose was to impart a corporate identity to a body of individuals in order that they could be subjected to discipline. To the 2000 men going to camp for the first time, the 'Mail Territorial Force correspondent gave this advice:

...spring to attention when spoken to. The first duty of a soldier is obedience, for without discipline and obedience armies are powerless, and become a mere armed rabble. Whatever you are told to do, do it cheerfully. 2.

Discipline was certainly not unpopular among Territorial Force soldiers - as it tended to be among some Militiamen. Any comparison

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1. N.C. q 11967, + 69 Col. F. Haworth, C.O. 3VR Lancashire Fus. (Manchester)
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, July 12.1912.

of the crime and desertion figures shows that the Territorial Force were well behaved and suitably contented in their camps.

Like Regular units, Territorial Force battalions placed emphasis upon esprit-de-corps; for instance elements of competition were introduced into army exercises, as each unit would battle to win over others.¹ In encouraging such loyalties, the Territorial Force was emulating the football club, and the desire for sport and exercise. It is important however, to distinguish Territorial Force membership from that of an ordinary social club; the working mens' clubs in Birmingham were nowhere near so well supported nor so enduring. The soirrées and darts matches of Territorial Force social life did not suppress the militaristic aspect of the Force; drill, rifle shooting and mock battles were attractions that the working mens' clubs did not offer. And the loyalties that the Territorial Force attempted to encourage were not solely local for the ethos of the Force was essentially nationalistic; it was part of the King's army and it wore the King's uniform. Its ceremonial was a part of the ceremonial of State occasions. Thus the battalions' 'Colours', a focal point for local esprit-de-corps loyalty, were as well a symbol of militaristic nationalism:

A sign of duty towards our King and
Country in the sight of God were being
unfurled to preach the gospel of patriotism
and duty in every shire in the Kingdom...
new apostles to manifest the gospel to
those who are deaf to listen to words, and
wherever they are carried through the streets,
amidst bristling bayonets, wherever the people
lift up their heads to gape at the British
flag, wherever the civilian bears his head as
the Colours go by, there these dumb apostles

1. At camp battalions "must foster 'esprit-de-corps' among officers and men alike, than which there is no stronger factor in war",
VOLUNTEER SERVICE GAZETTE, June 17.1898.

of patriotism will preach the doctrine of duty with fluttering silk. 1.

Perhaps the Territorial Force had a role to "imperialise" the civilian population as well. The 'Mail military correspondent, annoyed at the common man's lack of deference for this fluttering silk, complained

The people have not yet realised that they are expected to uncover as the Colours pass by...Let us not forget, and let not sheer ignorance in future cause us to be guilty of a breach of patriotism. 2.

The Colours were but one aspect in a whole complex of national and Imperial symbolism. Volunteer officers before the Norfolk Commission were not at all worried that men joined their units without "patriotic" motivation (leaving aside the desire for nationalistic military training). Drill and discipline were designed to make worthier Britons of them and the Force viewed itself as a "great Imperialiser."

...I should think half of them come in for...unworthy reasons...the wearing of uniform and all sorts of things. I should be glad to have men driven in by any means, and I think we could make men of the majority of them if they were driven in. 3.

Whether the men were "imperialised", it will never be possible to say.⁴ It is however, unlikely that men would have joined the

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail (military correspondent - a sgt. in 5Bn.) Jun.25,1909.
 2. " " " July 9.1909.
 3. N.C. q 7736. Col. Tennet-Walker, President of the Institute of Volunteer C.O.'s etc.
 4. It is interesting to note that of the 13.2% of Regular Army recruits who came from the T.F. 1910-13, most tended to join either the more ceremonial or vainglorious units (Foot Guards, Cavalry) or units with a particular and exciting reputation - particularly the Scottish units like the Seaforth Highlanders. Appendix 2.

Territorial Force or stayed on, if they had positively objected to the imperialist and militarist ethos of the Force. Two possibilities exist, that recruits were either apathetic to any of the diverse strands of militarist nationalism, or that they were in some ways pro-nationalist. In terms of the latter, it is clear that many were carried away by the ceremonial, and by the drill, and were susceptible to stage-managed proselytising patriotism. But apathetic or not, without positive objections to the values of militarism, the Territorial Force would have found its recruits captive and easy prey for its propaganda. Supported by the employers, the newspapers, and relying upon the drill and discipline pursued in the schools, the Territorial Force must be viewed as yet another powerful agency of nationalistic propaganda among the working class.

Chapter 13

Military Aspects: (3) The National Service League.

The political apostles of militant nationalism were the Navy League and National Service League.

The Navy League's activities will not be considered too deeply. On a national level, the organisation promoted much less popular propaganda, its role being generally confined to pressure group manoeuvres especially during Naval Scares. Birmingham's sole branch had 142 members in 1902; down to 1915 it seems not to have grown much, but supported a small detachment of Naval Cadets and Naval Reservists. According to its President, its failure to attract popular support in the city was due to Birmingham's distance from the sea.¹ It could also be explained by a lack of energy and purpose; the N.S.L. did not lack these 'virtues'.

The N.S.L. was founded by Lord Newton in 1902; by 1912, its national membership was 100,000.² From Nov. 1903 it published its own journal.³ The Birmingham branch began life in 1904,⁴ and its most active years were those between 1906-13. For the first five of these years its membership is known to have been:

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1. Midland Express, 31 Jan. 1902.
 2. J.O. Springhall, Youth and Empire... U/pub. D. Phil Thesis, Sussex, 1968. Appendix 1.
 3. National Service Journal, 1903-7. From 1907 became the Nation in Arms.
 4. National Service Journal, Dec. 1904, p. 256.

1906	441
1907	1220
1908/9	1352
1910	1702

Table 13.1. N.S.L. membership, Birmingham Branch 1906-10

Source: Annual Reports of the Birmingham Branch of the National Service League 1907-10.

The N.S.L.'s purpose and mission needs little comment; convinced that both spiritually and physically the nation was decadent, it saw a future grim with foreboding:

Degeneration of one kind or another
was rampant amongst us. 1.

At the times of the Naval Scares, it launched large numbers of meetings and circulated tens of thousands of pamphlets. Its policy was deliberately alarmist; it clearly indicated the enemy outside Britain's borders as well:

They know that within a few miles of
their shores there was an enormous
army, thoroughly trained and immeasurably
superior to our own in numbers, and a
navy which was rapidly increasing, and
it became absolutely necessary for us
to be prepared at all events. 2.

Or, to put it more bluntly:

There was not a decent place that the
English did not possess, and it was
therefore reasonable to suppose that the
Germans wanted something that belonged to us. 3.

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, Feb 19.1909. N.S.L. meeting in Town Hall.
 2. " " " Mar 26.1909. Lord Lifford, N.S.L. meeting at Evesham.
 3. Birmingham Daily Mail, Oct 16.1909. Col. Hickman. N.S.L. meeting at Tettenhall.

First then, the N.S.L. advocated conscription for military training either of the whole population, or of a proportion by enacting the Militia ballot,¹ or even by making the Territorial Force compulsory.² Second, it believed that training ought to begin young and it tried on several occasions - beginning in April 1901 - to introduce Parliamentary legislation for compulsory military training in schools. Its Vice President, Lord Meath,³ succeeded in persuading the Board of Education to introduce compulsory Physical Training in schools based up "Infantry Training 1902". The young were to receive a sense of duty towards the Empire which "God has placed them in", from the drill and discipline of the military.

Although it might be thought that in this cause, the movement could have expected support from the Volunteers, yet the evidence is of a considerable gulf, even enmity, between the two organisations. The Territorial Force correspondent of the Birmingham Daily Mail illustrates this disillusion with the N.S.L.:

The majority of the people who attend the swell meetings of the League are not made that way i.e. joining the T.F.; they shout patriotism while sheltering behind a working class professional army. 4.

The N.S.L.'s policy did not in general support the Territorial

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1. Evidence of N.S.L. to the N.C.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, Feb 2.1909 - only a passing phase, however, to win T.F. support.
 3. Founder of the Lads Drill Association 1899-1906, Empire Day Movement 1903-21, Duty and Discipline Movement 1912-19, British Girls Patriotic League 1911. Springhall op.cit. p.24.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, Jan 1.1909.

Force, for it felt that to do so would be to compromise its position and it believed that the problem demanded compulsion of the whole nation. Therefore the Inspector General of the Territorial Force noted in 1911

complaints by more than one Commanding Officer that their endeavours to obtain recruits were much hampered by agents of the National Service League, who are said to go about certain districts advising men not to take service in the Territorial Force. 1.

The N.S.L. lost support from potentially its greatest ally, the Territorial Force; its relationship with the major political parties was generally bad as well. In particular, evidence shows that the N.S.L.'s constant identification of Germany as the potential aggressor displeased the Tory leadership.

While the Unionist party was fully prepared to use the naval-scare and anti-German agitation as a platform for its election activities, it was constrained at other times to maintain a more neutral pose.

Thus in Oct.1908, Lord Roberts (the President of the N.S.L. and Army Commander in Chief) wrote to Balfour of an amendment he proposed to raise in the House of Lords:

...to take Germany instead of France as the supposed invader, and to point out how conditions have changed since you made your speech on 11 May.1905. 2.

This was followed with letters to Landsdowne,³ and Rosebery,⁴ both

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1. Report by the Inspector General of the Forces on the Territorial Force, 1911, Cd 5998, p.2.
 2. F.M. Lord Roberts Letters, MSS VOL.XI, 20 May.1908 - 11 Jan.1910
NAM 7101-23-22-11 Letter to Balfour, 26/10/1908, f.61.
 3. ibid. 28/10/1908, f.66.
 4. ibid. 9/11/1908, f.71.

claiming that German invasion was imminent. Prominent Unionists and Liberal Imperialists clearly tried to dissuade Roberts from this definite identification of Germany:

You deplore any efforts to bring the menace of Germany before the people of this country,, and you say that the attitude you would wish to adopt 'would be a wary vigilance, a civil tongue, and keep your powder dry (and of the very best pattern!)' My contention is that we have very little powder to keep dry, and no efforts are being made by those responsible for the safety of the country to provide us with the best pattern. 1.

Roberts was then summoned before the King and quite plainly told that he should avoid mentioning either the King's nephew or the German people. He returned to rewrite his speech, and duly delivered it on the 23rd November. Yet five days later, he was writing to the King's A.D.C.

I am more grieved and distressed than I can well put into words to learn from your letter that the King was displeased at the substance of the speech I made on Monday last...What I did understand was that his Majesty wished me to be very careful not to say anything that could possibly offend the German Emperor or the German people...2.

The King clearly had very considerably sway with the Unionist party leadership. It is possible that the King's highly cautious approach to German affairs had been impressed upon Balfour, and Lansdowne. Until the naval scares then, when it was clearly to the Unionist's advantage, party policy avoided direct identification with the N.S.L.

1. ibid. Roberts to Rosebery, marked "PRIVATE", 18/11/1908, f.75.

2. ibid. Roberts to Gen. Sir Dighton Probyn, 28/11/1908. f.81.

Thus the Liberal M.P. for Stratford, Captain Kincaid-Smith, who introduced the Military Service Bill into the Commons, found on resigning and standing for re-election on the N.S.L. platform, that the Unionists opposed him.¹ P.S. Foster, potential Unionist M.P., claimed that "England could fight her own battles without pressed men" although circumspectly adding "but Germany would not hesitate to make us bow to the knee to her if the time ever came."²

Despite his espousal of the Tariff Reform programme, Kincaid-Smith found the Birmingham Daily Mail opposing him as a man "suffering from a very bad attack of the German invasion bogey." Despite the London newspapers' support, and a telegram from Earl Roberts urging his election, even the local N.S.L. chairman (Lord Hertford) was eventually induced to denounce Kincaid-Smith as an "out and out radical". Nevertheless, since he stood on a "German Invasion and National Service" platform, Kincaid-Smith's election result is illuminating. From a vote of 4,321 in 1906:

P.S. Foster (Unionist)	5374
J. Martin (Liberal)	2747
Kincaid-Smith (Independent)	479 ³

Lacking significant Unionist and Liberal support, the N.S.L. turned its attentions to the left wing. The Birmingham Labour Party

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, Apr.6 1909.
 2. " " " Apr.12 1909.
 3. " " " May 5 1909.

appeared indecisive. At times its few publications contained strongly anti-German and Blatchfordian references - as noted above, e.g.,

with the exception of the German Socialists, practically the whole of the German people regard war with England as inevitable, while the majority of her people earnestly desire it. 1.

So the N.S.L. kept continual pressure on working class organisations. Circulars were sent to Trades Unions and Friendly Societies and Working Mens' Clubs.² The N.S.L. created a special ("Associate") membership for workers, paying only 1/- p.a. and receiving all of its publications. More than this, working class members were granted free bronze badges:

We want all our working class members to wear their badges frequently. 3.

Working men's meetings were held, and a lecturer appointed to tour the works and factories from 1910 onwards.⁴ By February 1914, the Labour Party decided to challenge the N.S.L. to a debate on conscription in the Town Hall, and won by 1030 to 142.⁵

From the major political parties then, the League could expect little support; alone and unsupported by other political groups, it

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1. Labour Mail, May.1907, p.71.
 2. Birmingham Daily Mail, 1 Jan.1909.
 3. National Service Journal, Oct.1906, p.66.
 4. Report N.S.L. Birmingham Branch, 1910, pp.10/11. Much more will be said on this below.
 5. "Forward", (Rotton Park) Feb.1914. p.73.

nevertheless achieved some success in recruiting working class supporters. An assessment of that success can be gleaned from the N.S.L. Reports themselves, by studying the lists of 1/- Associate "Working Class" members.¹ The largest number of these appear to have been recruited in 1907, following the fillip given by the visit of Roberts to Birmingham in April:

Sacrifice there must be if we are to maintain not only our position as a power, but even our physique, the healthy fibre of our people, and the industrial efficiency which has been our boast in the past, and to which we largely owe our wealth. 2.

To which the Bishop of Birmingham, seated near the Lord Mayor, could only but agree

on moral grounds he was persuaded that there was nothing this country needed more than discipline. 3.

The meeting was followed by a torchlight tatio in Victoria Square: of the 1220 enrolled in 1907, 575 were 1/- members. Since the "Reports" publish individuals' names and addresses, it is possible in nearly 80% of the cases to trace the areas in which they live, and in 25% of cases to also identify the individual's occupation.⁴

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1. Ordinary membership 5/-; some £1.1s and £5.5 members. (per annum).
 2. Report N.S.L. Birmingham Branch, 1907, p.8.
 3. ibid.
 4. Report N.S.L. Birmingham Branch 1907: Cornishes Birmingham Year Book, 1912; Birmingham Red Book, 1908-10.

TOTAL: 575

OCCUPATIONS IDENTIFIED: 147 (25.5%)

Army	36 (N.C.O.'s)
Clerks	31
Shopkeepers	22
Publicans ¹	20
Manufacturers with own business	11
Various working class ²	9
Artisans ³	5
Hoteliers	4
Farmers	3
Auctioneers	2
Teachers	2
City Councillors	1
Doctors	1

Table 13.2 Occupations of 1/- Associate Members of the Birmingham Branch of the National Service League, 1907. Sources: As footnote 4 on previous page.

Only a few on this list can be thought to be semi- or unskilled working class. The emphasis was clearly upon the skilled workers and above, especially those in the fringes of the lower-middle class - shopkeepers, publicans, perhaps army N.C.O.'s - which accounted for

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1. "publicans were Tories almost to a man and the party's self appointed agents", R. Roberts, "Salford: Classic Slum" (Mancs. U.P.) 1971, p.94.
 2. Unskilled/Semi-skilled.
 3. Highly Skilled/Skilled.

56.5% of the analysis. Just socially above, the clerks and teachers accounted for 22.4%. A further 15% were even more highly placed - doctors, manufacturers, farmers, auctioneers etc. If then, it was the League's intention to attract the less affluent by offering a cheap membership, it seems from this analysis to have failed.

Of course, it is possible that all the above occupations were the most likely to be identified in the sources used. The Directories were unlikely to list iron polishers and smiths' strikers by occupation, for instance. So then an analysis of area was attempted, classifying by the type of housing generally found in the area, the death rate, and by occupations named for others living in the same street. Certainly this must be an impressionistic classification, but it followed the gradings of Chapter I and allocated into: (1) casual worker and unskilled poorer housing areas; (2) general middle-group working class housing 3-5 rooms; (3) elite areas, with mixed working and lower middle class; (4) definitely non working class.

It is clear from Table 13.3 that the largest group were again upper working - and lower-middle class. Of the alleged "working class associates" 28.9% would appear not to have been working class at all. It is possible that they were domestic servants though, and this will be returned to below.

	n	%
Casual and Poorer Unskilled Worker	35	7.3
General Working Class Housing	151	31.7
Elitist skilled worker/lower middle class	153	32.1
Non-Working Class Housing	138	28.9
TOTAL	477	100.0

Table 13.3 Impressionistic Social Class Assessment by Housing of 1/- Associate Members of Birmingham's N.S.L. 1907.

The movement clearly was not over-popular with unskilled and casual workers in 1907; its philosophy and literature was at that time probably too deeply intellectual. Adding the first two groups together - where one can be reasonably sure of a measurement of solely working class affiliation - comes to only 186, which was but 15% of the total N.S.L. membership in 1907.

Only the Birmingham branch reports down to 1910 are still extant. From 1907 to 1910, the number of 1/- Associates fell while the total numbers rose.¹ The pattern then was of slight and declining working class involvement with the League down to 1910. But a large number of the members traced lived to the South of the city; over 140 1/- members lived in the Edgbaston, Bournbrook and Selly Oak areas alone. Of these, a large percentage lived in Teignmouth Road, Bournbrook and Sir Harry's Road, Edgbaston - which is where two senior members of the N.S.L. Executive lived (Sir T. Chavasse M.D., and Sir Hallewell Rogers). Short of believing that the noble gentlemen were hawking cheap memberships to their equally noble neighbours, it is very much more likely that instead they were leaning on their butlers, who in turn would have learnt on the cooks, the maids and so forth. This suggests strong bourgeois influences upon the domestic servants; but whether the servants were ideologically proselytised or speciously toadying will never be known.

1. Tables 13.1 and 13.4.

	n	% of total membership
1907	575	47.1
1908/9	455	33.6
1910	463	27.2

Table 13.4. Numbers of 1/- Associate Members in the Birmingham N.S.L. Branch 1907-10.

Further, the working mens' meetings that were being held down to 1910 appear to have been in the rural southern areas, like Barnt Green, Hampton-in-Arden and Stechford.¹ This entire concentration of effort to the south of the city and to the rural areas beyond was thus very unlikely to attract much working class support from within the principal central areas of the County Borough.

To counteract this tendency, from the end of 1910, the Birmingham branch appointed a lecturer to tour the works and factories.² These lectures were generally given during the dinner hour or the pay-time, and lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. In nearly all the factories visited the head of the firm, or the general manager, took the chair and in many instances too, delivered strong orations in favour of compulsory training. At the end of the meetings, pamphlets entitled "No Conscription". "Facts and Figures" and the "N.S.L. Catechism" were distributed, and workers hurrying home for lunch were urged to sign "Adherents Cards", pledging their support for the

1. Birmingham Branch, N.S.L. Annual Report, 1910, pp.10-11.

2. Percy A. Ongley appointed 1911, E.J. O'Kelly appointed 1913. N.S.L. B'ham Branch Report 1910, pp.10/11; Nation in Arms April 1911, Easter 1913.

principles of the League.¹

The lists of firms visited make impressive reading: all the breweries (Davenports, Ansells, Holders and Bowaters), big firms like the Metropolitan Carriage Works (3000 men harangued during pay-time²); Dunlops (a total of 2,500 men and 500 women attending three separate talks in Nov.1911 at the Para Mills factory, and 1100 men and 100 women attending one talk at the Manor Mills factory in Aston, on Nov.1911³); Everitts (2000 men during the dinner hour⁴); and hosts of small firms, many of whose bosses gave over factory time and saw to it that all their employees attended (v.g. Lionel Blackenzees, Nuttings, Cartlands, Setton and Durwoods⁵). In one month, alone, from Oct.16th to Nov.15th 1911, 6,158 workers were thus addressed.⁶ Only 454 adherents cards were signed however.

It is not possible to get adherents cards filled up and signed at meetings as time is short and people have to hurry away. 7.

It is interesting to compare the number attending meetings and the size of the firm, with the number of adherents cards signed. In the smaller firms, where the owner took the chair, most or all of the staff attended and high proportion signed adherents cards. In

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1. Drawn from series of Nation in Arms, 1910-13 esp. Dec.1911, pp.632/3.
 2. Nation in Arms, Easter 1913, p.279.
 3. ibid. Nov.1911 p.590, and Dec.1911, pp.632/3.
 4. ibid. Easter 1913, p.279.
 5. ibid. June 1911, p.309.
 6. ibid. Dec.1911, p.632/3.
 7. ibid.

larger firms, where the general manager presided, usually large numbers attended but few cards were filled in.

1. Date	2. Firm	3. Chairman	4. Numbers attending	5. Comments	6. Adherent Cards	7. Col. 6/4 %
Mar.18, 1911	Nutting	F.N. Nutting	22 ^m 15 ^f .	Total Employed	11	29.7%
May.9,1911	Lionel Blackensee	L. Blackensee	60 ^m 40 ^f .	Total Employed	56	56%
Dec.14, 1911	Heeley and Peart	F. Peart	57		51	89.5%
Oct.1911	Dunlop Para Mills	Foreman	100	)Possible Total 3000 to 4800 employees	179	3.7 to 6%
Oct.1911	Dunlop Manor Mills	Managing Director	100 ^m 100 ^f			
Nov.8,1911	Dunlop Para Mills	Managing Director	1100			
Nov.15, 1911	Dunlop Para Mills	Managing Director	1300 ^m 500 ^f			
Nov.14, 1911	Perfecta Steel	A.E. Hills	530			
Nov.6, 1911	Metropolitan Carriage Works	J. Allen	650	No adherents claimed	0	

Table 13.5. Numbers attending N.S.L. factory meetings, and numbers signing adherents cards, MAR-NOV 1911 (sample). (Small firms above blank line)

(Sources "Nation in Arms" April-Dec.1911; Chamber of Commerce Journal)

The possibility exists then, of a closer relationship with political implications between master and man in the small firms and factories characteristic of much of Birmingham's industry. The relationship would have been one either of political persuasion or coercion, and the signing of "Adherents" cards could thus represent either genuine conversions or gratuitous efforts to please employers. Remembering the previous failure to attract working class recruits, and the clear failure of the propaganda in the large factories, and the lack of commitment shown by failing to enlist 1/- Associates, it is likely that the greater number were just placating their masters. By these means of political control, the numbers of members and adherents from the working class significantly increased.

MEETINGS	1/- ASSOCIATES	ADHERENTS	OTHER MEMBERS
71	259	1385	46

Table 13.6. Recruitment to the Birmingham N.S.L. in 1913. Sources: Nation in Arms - all 1913 issues.

It is interesting too, to study the membership of the League among some of the more influential members of the local community. The N.S.L. Council itself, contained many of the local political power group - the Ansell, the Chamberlains, the Parkes and Nettlefolds. Of the 79 members of its Council and Committee, at least 15 were large employers of labour in their own right - as apart from directors of other companies - and five were on the Chamber

of Commerce Council.

Justices of the Peace	25
Doctors	14
Aldermen and Town Councillors	10
Members of the Birmingham or Aston Education Committees	4
Members of Parliament	2
Prominent churchmen, (including the Bishop)	3

Table 13.7. Influential Members of the Birmingham N.S.L. Council and Committee. Sources: Report Birmingham Branch N.S.L. 1907, Chamber of Commerce Journal, Birmingham Red Book 1908, Kellys Directory of Birmingham, Cornishes Directory.

Additionally, the Secretary of the Birmingham Naval League was a member of the Birmingham Education Committee.¹

1. Mr. M. Iward. School Management Committee Minutes, Min. 8494, 17 Nov. 1898. The Committee however for some years rejected all of the Naval League's approaches Min. 8479, 8494, 8762, 22 June 1899; Min. 3190, 26 May. 1911 and approaches by the Empire Day League to send their own lecturers into the schools Min. 3940 21 Nov. 1912 and efforts by the Regular Army Recruiting Office to sponsor drawing and essay competitions Min. 9206, 21 June, 1900. But by August, 1912, the Navy League were given permission to present occasional lectures in schools, - Birmingham Daily Mail, 21 Aug. 1912.

By 1908/9, all eight Birmingham M.P.'s had pronounced in favour of universal military training and two M.P.'s on the N.S.L. Council had proposed universal training in schools.¹

There was also a very close relationship between the N.S.L. Council and the governing bodies of the youth organisations, particularly the Scouts, the Church Lads Brigade and even (surprisingly) the non-military Birmingham Street Childrens' Union. Six N.S.L. Council members were on the 20 strong B.S.C.U. Council and between them, 20 N.S.L. Council members subscribed nearly 10% of the B.S.C.U. funds.²

Next, although the N.S.L. received little support from the Birmingham 'Mail,³ it attracted much from the Birmingham Gazette and Express. Of its play, an "Englishman's Home", the 'Gazette could say

The play inculcates a great moral,
worthy of our most serious attention.
It is really a passion play, a new
kind of old time morality play. 4.

Indeed, the 'Gazette gave only lukewarm support to the Territorial Force; it was popular it claimed, because of "hysterical enthusiasm", - the success of Haldane was "but a paltry achievement" when seen beside the failure to create an adequate Reserve, Regular Force, or Navy.⁵

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1. Report, N.S.L. B'ham Branch, 1908/9, p.6.
 2. Reports of the Birmingham Street Childrens Union, Nos.2-4, 1906/7/8.
More on this in the next chapter.
 3. A revisal of the Birmingham Daily Mails attitude before the Boer War, when in leaders it was urging that "young loafers" and "peaky blinders" should be pressed into service immediately for their own good...and that of the country. Birmingham Daily Mail, July 8.1899.
 4. Birmingham Gazette and Express, Mar.9 1909.
 5. ibid. Mar.11 1909.

The potential for action was there. The N.S.L. had sufficient funds and influence to promote nationalistic propaganda in many spheres. But it had alienated too many as well.

First, although many small and large employers of labour gave it support, the Chamber of Commerce never at any time publicly pronounced in its favour. In part, this was because the Chamber of Commerce refused to become a party political body; the furious internal arguments that followed its public identification with Tariff Reform in 1903 warned it against the divisiveness of political activity. But also an influential number of the Chamber's members were supporters of the Territorial Force and the N.S.L. was rarely on good terms with this "makeshift"¹ body. It was for this reason indeed, that the Worcester Chamber of Commerce refused to have anything to do with its local N.S.L.² branch.

Second, the N.S.L. received little official Unionist support except at the times of the Naval 'Scares' and General Elections. Of the eight M.P.'s who allegedly supported its aims, only two were members of its Council and for the rest, compulsory military training did not figure as a mainstay in their pronounced manifestoes. While individual councillors and party members joined the League, many more sober middle class members were scared away by the extremism of much of its propaganda. Even the Birmingham Daily Mail, hardly always sober, was unprepared to promote its bizarre half truths. Liberal and Labour support was similarly unforthcoming.

Third, the N.S.L. appears to have left its main recruitment

1. Roberts words: letters, loc.cit., p59 to Lansdowne 24.10.1908.

2. Birmingham Gazette and Express, Feb.9 1909.

too late, for during the Naval Scares, its working class membership actually declined.

Thus the National Service League in Birmingham maintained an influential presence in local government, but its ability to influence working class opinion relied upon employer support, which was split by the Territorial Force. Its contacts with working people were much more successful in smaller firms (including domestic service too), with direct employer proselytization or coercion. Its numbers were never high, though its propaganda was impressive. In the factories, tens of thousands of captive workers would have listened to its lectures slandering Germany, prophesying war, Prussian invasion or worse. As such, it must be counted as another powerful tool in nationalistic education.

That it failed to mobilise greater working class support is unsurprising, for the enquiring artisan, having cut through its rhetoric, would have divined that an army was to be pressed from the proletariat. That it should have achieved any support at all is more startling. It is suggested that groups with a greater propensity to support the N.S.L. would be ex-army men, general Tory working-men voters, domestic servants with their deference and servility, and those on the lower-middle class fringes - the publicans and occasional shopkeepers.

Chapter 14

Military Aspects: (4) Youth Movements.

Among children living in the central working class areas existed indigenous friendship groups and gangs. They appear to have been in constant trouble with the police, those guardians of bourgeois respectability, who used both belt¹ and savage law to persuade children to conform.² Thus children coined pejorative ditties like

I spy this, I spy that
I spy a copper in his shiny hat. 3.

or in London, "Gertch y'mucking copper, you."⁴ Such ditties, enshrined in popular folk-lore, probably passed from generation to generation, increasing the gap between the police and the community. Yet it would appear from the biographies that children of skilled parents and lower middle class parents, living the outer wards or

1. Sam Shaw, Guttersnipe, 1946, p.20.

2. M.G. Barnett, Young Delinquents...1913, p.12. Thus out of 605 children brought before Birmingham Juvenile Court in 1911 for non-indictable offences, 132 were charged with playing ball in the streets.

3. W. Collison, Apostle of Free Labour, 1913, p.3.

4. W. Goldman, East End My Cradle, 1940, p.18. Anti-police epithets were common, it seems, even in peaceful villages: "There goes a bobby with his black shiny hat/And his belly full of fat/And a pancake tied to his nose", Flora Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, (Penguin ed'n), 1973, p.485. And so the police rarely appeared in 'Penny Dreadfuls' as heroes - "they are constantly shown as stupid, cowardly, or ill-looking" complained the Quarterly Review, Vol.171, July 1890. p.150.

suburbs, viewed policemen more favourably. They were "superior and sacred beings who wore a uniform it was sacrilege to touch";¹ they seemed "so old and wise in those days."²

Older youths in the depressed areas formed "peaky-blinder" or "slogger" gangs, 50-60 strong. The uniform of the sub-culture was a shaven cropped head, long peaked cap, a line of vivid brass buttons, bell bottom trousers, and weapons of buckles, knives, and half-bricks.³ Most active in St. Lawrence's (Lancaster Street), St. Martins (Rea Street) and the poorer parts of Aston and organised around the pubs, they terrorised whole districts.⁴ The

chaos of gang fights, police whistles, blood and buckles, screaming women - local newspapers would bring out a special Sunday edition which exacted as much interest as the bells of the fire brigade. 5.

This subculture, seeking identity and status, was a violent and criminal rejection of bourgeois standards of behaviour. It invested the weak transitional stage in the socialisation process, between the family and school, and the assumption of adult responsibilities.⁶

1. James Spenser, Liney Breaks In, 1934, p.3.

2. F. Willis, Peace and Dripping Toast, 1950, p.59.

3. V.W. Garratt, Man in the Street, 1939; pp.65-6.

4. Birmingham Daily Mail, 7 Oct.1905.

5. V.W. Garratt, op.cit. p.66.

6. Phil Cohen's analysis of contemporary "skinhead" sub-cultures in the East End saw them as a "reaction against the contamination of the parent culture by middle class values and the reassertion of the integral values of working class culture through its most recessive traits - its puritanism and its chauvinism." Although these 'peakies' originated in a culture much less contaminated by bourgeois values, we may see their reaction in a similar light, for it was a reaction against social discipline - the combined and repressive discipline of the State (through its policemen), and of industry (the long hours and soul-destroying factory environment with which they would have just become acquainted) - a discipline, escaped after school but soon to be re-applied in industry, and a discipline to which they would inevitably succumb. Phil Cohen. Sub Cultural Conflict and Working Class Community. W.P.C.S. 2, C.C.C.S. Birmingham, p.24.

In the families of more respectable skilled workers, the twin effects of continuing education and family assistance in job finding possibly extended and brought together these two stages, and the socialisation process would have been more continuous.¹

Thus the children most susceptible to the approach of Organised Youth were perhaps those, who by the definition of the organisers, would have needed the movements least.

For the clubs and movements that vied for the custom of working class children were run by people from outside working class culture, to whom the working class environment was alien and against which culture these youth movements were designed to battle.

For all the clubs, of whatever description, a principal evil to which working class children were susceptible was that of indiscipline. In this, they carried over the ethos of the Elementary Schools; for some clubs, the discipline which they intended to impose was starkly barren of imagination.

Children required salvation from the vices of their parent culture too; a second set of evils lay in the wiles of gambling, sexual laxity, the "animal excitement" of theatres and cinemas, and the curse of drink. Clubs then, wished to direct working class leisure into "respectable channels", with either a religious or a military bias or both.

1. M. Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire (CUP) 1971, pp.112-3, pp.119-124. Both C. Stella Davies, North Country Bred, 1963, p.35 and L. Halward, Let Me Tell You, 1938, pp.56-7, note the continuing familial support in skilled artisan families, as does A. Freeman, Boy Life and Labour 1914, pp.13-21, and P. le Rousiers, Labour Question in Britain, 1896, pp.11, 20.

Finally, clubs and youth movements existed to act as a focal point for loyalties. To their organisers, the closed nature of working class society evidenced a self-centred and selfish perspective upon life. Children needed to receive a sense of group identity, group loyalty and group pride above and beyond the peaky gang, and well above divisive working class identification. The clubs were to act to promote loyalty from sub-group to local institution, thus to society and to nation; the loyalty they demanded from their members was but one strand in a complicated web of national identity and the connection of the one to the other was achieved in various ways by the different movements.

For the purpose of analysis, the movements are grouped as paramilitary, semi-military, and philanthropic civilian. Paramilitary movements were closely connected to the army; their members wore uniforms, carried weapons, practised drill and were superintended or officered or organised by ex-army officers, officers from the Volunteers, or by members of the N.S.D. In this group were included the Boys Brigade, the Church Lads Brigade, the Incorporated Church Scout Patrols (I.C.S.P.), the army cadets and the Naval Cadets. Semi-military movements were distinguished in overtly trying to avoid direct military identification; their literature criticised militarism, and they carried no weapons. Usually however, they wore uniforms and practised drill, and their organisers were drawn from the same broad group as the paramilitary. Examples were the Boy Scouts, the Boys Life Brigade, and the Jewish Lads Brigade. Finally, non-military movements abandoned drill, weapons and uniform; again however the personalities within their central organisations were

closely connected to the military, and again discipline was the key word. In this category were included the Street Childrens' Union, the Y.M.C.A. and miscellaneous youth clubs attached to churches, orphanages and factories.

For the purpose of analysis too, this chapter will be particularly concerned with the recruitment figures of youth movements in the six central working class wards,¹ and particularly in the two destitute wards of St. Mary and St. Bartholomew.

Paramilitary movement organisers appear to have been violently disciplinarian. Such attitudes are well summarised in a quote from a Boys' Brigade lieutenant:

There was a lack of obedience and of discipline in society. Boys of thirteen and fourteen tried to be their own masters at home, and in the world, going out, like young colts,, without any restraint being put upon them, heedless of their duties to parents and employers, desirous only of recreation and pleasure, and callous of what their future prospects would be. It meant a growing individualism in society, and this...increase of selfishness, this want of cohesion and lack of proper discipline, were unmistakable signs of the times. 2.

The Boys' Brigade,³ like the Church Lads' Brigade, was a semi-religious organisation, being usually attached to Non-Conformist churches. It claimed 450 Birmingham boys in 1909⁴ (although by 1913,

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1. Market Hall, St. Mary, St. Bartholomew, St. Pauls, St. Martins and Deritend, as listed in Handbook for Workers Among Boys in Birmingham 1913. No figures available for St. Georges. Ladywood excluded.
 2. Handsworth Herald, 25 July.1903: the Lt. (Rev. Selwyn) was also assistant chaplain to the Handsworth Volunteers.
 3. Begun in Glasgow in 1884; by 1913, claiming 100,000 members.
 4. Birmingham Daily Mail, 28 April, 1909.

it seems to have grown to 18 companies - perhaps 900 boys¹) aged 12-17 years, who paid 6d to join, 6d for the cap, and subscriptions of between ½d-2d per week. Training included drill and discipline, playing brass instruments, first-aid and religion. Once a year, the Brigade attended a two-week camp (a martinet institution, involving days crammed with parades and drill from 5a.m. until 8p.m.), which cost each individual between 12/- and 18/-.² The Boys Brigade was at times popular with working class children, though for the wrong reason and in the wrong way:

At the same time, in those days,
boys in uniform were the object of
a considerable amount of ridicule
in the street from other boys...
many other things besides words being
thrown at us:

'Ere come the Boys Brigade
All covered with marmalade;
A tuppenny - 'a penny pill box,
And 'arf a yard of braid.
Keep yer 'air on...etc. 3.

In their Eton collars, officered by King Edward high-school boys, and carrying Martini-Henry carbines they thus occasioned considerable attention. There were four companies of the Boys Brigade in the central city areas in 1913. Two were attached to Non-Conformist churches in Ss. Mary and Bartholomew, one to Cattell Road Mission, and one to the Digbeth Institute.⁴ Thus they only touched the fringes;

1. Handbook for Workers...p.9.

2. ibid.

3. Boys Brigade, 10 Birmingham Company 1908-29, Souvenir Booklet 1929.

4. Handbook for Workers....

in the centre were some 15,000 "street arabs" alone.¹ Families of workers attending the Institutes and Adult Schools would have been most involved. Nelson Street Adult School had a Boys Brigade, formed in April 1902, which within two months had 120 members. Thus did the children of skilled artisans march about the streets at 1030 a.m. on Sunday mornings, blowing bugles ("to get the laggards out of bed") and sporting rifles.²....

the sole object being to promote cleanliness, discipline and obedience, and to encourage physical, mental and moral culture. 3.

The Church Lads' Brigade, although attached to the Established Church, was in most other respects very similar. It was even more closely connected with the military; its Vice Presidents included two Field Marshals,⁴ nine Generals, the Chaplain-General of the Forces and the Chaplain of the Fleet. While the Boys Brigade however, rejected in a referendum the opportunity to become a part of the military army cadet force⁵ (attached to the T.F.), the C.L.B. amalgamated with the army cadet scheme in 1911.

The C.L.B. took boys from 13-19 years old; it taught military drill and shooting and demanded the usual subscription of between ½d and 2d per week.⁶ Like the Boys Brigade, the high point of its

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1. Report of the Birmingham Street Childrens' Union 1907-8, p.30. This figure however, must include large numbers of children under 10 years of age.
 2. Nelson Street Adult School Magazine, April, June, Oct.1902.
 3. ibid. - Superintendent Robert Best in the May 1902 issue.
 4. Brigade, Vol.1, No.1, Oct.1894.
 5. Boys Brigade Gazette, 1 Jan.1911, 87% rejected, 13% for.
 6. "Handbook for workers...." op.cit., p.9.

activities was an annual camp. 582 cadets from Birmingham attended this camp in 1909, paying 10/6d each;

The camp is necessarily run on strict military lines, and as the War Office inspecting officers signify in their reports on the inspection, does provide a week's sound military training for lads who work in our crowded towns, and who will soon be taking their place as men and citizens of the Empire. 1.

In the central city areas in 1913, the C.L.B. had six companies varying from 20 to 60 members each.² Three of these were in the two lower working class wards, but such ventures tended to be temporary. In 1898 for instance, a "street arab" detachment was started in the parish of St. Lawrences,³ but by 1903 nothing more was heard of it.⁴ Again, the recruitment from Sunday Schools in working class areas was likely to be fruitful only up to school leaving age. It is likely then that C.L.B. detachments in working class areas would therefore have a high turnover, and be composed of many younger children, thus having a dynamic to impermanence.

The central city area also boasted one troop of the Incorporated Church Scout Patrols (I.C.S.P.)⁵; run until 1914 by the C.L.B. This organisation was fiercely militant:

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1. Birmingham Daily Mail, July 20.1909: Réveille 0530, Drill, Church Parade every morning, eight hours of exercises, drills and parades - "instilling of a healthy, manly sense of religion".
 2. "Handbook for Workers...." op.cit., p.9.
 3. Rev. T.J. Bass, "Every Day in Blackest Birmingham, Facts not Fiction". pamph., 1898. Thirty six boys, donations given by wellwishers.
 4. Rev. T.J. Bass, "Hope in Shadow Land", B'HAM, 1903.
 5. "Handbook for Workers..." op.cit., Abstract.

Here at home, if you ever hear a boy crying down his country, or telling lies about the King, tell him to shut up, and if he won't then punch his head. (1)

Of the Army Cadets outside the grammar schools,² there were very few. In other cities, schemes for organising working class cadet battalions attached to Volunteer forces had begun well before the Boer War. But they involved their members in some expense, no grant being provided by the War Office until 1909. Thus the 1st Cadet Battalion of the Manchester Regiment (begun in 1883) charged 15/10d for camp and 5s. p.a. Yet it attracted 600 members - and it was claimed that the number could easily have been doubled with financial support for uniform purchase.³ Such units catered for the 14-17 year age group, whose members were too young to join the Volunteers.⁴ The membership was drawn from a similar social strata as the Volunteers, many of the Manchester Regiment cadets being fitters in boiler works, engine shops, grocers' assistants and general factory labour. Its popularity with the working class might be expected to be higher than for the religious cadet units; it did not demand Sunday School or Church attendance, nor did it patronise its members with religious moralising. It was more closely connected with "legitimate" soldiering and taught mostly drill and shooting.

For employers of labour too it held some attraction, for at least one unit was supported by their kind donations.⁵ The change which cadet membership was alleged to have wrought in character and personality was,

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1. Scout Message, Sept. 1911. Scout Law No.2 of the ICSP.
 2. King Edward Schools attached to 1st VB R.War Regt. B.D. Mail May 6 1908.
 3. N.C. Col. Ledward, 1st Cdt. Bn. Mancs. Regt. q.2390 6-24006.
 4. 50% join Volunteers, and "great many" The Regulars. Also see N.C. q.24033, 24072 - for evidence of the two London Cadet Bns viz. q.24034 - 10% of 1KRRC Cadets, join Regulars each year.
 5. N.C. q.24072-24150: 1st Cdt.Bn.West Surrey Regt.

like that similar alleged change for Volunteers, thought to be of great benefit to prospective employers:

q23966 You have explained the fact of your taking these boys into the cadet battalion has some effect on their character and habits; do you attach very great importance to that ?
Yes, I attach very great importance to that, and employers of labour in Manchester attach importance to it; the big merchants will come and ask whether I have got any boys that I can recommend as office boys, and they tell me that my boys are keener and more alert and much more quickly learn their duties than boys who have not been so trained.

q23967 I suppose before the boys come to you they have been to Board Schools where they have had some previous physical drill?
Yes.

q23968 Do you find that an advantage?
A very great advantage.

q23981 Am I right in supposing that ... you attach the greatest importance from a military point of view to boys being caught young and taught to shoot?
I do. (1)

Indeed it was claimed that in Manchester, the movement had stamped out the incidence of other forms of violence - "Hooliganism, fighting with belts and knives".²

In Birmingham, the movement was slow to start. The elementary schools themselves never formed cadet corps. There was no need - as the Lord Mayor succinctly explained that:

the youth of Birmingham in the Board Schools had been subject to that system for the past twenty years. (3)

No doubt too, the flagging Volunteer organisation down to 1908 had insufficient vitality to organise cadet units for it was the notably active Manchester battalions which were the first to do so. Again financial

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1. N.C.Evidence of Col. Ledward. 1 Cdt.Bn., Mancs.Regt.
 2. q.23990.
 3. B.D.Mail Jan.21 1909 i.e. "compulsory military training" (sic.)

support was not forthcoming until 1909, and more fully in May 1910 with the formal affiliation of Cadet Battalions to County T.F. Associations and a treasury grant of £5. p.a. per company of thirty qualified cadets. Haldane had originally intended to provide money for the creation of cadet corps in Elementary Schools in his T.F. Bill of 1907. This proposal was defeated by an amendment from the 56 Labour M.P.'s restricting financial support to those aged over 16 years old.

Following TF reorganisation, the 8th Bn. began to introduce a cadet scheme and its first success was to capture three troops of Boy Scouts (discussed below), some 93 boys.¹ By 1909 Col. Ludlow was writing to the newspapers. He required the boys to be teetotallers and non-smokers, nor should they be particularly fond of enjoying themselves:

The boys of working class parents who leave school early have no real opportunities of usefully employing their spare time, and in consequence you will find our cheap music halls crowded every evening with young fellow who would be far better employed learning habits of order, discipline and patriotism and in improving their physique in every way. (2)

The cost was 2d/week and after the first 30 'drills' the recruits were given a uniform. Ludlow required 406 boys.³ The response was in fact very strong but Ludlow was cautious, rejecting 48%⁴ of youths who applied on medical grounds. And although it seems from the regimental histories that the Force proved popular and soon reached its target, one wonders just how much more support it would have attracted had the medical standards not been so exclusive, nor the moral standards so puritan. It is most probably the case that recruits to the 8th Bn cadet force were drawn from the children of the officers and soldiers; the high standards indicate at least they were from families of comfortable incomes.

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1. B.D. Mail 21st, 28th Jan. 1909 - growing to 130 by Aug. 1909. BD Mail, Aug. 25 1909.
 2. B.D. Post Nov. 29 1909.
 3. B.D. Post Dec. 4 1909.
 4. B.D. Post Dec. 6 1909.

Of the uniformed para-military youth, the possible total from the central city wards identified was unlikely to have exceeded 750, which was about 14% of all male youths 12-17 years in these six wards studied.¹ The cost of being a member of any of these units was not prohibitive to working class boys in employment, but the expense of annual camp in both time and money might have dissuaded the poorer ones. The attachment of the BB, CLB and ICSP to religious and educational institutions probably tended to make these movements more popular with children of skilled parents. Organisations formed in the casual labourer areas tended to fail for the reasons outlined at the beginning of this chapter - the discontinuity of socialisation - and the high removal rates.

The semi-military organisations deliberately tried to avoid more extreme military overtones yet dressed in uniforms and performed army marching drill. The Boys Life Brigade², claiming to be non-military, was "formed to inculcate principles of discipline, self reliance and humanity"; it taught drill and First Aid.³

There were nine companies of BLB in Birmingham in 1913, five being in the central wards and two in the "blackest" streets - Floodgate and Fazely Streets - attached to the Medical Missions. Thus probably about 60

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1. BB = 250 CLB = 350 ICSP = 30 CADETS (400 inc. Aston) = c.120.
Population of Wards = 97,708. 5.65% of Birmingham's population was male, 12-17 years. Thus in wards = c.5520. If we ignore the Cadets (a hypothetical figure), then = 11.4% in BB/CLB/ICSP. This assumes full strength units and no 'commuter' cadets from outside and thus overestimates.
 2. Formed 1899 in Nottingham by Rev.Paton to combat "jingoistic" BB and CLB. By 1906 = 8000.
 3. Handbook for Workers ... loc.cit.

boys, aged 12-18 years old, joined at 1d/week in these destitute areas. Little is known of these units though probably they worked closely with the St.Johns Ambulance. Although no shooting was taught, the ethos of patriotic manliness and disciplined duty appears no different from the para-military.

More attention must be given to the Boy Scouts for the whole movement originated in Birmingham with the visit of Baden-Powell to Dale End in 1908. However, although it had been B.Powell's intention that the movement should grow among Birmingham working class boys, yet Springhall notes by the 1950's that it had become principally localised to the South East and again, was predominantly middle class. The initial years were not unencouraging; after Powell left the city, an advisory committee was set up to implement his scheme. Yet this committee was overlorded and controlled by the paramilitary Boys Brigade and Church Lads Brigade, as well as the Police Court Mission, Dr.Barnados and the Street Boys Union. Powell's speech had denounced militarism:

They were taught the three R's in schools, but they were not taught discipline, manliness, self-sacrifice and patriotism ... His object was to make good citizens, not soldiers. One could teach patriotism without encouraging militarism.²

Yet the Scouts could not shake off their military birth; by 1910 of the 250 Presidents and Commissioners, 140 were military officers.³ The President of the Birmingham Scouts Association was a senior member of the National Service League Executive (A.M.Chance), the Vice-Presidents were members of the NSL Council (E.Parkes and R.Cary Gibson) and the Hon.Sec. was a 5/- member of the N.S.L. (F.Bennet).³

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1. J.O.Springhall, Youth and Empire. A Study of the Propagation of Imperialism to the Young in Edwardian Britain. U/pub. D.Phil thesis. Sussex University 1968.
 2. B.D.Mail. Jan.20 1908.
 3. J.O.Springhall, op.cit., p.217.
 4. B'ham District Association of Boy Scouts Yearbooks, 1910/15. NSL B'ham Branch Reports, loc.cit.

Thus the Regulation Drill for Scouts included "fall in, dressing, eyes front, numbering, form fours, quick march, Arms Drill with Staves".¹ Baden Powell always denied military connections:

Our Scouting has nothing to do with soldiering, it is merely the practice of backwoodsmanship. His manliness and sense of patriotism would no doubt cause every Scout to prepare himself to take his share in the defence of his country should this ever be necessary, and incidentally the practice which he gets in camp life, scouting, signalling, despatch riding etc. afford the soundest foundation on which to model a soldier of the best quality. But we do not preach war and bloodshed to the lads, nor do we favour military drill for them. (2)

... but the connection is clearly there, not only in drill, but in the cautious mention of home defence and in the eulogy of soldierly characteristics. More than this, the Scout was to be a 'brick' (sic) in the national fabric; upright, self reliant, loyal and of course patriotic. Baden-Powell despised social welfare, denigrated "socialistic" strikers and condemned the "professional agitators" who, he thought, controlled them.³

In Birmingham, the numbers of Scouts rose rapidly from 500 in November 1909 to 2878 in January 1913.⁴ The "Imperial Scouts Exhibition Rally and Sea Scouts Display" of July 2-8th 1913⁵, gave a fillip to the movement, which increased by another 1000. The War interrupted a massive publicity campaign which burst upon local newspapers in July 1914, to raise money for more working class units. Employers in particular were then told that "lads so trained in Birmingham were clean, smart, obedient and thoroughly trustworthy".⁶

1. BDABS Yearbook, 1910, p.19.

2. Ibid., 1913 p.41.

3. Baden-Powell R.S. "Scouting for Boys" London 1910, pp.334, 339.

4. BDABS Yearbook 1910 p.9, ibid. 1913, p.41.

5. Ibid., 1914.

6. B.D.Mail, July 7 1914, Advertisement.

In the central wards were some eighteen troops of Scouts (c.600¹) by 1913, seven of these being in St.Bartholomew's and St.Mary's (c.200). All these seven were attached to churches, including two Catholic churches, possibly recruiting in the Irish and Italian communities. The ages of boys in units in more destitute areas ranged from 11-14 years,² - clearly leaving school for work meant leaving the Sunday School and the Scouts. The subscription was 1d - 2d per week; the uniform cost about 7/- although this could be reduced by a discount scheme and paid for by a savings scheme.³ The cost was clearly not too large for many working class parents.

Some units were well versed at a little sleight of hand; the Digbeth Scouts, 100 ("bounding, exuberant boys"⁴) strong in 1908, recruited from a gymnastics class. Council Schools were asked to send boys to the class at the Digbeth Institute, "the intention being to pass them from class into the troop".⁵ And of course this action could be justified by the usual nationalist argument:

Sure I am that no nobler and more Imperialistic work is being done in Birmingham than that which is being done in the gymnasium at Digbeth. And in promoting imperialism at home, Digbeth is doing service to the nation and the Empire, whose policy Birmingham has done so much to mould.⁶

The military connection caused the Scouts considerable division. On April 1st 1909 for instance, a large military parade was to be held before Haldane, to include Territorial, Regular and youth organisations.

1. "Handbook for Workers ..." 1913 op.cit. 86 troops = 3000 boys.

2. Ibid.

3. BDABS Yearbook 1914.

4. Digbeth Institute Reports 1908, I. p.16.

5. Ibid. 1910, III. p.15.

6. Ibid., 1908, I, p.15.

The Birmingham Scout Association declined Col. Hart's invitation to join in; F.C. Bennet, its Hon. Secretary, wrote to the B.D. Mail that the Scouts were "peace Scouts" and could not therefore contemplate participation.¹ This shows considerable duplicity; both Bennet, his President and his Vice-Presidents belonged to the National Service League. Their refusal only represented yet another attempt by the NSL to spite the Territorial Force.

Scout Masters wrote to protest; how could they "be loyal to God and the King"² like this? And at this point the 1st St. Pauls Troop over in Lozells left the BDSA and attached itself to Col. Ludlow's 8th Bn. More Scoutmasters wrote in:

The Boy Scouts are no more a peace organisation than the Boys Brigade or the Church Lads Brigade.³

Even Boy Scouts complained:

[the Birmingham Scouts Council]...

says that the boys are being trained in a peace scouting movement, and not as war scouts. If this is so, it was never understood by the boys themselves, or at least those whom I have spoken to. We always understood that we were being trained to be of use to our country in the time of need. (4)

And another twenty scouts in Edgbaston, horrified to discover that they were not "military scouts", hoped "that steps are taken in the matter."⁵

The wealth of letters that arose out of this decision demonstrates both the expectations of ordinary youth in the movement and the attitudes of its leadership. It was more military and militant than its founder

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1. B.D. Mail, Mar. 17 1909.
 2. B.D. Mail, Mar. 22, 1909.
 3. B.D. Mail, Mar. 19, 1909.
 4. B.D. Mail, Mar. 25, 1909.
 5. Ibid.

admitted. Springhall notes that in the rift which developed in 1910 between Sir Francis Vane and the NSL military 'cabal', and which resulted in the formation of the "British Boy Scouts" as 'peace scouts', Birmingham and the Midlands were 'converted' to the idea of peace scouting with the support of George Cadbury.¹ No evidence of this has been forthcoming from local sources however, and the indications are that such support was limited.

The paramilitary and semimilitary youth organisations adopted essentially similar attitudes to working class youth. The social role of youth work was the inculcation of discipline and kindred respectable moral values and in the performance of their rôle they modelled both organisation and training goals upon the Army. Loyalty and patriotism were essential, the individual being taught of his duties within that national fabric which the youth organisations existed both to preserve and to strengthen.

They attracted the support of rather less than 1450 boys from principally working class areas of the city centre, out of a total of just under 6000 overall in Birmingham. They tended to draw more support from families of skilled workers than from the main mass of the labouring population:

... they deal with a class of boy who is, as a rule, higher up in the social scale than the boy in the slum. (3)

for in demanding strict discipline it was quite impossible to establish a very intimate relationship with the children:

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1. Springhall, J.O. op.cit., pp.228 ff.
 2. 750 Paramilitary: 700 Semi Military = c.26% youths, male 12-17 years maximum.
 3. Pelham, Rev.H. S. "The Training of the Working Boy" (special reference to Birmingham) 1914, p.119.

this may very likely be a wise plan with the better class of boy who comes from a decent home, and whose individual training is done by the parents, for his main need is a sense of discipline and obedience. It is a system however, which is not adapted for this reason, to work among the poorer boys. (1)

It was indeed a problem ; leisure time for working class children of school age could be scarce for 12 per cent of boys were averaging 20 hours per week work as well.² Every year, 13000 left school to be immediately absorbed into the grey anonymity of factories and warehouses. For these, 70 local committees with 1500 workers in 124 schools were set up in 1913, as school care committees "to furnish every child with an industrial Godfather or Godmother".³ For such working class children too, the Birmingham Street Childrens' Union was begun circe 1904. In 1906, it boasted 18 Clubs;⁴ by 1913/14, 43 boys clubs totalling 2500 members and 41 girls clubs.⁵ 36 of these boys clubs, perhaps containing 2000 boys, were located in the six central city parishes.

The Street Childrens Union was deliberately aimed at the lower working class and the slum labourers; it organised Junior (10-14½ yrs) and Senior (14½+) Clubs for both boys and girls. In St.s Batholomews and Marys were 17 boys clubs of which 9 were attached to Churches or Missions, 5 attached to the Womens' Settlement and one being independent.⁶ As mentioned in the last chapter, the central organisation and funds were closely involved with the NSL and its influential members.

1. Ibid., p.120.

2. Ibid. p.55 et ff.

3. Muirhead J.H. "Social Work in Birmingham" in "Handbook for Birmingham" ed. G.A.Auden, British Association, 1913. p.279.

4. Reports of the B'ham Street Childrens Union, 1906-14.

5. Birmingham Street Boys Union. A Souvenir (pp.22) 1913.

6. "Handbook for Workers..." op.cit. p.9.

The S.Ch.U was to work by giving personal and sympathetic attention to the problem children from the slums, and providing sports and games without uniform and without military drill - except at camp.¹ But discipline was still the keyword: the work of the Council Schools in this was fully supported for "they are the source of all that tends to uplift children from the slum." The Council Schools were said then, to be succeeding with little or no home support:

in turning wild and reckless youngsters into smart and obedient boys ... the regular drills, the insistence on punctuality, and the strict maintenance of order have a far reaching effect on character, and it is an encouraging sight to visit a slum school and see the results of such training in older boys. (2)

The sympathetic counsellors were often drawn from the middle class endowed grammar schools; the old Edwardians were said to be "put(ting) boys under beneficial discipline",³ and the ethic of the Clubs was "discipline, honesty, keenness".⁴ The focus of training was a two week Summer Camp, attended in 1913 by 500 boys and girls.

At the camp, three "Prefects", six "Magistrates" and an indeterminate number of "Monitors" were elected from among the children to "administer discipline".⁵ Miscreants were summoned, tried and sentenced. The respectable and conformist values thought by middle class society to be so advantageous an acquisition for working class children were adopted and assimilated into the fabric of these micro-societies.

1. "Handbook ..." abstract.

2. H.S.Pelham op.cit, p.31. Pelham was a senior B.S.Ch.U organiser.

3. Birmingham Street Boys Union, Edwardian Branch. Report of the Annual Meeting 1907.

4. B.St.Ch.Union Report, 1910/11 p.7.

5. B.St.Ch.Union Souvenir 1913, p.2.

Smoking, bad language, indiscipline and moral laxity met with strong censure. And each club cultivated its own 'esprit-de-corps'; in its football, its games, and even in the behaviour of its members was exerted the demand for a loyalty to uphold its good name.¹ The focus of such loyalty was a deliberate and calculated first step in socialisation, in the formation of a local group loyalty, which was to be extended to the wider group of society and nation.²

The normal pursuits of working class children were seen as either selfish or morally perilous. Films were "dangerously suggestive" and the music halls were "rotten to the core"; gambling and sexual laxity were allegedly "widespread".³ To become a useful member of society required the destruction of their working class culture and its replacement with values which were essentially in harmony with the concepts of discipline and respectability. Such ideals of an ordered society were the same ideals pursued by the more militarist youth organisations. With such close contact with the Church, the National Service League, the endowed grammar schools and the University perhaps it is not surprising that the B.St.Ch.Union could not rise measurably above paramilitary youth.

Its biggest problem however was, in "preventing a club from getting respectable".⁴ One estimate⁵ claimed that the Street Childrens' Union only attracted 400 lower working class boys to its eight senior clubs, and another⁶ that the boys from the "higher grades" who joined other clubs

1. B.St.Ch.Union Report, 1910/11 p.7.

2. H.S.Pelham, op.cit. p.121.

3. Ibid. pp.49-51.

4. A.Freeman, Boy Life and Labour, p.130.

5. R.A.Bray, "The Boy and the Family" in Studies in Boy Life in Our Great Cities, p.100.

6. W.H.Carnegie Problem of the Street Child, 1910.

as well flocked to the Street Childrens' Union.

Involvement in all these movements was closely related to social class. In the study mentioned in Chapter 5, of 71 Birmingham 17 year old working class boys, the only youth to attend church, a club, evening classes and the TF was from the "comfortably off artisan classes."¹ Of 31 boys in the general 'middle group', 10 attended various clubs and went to church regularly.² Of 21 from poorer unskilled and casual worker families, only one went to church and one to a club regularly.³ Economic restrictions on leisure time, constant migration in housing, poor clothing but above all an independent subculture which refused to be disciplined, kept many of these latter groups away from Organised Youth.

Quite what the long term effects were of the B.St.Ch.Union's training upon personality will never be known. Letters from 'Old Boys' written during the Great War spoke with pride of having "answered the call" or "Keeping the Flag flying", and one even claimed that the moral training kept him away from the "tarts"(sic).⁴

A total then of approximately 3500 boys in the central wards analysed were associated with some movement or another, ignoring double memberships. But then there was also one Naval Boys' Brigade Unit one Jewish Lads' Brigade, two YMCA and twenty five other clubs attached to schools, firms and churches. Of just over 7500 male children aged 10-17 years living in these wards⁵ then, it is likely that Organised Youth touched just less than half. The more respectable outer ring areas

1. A.Freeman, op.cit. p.21.

2. Ibid. p.52.

3. Ibid. p.71.

4. Birmingham Street Childrens' Union Magazine, Vol. 6-8, May 1915-17.

5. Census 1911 loc cit. Population of these wards = 97708; 7.67% of Birmingham's population was male 10-17 years inclusive = 7494.

had higher figures being particularly favoured with military cadet units. The depressed wards of SS Mary and Bartholomew, containing perhaps 2600 males 10-17 years, had a theoretical club membership of up to 1300¹, due particularly to the 17 Street Childrens' Union branches.

Exceeding all these figures and touching nearly all working class youth, was "Empire Day", May 24th each year. In the Elementary schools it presented an opportunity to peddle nationalism and imperialism on an unprecedented scale.

The creation of arch-imperialiser Lord Meath, the event was not officially recognised in the UK until 1916. But by 1904, according to the Board of Education, it was being celebrated in schools in five English counties and four boroughs. Meath claimed nine counties, twenty two boroughs, four UDC, making 180 schools in all.² The values to be promoted by Empire Day, according to Meath, were

loyalty, patriotism, courage, endurance, respect for and obedience to lawful authority, and to encourage self-sacrifice for the public good; to teach all and especially the young the sacredness of the Trust committed to them; and to inspire them with a determination to do their duty. (3)

The Birmingham Education Committee⁴ did not officially recognise the event for, they argued, with the normal high absenteeism, an official half-holiday on Monday would have led to many children not being seen for a week. But in a number of city schools, the flag was hoisted, saluted and sung to and pupils were addressed on patriotism. Thousands of more wealthy children attended school in smartest attire, wearing rosettes and flowers.

1. St.Ch.Union = c.900. Scouts = c.200; BLB = c.60
CLB = c.60; BB = c.60.

2. J.O. Springhall, Youth and Empire ... op.cit. p.54.

3. Times, 24 May 1921.

4. Following evidence from Birmingham Daily Mail, 24 May 1909,
Birmingham Daily Post 25 May 1909.

In the Aston, Birmingham Urban District, Handsworth, Oldbury, Redditch, Tamworth, Nuneaton, Kidderminster, Halesowen and Stourbridge and Cradley Heath areas the celebration was more intense.

In Aston, under the aegis of the Ansell family, children were given half a day in the parks, receiving oranges, sweets and cakes and wearing specially designed and provided clothes and dresses. At Handsworth, the whole morning was spent singing patriotic songs, hoisting and saluting the flag, with the afternoon left free. In Oldbury and Redditch children were taught special songs and were addressed in schools and town squares. At St. Stephens school, they were addressed by the Vicar who pointed out to them the meaning of patriotism:

One boy, when asked who was England's greatest enemy,
said Germany, to which the vicar replied he thought
it was the sin of our own people.

In Nuneaton, preparations had been laid weeks before with special instruction for children in the creation and growth of the British Empire. "Flags were flying in all directions"; 1000 children marched and countermarched, wearing red, white and blue rosettes donated by a local worthy and singing Kipling's "Recessional":

God of our Fathers, known of old.
Lord of our far flung battle line.
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine -
Lord God of Hosts be with us yet, ¹
Lest we forget - lest we forget.

Birmingham and Aston children were again to repeat the experience just over one month later, when the King and Queen visited Birmingham; 40,000 of them strained their tired throats in patriotic airs upon the Bristol Road and received each a commemoration medal donated by a

1. Vs.1 "Our King and Empire, Royal Visit to Birmingham, Souvenir Edition"
F. E. Tillamont. Pub. by Empire Education League, 1909, p.58.

grateful Lord Mayor, knighted that day for his services in the Council House.¹

The children received a similar salutary experience in 1911, for the coronation followed less than a month after Empire Day. Here the schools presented tableaux with patriotic songs in the main city parks. Floodgate Street - by notoriety the most disadvantaged school in Birmingham, presented a tableaux on "Greater Britain" in Calthorpe Park. Following these tableaux and after everybody had saluted the Union Jack, 47000 children spread throughout the seven parks burst forth into massed singing of patriotic songs.²

The attitude of the Birmingham Education Committee from 1900, appears to have developed progressively more in favour of nationalistic movements. By 1912 it was even allowing NSL and Navy League lecturers into the schools.³ More and more teachers appear to have been supporting Empire Day. Certainly by 1914 it must have provided a very solid support for all the other methods of teaching nationalism in the schools.

It is clear then that large numbers of working class children and youths were acted upon by youth movements and the annual celebration of Empire Day, to become disciplined, duty-oriented, patriotic individuals aware of the "Mission of their Race". Again of course, it is easier to describe propaganda than to conjecture upon its effects.

The strands of militaristic nationalism discussed in these past four chapters were united in at least two important aspects. First, they were all based upon a perception of society as, in one sense or

1. B.D.Mail July 7, 1909.

2. B.D.Mail June 3, 1911.

3. B.D.Mail, 21 Aug.1912.

another, corrupt and decadent, and of the Nation itself as being threatened by external aggressors. The military solution to the problems was familiarly stated in the same trite conceptions of "duty-drill-discipline". Second, the various organisations despite some disunity were bound together by the same personalities or groups. Members of the NSL, of the Territorial Force and senior ex-Regular officers appear in the membership lists of the youth organisations, the local Councils and their Education Committees, and supported powerfully by the employers, the teachers and local major political parties they composed a loosely knit but powerful cartel of military nationalist propagandists.

In 1914 these propagandists enjoyed the dubious satisfaction of being proved partly correct. The enemy they had identified had been uncovered; the cause for which they had striven - universal military training - became a national policy.

Chapter 15

Working Class Leisure

To return to possibilities suggested in the second chapter and returned to variously above, it would be interesting to know to what extent the high housing removal rates, seasonal job mobility and perceptions of differential skill status made unstable or limited the growth of working class social networks in Birmingham. More data would be required upon settlement patterns and marriage ties, though, beyond the scope of this thesis.

Certain evidence tends to suggest a weakness in the organisation of working mens' clubs,¹ and of working class political self expression. It was into these vacuums that bourgeois nationalist political, religious and military organisations attempted to fit, with differing success. In single occupation towns, such as mining and shipbuilding areas, the traditions of working class political radicalism tended to be stronger than Birmingham, depending upon a more clearcut definition of economic self-interest, and this political solidarity appeared to be reflected in the strength of the working class social structure.² Perhaps the

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1. In 1912/13 for instance, there were only 34 Clubs registered for Birmingham and District, including the T.A. at Saltley carriage works, and religious and political clubs. Birmingham Social Club Union Handbook 1912/13.
 2. e.g. T.Bell Pioneering Days 1941 esp. pp.19-20, on the intimate and extensive friendship and assistance networks in the Clydeside Communities.

apparent sub-grouping by skill at work and in residential patterns in Birmingham fragmented and inhibited developing class-consciousness.

Such sub-grouping, claimed John Foster,

besides allowing people to accommodate deprivation (1) functioned as an authority system by which labour could be tied politically to the ruling-class. (2)

This could then, partially explain the close control and hold on political power maintained by employers down to 1911, and the initial failure of radical labour. From 1911, the development of some solidarity was seen in industrial confrontation, and the increasing Labour vote in municipal elections. Yet these stand out just because they were so novel; they are unlikely to represent a wholesale change in working class attitudes, more likely - under the leadership of some skilled worker activists - an increasing margin of radicalism.

But apart from this fragmentation model, there were whole areas of social interaction where working people were linked in common cultural experiences, shaping and reflecting general rather than sub-group ideas and attitudes. Working class relationships to aliens perhaps, as discussed in Chapter 9, suggest common reactions to influences arising outside of but directly affecting working class society. And again, in working class leisure, people were united in the celebration of popular ideas, values and actions. This latter is examined below, with particular reference to the influence of nationalism in this cultural expression.

1. i.e. by creating small-scale social systems of their own.

2. J.Foster "Nineteenth Century Towns - A Class Dimension" in H.J.Dyos ed. Studies in Urban History 1968, p.294. See Foster's development of this argument, in Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution.

Working class leisure focused on the pubs, court and alley entertainments, the music halls and cinemas.¹ Pubs, as already noted, were most popular in the depressed areas. In such areas, noted Rowntree,² pubs were frequented by women and children and the "singing and shouting was almost deafening". The songs were of "a maudlin sentimentality; others ... unreservedly vulgar. Throughout the whole assembly there is an air of jollity, and an absence of irksome restraint."³ In the more 'respectable working class districts' he found quiet pubs, unfrequented by women. In the highly skilled districts, he found no pubs at all. The desire to escape reality then, in drink and loud revelry was strongest among the most deprived groups of the working class but increasing affluence displaced this need, and thus progressively displaced the public house as a community centre.

The courts and alleys themselves presented a primitive stage for entertainment, from the "hot muffin man and periwinkle man, the Italian with his organ and monkey, a man with a bear which danced as its owner sang, a troupe of wandering "darkee" minstrels",⁴ to the efforts of the Courts and Alleys Association.

This Association was formed in Birmingham in 1898 by W.J. Clarke - a radical, staunch pacifist and philanthropic minister to Hurst Street Mission.⁵ By 1908, it had provided 250 concerts to a total of 300,000

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1. There is no intention to discuss football!
 2. R.S. Rowntree, Poverty. A Study of Town Life. 1913. p.372.
 3. Ibid. pp.368-9.
 4. V.W. Garratt, Man in the Street, 1939, p.70.
 5. Hurst Street Mission Monthly Record. Mar.1910. Open Air Court Concerts' Association (BRL collection 295030 with MS notes by D.J.O'Neill) 1898-1905 f.5.

attendances. Its managing body included Unionist MP Sir Francis Lowe as Chairman, and Unionist Councillor Sir George Kenrick.¹ It gave concerts in the very poorest and roughest areas, indeed the typhus epidemic of 1902/3 was the only thing that discouraged the Association.

Before a concert, court inhabitants themselves would scrub and clean the court, "reddening the window ledges" and making the place as presentable as possible with streamers and flags.² In No.1 Court, New Summer Street (St.Mary's Ward) for example:

There were dozens of streamers, while as many more rows of festooning, beautifully executed in tissue paper, crossed and recrossed from window to window. In the centre of the yard a large framed portrait of Her Majesty was displayed, surmounted by a prettily designed coronet and the national flags ... and here and there were displayed portraits of eminent statesmen or distinguished naval and military leaders. (3)

Up to 2,000 people would attend a concert:-

All sorts and all ages were there - young children with tattered clothing, hatless and shoeless; the 'peaky blinder' so easily distinguished ..., husbands and wives, their children in arms; decrepit old women whose worn faces told the tale of many a struggle for existence. (4)

The concerts usually included 14 items,⁵ with

four sentimental, two sacred, two patriotic and two comic songs, two instrumental pieces, and two pianoforte solos. Recitations are sometimes given and also occasional nigger performances. Hymns

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1. Birmingham Red Book 1908-10 (both too, members of the NSL).
 2. BRL 295030 collection loc.cit. unnumbered poster by W.J.Clarke.
 3. BD Mail Aug.1 1898.
 4. BD Mail Aug.18 1898.
 5. One included as many as 28, of which 5 were "patriotic"
B.Weekly Post May 12 1900.

or anything of that nature are, of course, prohibited, seeing the movement is of a purely social order. On the other hand, comic songs with any semblance of coarseness are strictly guarded against. (1)

Although organised by non-working class people and items censored with a view to propriety, the concerts were very popular. In particular notice the patriotic element in the decoration of the Courts, which was not unusual; patriotic songs too, were said to

Go down very well ... stirring energetic refrains
... the people swayed to and fro in a sympathy with
its strong movement. (2)

Performances finished with a verse of the National Anthem "sung, hats off and with real fervour, the novel picture dislimmed (sic) and Court Number One, Cheapside, was left to think over what had taken place".³ These free concerts provided the opportunity to make drab surroundings presentable and attractive, and gave working class people the chance to express and to feel some real community in the singing, dancing and cheering. In the expression of community, the symbols and myths of nationalism were ever present - pictures, placards, flags and songs - and the community was thus encouraged not only to feel itself a working class community but to perceive its uniquely British characteristics.

Most popular leisure activity of all was the visit to the music hall. Of course, music halls originated in the pubs, and just before 1900 a total of nearly 40 "informal halls" operated in the public houses,

1. BRL collection loc cit f5.

2. B. Daily Gazette 19 Aug. 1898 ("Soldiers of the Queen").

3. Ibid.

part time. By 1912, there were seven major music halls in Birmingham, seating 16,530 people at an entry fee of 2d.¹ In one survey, all working class juveniles interviewed went to the music hall at least once a week.² Some distinctive differences in the audiences of individual Halls can be guessed from the advertisements carried in their programmes. At the Gaiety Theatre of Varieties, for example appeared adverts for a "working mens' shirt shop", "good fish and chip supper", "cast off clothing for sale or hire".³ Yet the Hippodrome's adverts - furs, motor cycles, bowler hats, school picnic caterers, milliners, jewellery and high class dressmakers - would suggest a 'higher class' of clientele.⁴ Both programmes advertised much the same performances, but the Hippodrome did have a propensity to offer playlets set in offices⁵, shops⁶, and domestic service.⁷ It can therefore be assumed that certain music halls attracted particular social groups and would present programmes most likely to appeal to their respective clienteles.

Music Halls' programmes usually featured some ten to twelve items; artistes, singers, gymnasts, animals, musicians, dancers, comedians, ventriloquists, wrestlers, even educational items - for instance a demonstration of "Marconi's Wireless Equipment as used at sea to save

1. A.Freeman, op.cit. p.141.

2. Ibid.

3. Birmingham Gaiety Theatre of Varieties, Programmes 1907-10 (BRL) (later renamed the Coliseum; Coleshill Street).

4. Hippodrome, Programmes 1906-14 (BRL) (earlier named the Tivoli).

5. Ibid., v.g. Aug.26 1907 "Office Hours".

6. Ibid., v.g. May 6 1907 "The Woman That Was".

7. Ibid., v.g. June 10 1907.

lives, and on all His Majesty's ships".¹ The performances nearly always included a play or playlet and some Halls featured large numbers of plays - the Metropole for instance, which up to 1911 could really be regarded as a working class theatre. Clips of film on the "cinematograph" were always included. Indeed, film became increasingly popular and by 1912, a number of music halls had become pure cinemas. By 1912, indeed the large established cinemas of the Curzon and Kings' Halls, Birmingham had 47 "picture dromes" seating 32,836 people with a further 15 under construction, at an entrance fee of 1d or 2d.²

The plays and playlets were performed in the style of late Victorian melodrama. The villain appeared truly evil, berated by the audience, and the hero or heroine took on the appearance of a particularly lucky saint - to frenzied shouts of applause - avoiding all all the villain's snares.

Melodrama was always a sure card to play in the provinces and certain theatres ... put on this type of play fifty two weeks of the year. To meet the demand, plays were dished up and served afresh in various forms, but as long as virtue was triumphant and the black-moustached villain met his just reward, usually a long drawn-out painful end, the audience were perfectly happy. They did not go to the theatre to criticise in those days. (3)

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1. Gaiety Posters, loc.cit. 29 Mar. 1909.
 2. A.Freeman, op.cit., p.133.
 3. G.W.Altree, Footlight Memories, 1932, p.101.

Many plays featured a woman's story,¹ and/or were set in working class society.² Colourful characters were drawn from the ostentatious or noticeable in the local community, particularly Jewish pawnbrokers,³ Italians and coloured people.⁴ The plots invariably showed a fall from grace, with hope then sparking anew. Chambermaids became duchesses, bad men got their just desserts as the scales of justice were brought to balance, and the loving or brave or true or faithful surfaced resplendent. It was as if the theatre projected aspirations of perfection upon an imperfect world, and translated the boredom of working class society into excitement by selecting the colourful characters and dramatic events, like suicide robbery, murder. It imposed a gratifyingly happy, romantic and just settlement on the unhappy reality. As an example of the promotion of outwardly unexciting aspects of working class culture to thrilling and notable drama, the "Great World of London" advertised a cast of "thieves, gangs, Salvation Army shelters. A Flower Girl, A Detective from Scotland Yard, Discharged Prisoners, Male and Female Tramps,

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1. Particularly Fredk and Walter Melville's plays, written as proprietors of the Metropole, and which found a wide national circulation - Soldiers' Wedding, Worst Woman in London, Female Swindler, A Girl's Crossroads ("original life - life moral play (sic)" Metropole Posters Sep. 27 1908) The Girl Who Took the Wrong Turning, Between Two Women, Her Forbidden Marriage - and about fifteen similar "Her..." titles; also plays in a similar vogue by Mrs.F.G.Kimberley, F.M.Theme, H.Hill Mitchelson and Charles Darnell - who "From Shop Girl to Duchess" was particularly popular: Metropole Theatre Posters Jan 20 1908 - Oct. 1908.
 2. v.g. "The Streets of Birmingham", "The Great World of London" Metropole Posters, Mar. 2 1908, Oct 12 1908.
 3. "Solomon Isaacs" or "Ilkestein" the most common - Gaiety Programmes loc cit June 28 1909.
 4. v.g. the "niggers d'ats a fact (why should a nigger wash?) Metropole Posters Aug.31 1908.

Outcasts, Vagrants, Ex-Convicts, Waifs and Strays, Station Loafers, Newsboys, and numerous other characters met with in the GREAT WORLD OF LONDON".¹

Many of the stories centred around soldiers, such as "Soldiers Wedding" and "Second to None"² and these conformed to this insatiable romanticism. The housemaid in one, the devoted sweetheart in another both identify with the females in the audience. Many of these soldier stories fancifully interpret a deferential and romantic perception of the aristocratic way of life.³ The soldier-officer, usually knighted, was often adorned with impressive insignia of gallantry.⁴ In these sketches was an unspoken yet explicit assumption of close association between the aristocracy and the working class. Not only were duchesses made from domestics and princesses from beggar-maids, but when the middle class intruded into the plot they were instantly given the villain's role (crooked bankers, unscrupulous businessmen), rough and uncultured when compared to the real aristocracy. Not for the merchant a parlourmaid, but for the Duke. Even colonels and privates consort and converse, with appropriate deference of course.⁵

But then that really never happened in every day life; the aristocracy were distant and unknown. Fanciful romanticism at times gave way to comic parody, deference changed to ridicule as Fred Karno's company staged their hilarious "His Majesty's Guests", and the audience

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1. Metropole Posters, Oct.12 1908. See "The Lights of London", "Two Little Vagabonds", and "Saturday Night in London". Imperial Theatre, Bordesley, Collection of Programmes Oct.1899 - Sep. 1900 (BRL).
 2. Metropole Posters Sep.14 1908.
 3. v.g. "Love of a Princess" "For Love and King" "Midnight Wedding" Metropole Posters Nov.23 1908, Sep. 26 1910, Sep. 12 1910, Oct 24 1910.
 4. v.g. The V.C. "Two Little Drummer Boys"Metropole Posters 6 Dec. 1908.
 5. v.g. "Second to None" Metropole Posters, May 17 1908.

burst into the satirical refrains of "Burlington Bertie", "Galloping Major" or "Captain Gingha".

Of patriotic, nationalistic or imperialist songs, plays, scenarios, and films there were many. During the Boer War, the use of film became particularly sophisticated; all of the music halls advertised "all the latest pictures" of the Boer and Third China Wars. Those that still survive fall into two categories. First, films shot on location at the seat of war. Given the technology, it was necessary to imagine that the Boers were attacking troops in these "action scenes", for no cameraman would have been induced to brave Mauser bullets while standing at his tripod with a non-moveable camera.¹ Second there were films shot in Britain - usually on London's Hampstead Heath - which presented Boers or Chinese in action against British troops. One showed a nurse and wounded troops being bombed while under the shelter of a Red Cross flag.² Another, filmed on the same piece of ground, showed Boers clubbing and shooting dying men.³ In one particularly interesting scene a wounded but greedy Boer (dirty and unshaven too), asks twice for a drink of water from a British soldier - and of course twice receives it - and then shoots his benefactor in the back as he turns to go. (Gratifyingly, the Boer is soundly thrashed). "An Attack on a Christian Mission by Chinese Boxers" was another

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1. See National Film Archive "Skirmish with the Boers near Kimberley" and Imperial War Museum "Troops crossing the Modder River".
 2. National Film Archive (NFA) "Boers attack a Red Cross Outpost".
 3. NFA "The Despatch Bearer".
 4. NFA. All these films are "c.1900"

hilarious episode set among the rhododendron bushes of Hampstead Heath, where slit-eyed cunning little men with pigtailed attack a missionary and his family with what look like hockey sticks, but are all killed by the timely arrival of British troops.¹

The advertisements for these last three films were in no way distinguished to indicate that they were fraudulent.² An unsophisticated audience newly introduced to the "viagraph", would be very likely to believe all they saw and no doubt passions could rise to an indignant patriotic fury.

Plays and playlets about the wars were common during 1899-1902, the most popular of the Boer War returning time and again well after the war had ended.³ In one playlet, 100 Birmingham children re-enacted "the storming of the Taku Forts" with soldiers and members of the Naval Brigade.⁴ Patriotic scenes like Bessie Willow's "Victoria's Emblem"⁵ were set against more lighthearted caricature - Kruger became a particular object of parody and one performing troupe had a donkey named after him.⁶ Popular military dramas took about 10% total drama time in the theatres and music halls studied, two of the most popular being "One of the Best"

1. NFA. All these films are "c.1900".

2. See Tivoli Theatre of Varieties. Programmes. Sep 9 1901 and "The Caste" Mar. 19 1900, advertisement for the Empire Palace.

3. Particularly "A Solder and a Man", "Soldiers of the Queen", "On Her Majesty's Service", and the "Absent Minded Beggar".
Imperial Theatre Bordesley, Programmes Oct. 1899. Sep.1900.

4. (One of the bloodiest and most disgraceful episodes in the history of the British Army) - Tivoli Programmes May 5 1902.

5. Ibid. May 27 1901.

6. Ibid. Sep.21 1902.

(featuring two military bands and 60 soldiers) and "The Soldier's Return".

By the beginning of the First World War, film-making had become a major industry. In 1909 it employed nationally 20,000¹ people. Within two weeks of the outbreak of war, Birmingham music halls could advertise 3000 feet of film on "England's Honour - Why England Went to War" screened to background music of "Soldiers of the King".² In September 1914, song-scenes were developed like "Your King and Country Want You",³ and a further 3000 feet of film showing the chief events of the war ("Events that Will Live in History").⁴ As in the Boer War, the working class were fed biased reports of military activity. In the Boer War, the editing authorities had been the filmmakers themselves, responding to what they perceived demand to be. In the Great War too, this was initially the case, but increasingly the government exercised control over both press and film industry.⁵

During the interwar years 1902 - 14, the music halls and filmmakers responded to topical interests. Nationalistic or imperialistic items in programmes were usually there because a demand existed among working-class clientele. Thus the popular "Soldiers of the Queen" play appeared time and again in most of the Halls and theatres.

1. Daily Mail, Oct.16 1904.

2. Birmingham Coliseum of Varieties, Programmes 1911-19, Augu.17 1914.

3. Ibid. Sep 21 1914.

4. Ibid. Sep 28 1914.

5. H.D.Lasswell, Propaganda Techniques Used in the World War 1938. Forty films were made by the Topical Film Co., not until mid-1915 were government sponsored films being shown and not until 1916 did the government exercise a monopolistic control. M.L.Sanders "Wellington House and British Propaganda" Historical Journal Mar.1975 Vol. 18, No.1.

Allegedly "founded on actual facts and incidents that occurred in South Africa, it had four Acts:

"Act 1: Massacre at Majuba-Levi (Solomon Levi, Jew, financier, agent etc.) offers £5000 to shoot Forrester, his wife and child. The Soldiers-Comrades in Arms - stand shoulder to shoulder like Sons of Britain and Soldiers of the Queen ... Young Dick wrapped in the Colours of the Regiment by Jack Willoughby.

Act 2 : The Lion Shews his teeth ...

Act 3 : The Lion's Claws Plough Deep ...

Act 4 : Britain Protects Her Sons ... ¹

Military and naval dramas were common, the Hippodrome for instance showing 13 between May 28 1906 - Dec. 23 1909.² Occasionally a theatre might decide to pursue a completely military theme for a week. For four weeks the Metropole staged a "special educational programme" on "Our Navy and Our Army". This gave the comforting picture of the Navy defending the Empire's outposts, of the Army mobilising for war, of recruits being waved off by excited villagers and was particularly strong in pushing recruiting.³

During the years 1908-10, with Territorial Force reorganisatinn and Naval Scares, the music halls and cinemas responded with increased attention given to all aspects of naval and military life. Principally they reflected popular demand, but there is evidence of pressure being brought to bear on theatre proprietors to stage the National

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1. Metropole Posters Aug.22 1910; Metropole Programmes, Dec.26 1908, Jan. 10 1910 etc. An (almost) indistinguishable version of this was "On Her Majesty's Service".
 2. Hippodrome Programmes 1906-14.
 3. Metropole Programmes, June 15-July 6 1908.

Service League play "An Englishman's Home".¹ Even without this interference, 1909 was a notably active year for patriotic material. In March 1909 the Grand showed the military sketch "Drummed Out" ... "as an aid to the effort which is now being made to encourage the military spirit",² and the Empire showed "Wake Up England"³. The Empire also employed a Mr.F.O.Villiers to present a 'bioscopic coverage of Britain's Wars' ("an appeal to patriotism"⁴) and put on two patriotic plays - "Parson Gray V.C."⁵ and George Leyton's "Relief of Lucknow"⁶. The Kings Hall cinema screened variously a "highly dramatic piece - The Patriot"; "the Defenders of Our Empire; "British Might", and patriotic pictures of the King and Queen's visit to Birmingham.⁷ The Curzon cinema packed houses with pictures of the fleet manoeuvring off Portsmouth backed by Miss Ducie Sanderson singing "An Englishman's Home is His Castle"; it screened "John Bull's Breadbasket" (on the value of the Empire's Canadian corn); it showed a film on the life of the King and his visits abroad, his visit to Birmingham, his inspection of the Navy on the Solent and on the Thames, and gave much attention to Baden Powell's attempts to raise Boy Scouts.⁸ The Hippodrome celebrated Empire Day 1909 by staging "Call to Arms", and anticipated Trafalgar Day by showing

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1. As in Chap.12. One music hall manager strenuously denied though that political interference was possible - politics on the music hall, he claimed, 'gave offence'. Birmingham Election News Vol. 1 Jan 4 1906. But this was surely not always true - vide. Little Tich's joke: "My brothers in the Gas Trade, too you know. In fact he travels on gas. He's a Socialistic agitator!" Gareth Stedman Jones "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London 1870-1900; notes on the remaking of a working class". in Journal of Social History Vol. 7 No.4 p.493. Indeed, Jones claims that from 1870-1900, the music halls became self-consciously Tory.
 2. B.D.Mail 28 Mar.1909.
 3. Ibid. 9 Mar.1909.
 4. Ibid. 30 Mar. 1009.
 5. Ibid. 20 Apr. 1909.
 6. Ibid. 28 Sep. 1909.
 7. Ibid. (respectively) Jan.5 1909, May 11 1909, June 7 1909, July 13, 1909.
 8. Ibid. (respectively) Mar.23 1909, June 7 1909, July 6 1909, July 13 1909, July 30 1909, Aug.3 1909.

"1912, Invasion of England"; it also staged plays about the South African War, Wars in Imperial India, the Cadet Force, and a bioscopic production entitled "Duty vs. Revenge".¹

This is not an exhaustive list for 1909, and it cannot be the case that all this patriotic material was staged by powerful pressure group activity from outside. It is clear the working classes found much of this dramatic and involving.

The Conservative Party's Tariff Reform agents were not slow to make use of film however.² An early film, "John Bull's Hearth"³ depicted a Frenchman, an American, a German and a Russian slowly edging a generous John Bull away from the warmth of his own fire. The situation is saved by the arrival of a 'colonial' (either an Australian or New Zealander), who kicks the foreigners out and places a portrait of Joe Chamberlain (plus monocle) over the hearth. The motto above the fireplace which once read "Free Trade" is changed to "Fair Trade". But what are interesting are the stereotypes of foreigners themselves, instantly recognisable by the audience. The Frenchman was slim, effeminate, with a short beard. The German was fat, arrogant, smoked a pipe and had a "pork pie hat" and whiskers. The American was brash, overdressed in a long tail coat and a high hat, being the typical image too of a grasping Uncle Sam. The Russian was covered in fur, looked like Rasputin, bearded and evil. John Bull of course, was affable and friendly - allowing the foreigners to take seats before his fire and leave him out

1. Ibid. May 11 1909, Oct.12 1909; Hippodrome Programmes July 12 1909, Dec.23 1909, Nov.29 1909, Feb.22 1909.

2. By the 1910 elections, the TRL, N.U. Conservative and Unionists Associations and the Budget Protest League were putting considerable effort into this media. Daily Mail Oct 16 1909.

3. Copy in NFA.

in the cold. This imagery closely resembled the cartoon styles of the commercial advertisements and newspapers.

Against the threat of foreign imports, newspaper advertisers liked to stress the essential "Britishness" of their products. Thus Guinea Gold cigarettes were made by "British Labor" (sic),¹ Players' Medium Cut Cigarettes carried the motto "PRO AMORE PATRIAE",² and Bovril (alluding to the Relief of Ladysmith) came to the "Relief of ... Influenza",³ for it was "BRITISH TO THE BACKBONE".⁴ Again Oxo, Pears Soap, Dunlop Tyres, Quaker Oats, Rowntrees, Cadburys, Invelcon, Dunville's Whisky, Ellimans, Carters' Seeds,⁵ Hills' Imperial Cigarettes, Benson's Watches, Abbeys' Salt, Bryant and Mays, Erasmus Shaving Sticks, - the list is endless - stressed their 'British Manufacture' as for obvious reasons so did Voelkner Mantles.⁶ Between these advertisements and newspaper cartoons developed changing stereotypes of the foreigners with whom Britain competed. Uncle Sam always appeared plutocratic, tall overdressed but increasingly wicked and grasping; newspaper cartoons tended to ask "Does he want the whole Earth?"⁷

The image of the German too, underwent some change. Cartoons of 1900-02 portrayed a fat, jolly little man with overlarge clothes,

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1. Midland Express, 1st Nov. 1901 "employing over 2000 British people".
 2. Birmingham Daily Gazette 6 Jan. 1900 (which no doubt all well-schooled workers could interpret). They also liked to quote Sir Walter Scott "Breathes there a man with soul so dead ... etc." Midland Express 7 April 1902.
 3. Midland Express 28 Feb. 1902.
 4. Ibid. 29 May 1902.
 5. All of these preceding are taken from just one issue of the Daily Mail 20 Jan. 1910.
 6. "Spun by North of England lassies and made by London workpeople". Birmingham Daily Mail. 22 Oct. 1909.
 7. Midland Express 22nd and 29th Mar. 1902.

a pill box hat, droopy moustache, clogs, a curved pipe, a benign avuncular smile, and sausage tumbling from his pockets.¹ Under the influence of Tariff Reform, Unionist newspapers increasingly caricatured him as less benign, more malevolent. His clothes became plusher, better cut; his clogs were replaced by shoes and spats and his pipe by a monocle. This nasty fat capitalist haunted the Tariff Reform posters of the 1906 and 1910 elections. Set against a background of increasing poverty, he is captioned:

Ach! But dat is good. Dese Liberals
are blaying our game! (2)

But this image itself changed, as under the influence of NSL/TF/ Navy League propaganda and reports of German militarism, cartoonists removed the German's fat, increased his height. So appeared the image of the monocled, jackbooted Prussian officer, grimly silhouetted against marching soldiery, and captioned for instance:

As the German people seek first place among
nations, St. Julian tobacco (seeks) first place
among Tobaccos. (3)

In the cartoons and advertisements too, the French were effeminate, and the Russians but coarse and evil black bears. And this imagery repeated itself on the music hall stage. The invasion plays of 1908-10 included stereotyped, bewiskered Germans.⁴ Anti-

1. Midland Express 19 Nov. 1901. Roberts (op.cit.) attributes this to the large number of Bavarian butchers who settled in Britain.

2. e.g. Birmingham Daily Mail 12 Jan. 1909.

3. Ibid., 8 Sep 1909.

4. Ibid., 15 Mar. 1909.

Russian plays commonly dealt with Tsarist persecution, secret police and prisons.¹ Some sketches attacked America too, particularly for the brashness and violence of its society. In one play, "The Third Degree", a special inset page was included in the programme informing the audience that starving, keeping awake continuously, maltreatment and torture of prisoners by the American police was an accepted practice for obtaining confessions of guilt:

It is constantly employed by the police,
often innocent men confess to crimes which
they have not committed. (2)

The music halls and cinemas were not as such creating myths; they were reinforcing and identifying contemporary popular images. Nor were they unique institutions of this 'vox populi'. The three strands of popular demand as discerned from music hall programmes and analysed above are similarly found in popular cheap literature, (the demand for sickly romanticism, making a Paradise from poverty; the inflation of the reality of working class life to exciting and colourful adventure; the demand for nationalistic and patriotically stirring material).

Among the young, the most eagerly sought after of literature were comics including "Penny Dreadfuls", one boy "spending every penny he could to get hold of them".³ First, there were halfpenny and penny novellettes, with popular stories issued again and again with modifications

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1. v.g. "Under the Czar" - a story of the salt mines, which includes Act (IV) "Under the Protection of the Union Jack - Freedom!"; also "A Beautiful Fiend" and several others set in "Slavonia" Metropole Programmes, June 1st 1908; ibid. Posters. Jan 30 1911.
 2. Hippodrome Programmes, 26 Sep. 1911.
 3. J.Spenser, op.cit., p.4. (I will not be able to cover this topic very well, lacking sources).

(like Melville's plays). For instance, "Mother Love - A Pathetic Story that will Touch the Heart of Every Reader", "Dora Courage - Typist", "Dainty Daisy Simple, the Tea Shop Girl", "The Girl Who Trusted Him" - all particularly for girls, all filled with sickly romanticism.¹

Next, there were novellettes which, set in the working class community, amplified and inflated the excitement of day to day life. In many, the stories reverse roles and the villains and criminals became the heroes. In "Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber", "Turnpike Dick", "Jack Sheppard", "Captain MacHeath, the Prince of the Highway", "Cheeky Charlie, or what a boy can Do", and "Tough and Co. Wholesale Dealers",² the criminal is conferred with almost superhuman strength, sagacity and courage against which the authorities, police, Guardians of the Poor and the like appear as weak, stupid, blundering fools or rogues. Perhaps the stories helped half-express a deeply rooted sense of grievance against the oppressive social system, perhaps they assisted a cultural expression of working class social identity. Certainly there are glimpses of rejection of bourgeois respectability. But there were 'respectable comics' too, shared by the working and middle classes alike, and equally popular with both. Published by the Harmsworth and Pearson presses, the "Chums", "Gem", "Magnet" and the "Boys Own Paper" (of the Religious Tract Society) featured articles by Frank Richards, G.A.Henty, Rider Haggard and Ballantyne. J.O.Springhall has made an excellent appreciation of the works of these last three authors.³ He analysed

1. A.Freeman, op.cit., pp.144-50.

2. Quarterly Review, Vol. 171. July/Oct.1890 pp.152-170. E.S.Turner Boys will be Boys 1948, pp.23-53.

3. J.O.Springhall, Youth and Empire ... U/pub.D.Phil thesis, Sussex 1968.

racially prejudiced, bloodsoaked and fiercely nationalistic accounts of Imperial adventure. But, he claims, neither the books nor the papers which carried their kinds of article were popularly read by working class children.¹

He dismisses assertions that they were, as "wish fulfillment".² But Roberts talks of a "working class addiction" for them;³ George Orwell says they "were sold in all the seediest shops" to working class boys.⁴ E.S. Turner, in his history of 'Penny Horrors', notes that from about 1900 on, comics like the above and Northcliffe's "Boys Friend", "Boys Herald" and "Marvel" were displacing the popular "Sweeny Todd etc." novellettes.⁵ Biographies mention them too, and one even claimed that they helped to "sow the seeds" of deference.⁶

The Public School of the Frank Richards tradition, particularly popular in these magazines, was one untouched by the sordid cares of the outside world, an oasis of imagination. Laudable British "characteristics" were stressed in comparison with the oft-invoked imagery of foreigners who were "comic, stereotyped, sometimes dangerous but above all different."⁷ Frenchmen ('Frogs') had pointed beards, pegtop trousers, and were wildly excitable. The Indian boy (Haree Janset Ramh Singh) was a comic babu in the Punch tradition, even though a Nabob. The Chinese boy

1. Ibid. p.125.

2. Particularly assertions by C.E.B. Russell, Manchester Boys. Sketches of Manchester Lads at Work and Play (MUP) 1905.

3. R. Roberts, Classic Slum ... p.127.

4. G. Orwell, Inside the Whale and other Essays (Penguin edn. 1957) "Boys Weeklies" (1939).

5. E.S. Turner, Boys Will Be Boys, 1948 p.70.

6. F. Willis, Peace and Dripping Toast 1950, pp.56-7. Lower middle class really, but reduced by father's death to Board School etc.

7. G. Orwell, op.cit.

(Wun Lung) had a comic saucer hat, slit eyes, spoke pidgin English, and wore the inevitable pigtail. Americans were "derided".¹

Northcliffe's magazines were particularly biased. In 1900 for instance, 'Boys' Friend' (already anti-Boer) showed pictures of the British navy sinking the French and Russian fleets.² Down to 1905, 'Boys' Friend', 'Boys Herald' and 'Boys Realm' kept up a constant anti-French tirade with articles on French invasion. In 1909 indeed, the 'Boys' Friend Library' scripted a 150,000 French, Russian and German invasion of England, being repelled by 34,000 British troops at Newhaven under Earl Roberts. The British then took the offensive and the foreigners paid £100 million reparations.³

From 1908, the recurrent theme of foreign invasion by Germany was linked to spy hunts for boys. Plots showed St. Paul's bombarded, people starving, the Colonies sending help, and the population shouting "No Surrender! God Save the King!"⁴ Not only were Northcliffe's magazines biased, but those from the Aldine and Pearson houses too.⁵

All this of course, is signally at odds with the earlier "Dreadfuls", and it may seem paradoxical that working class youth could be attracted to both - though increasingly to the "Boys' Own" breed. But both posited artificial dream worlds and both satiated the same demand:

Their imaginations are prepared for any flight of fancy', their instincts are all agog for anything that is lurid or wierd or bloodthirsty" (6)

1. R. Roberts, op.cit., p.127.

2. E.S. Turner, op.cit. p.173.

3. Ibid., pp.175-6.

4. Ibid., p.177.

5. Boys Own Library, No.44 "The Aerial War! ... Germany vs. Britain".

6. A. Freeman, Boy Life and Labour 1914, p.144.

To what extent the material influenced behaviour it is (yet again) not possible to say. If one accepts Robert's overstatement that the "public school ethos (of) Frank Richards ... had more influence on the minds and outlook of young working class England than any other single person",¹ then one must also allege that the 'Dreadfuls' impelled criminality. Contemporary social surveys were of course, prone to assert just this, and to condemn as well the music halls and cinemas, all jointly doing much "to people our prisons, our reformatories, our Colonies ..."²

But all this popular leisure fulfilled a need in working class society. For its material, it fed upon a common bedrock of beliefs, values, aspirations and myth current in popular culture. It did not create behaviour, nor was it in some sense a tool manipulated by the unscrupulous to alter working class behaviour. In that it responded to popular demand, it was at once a part of culture, and in studying it one is informed of the quality of working class values and beliefs.

In conclusion, and at the risk of oversimplification, certain broad deductions may be made. First, working class individuals in Birmingham were often unable to articulate any real grievances that they might have felt toward their relative economic and social deprivation. Perhaps grievance was to some extent accommodated by the sub-grouping of working class society. Perhaps too, for reasons discussed above, working class society was socially fragmented. Certainly there were few institutions for working class social or political solidarity, for the corporate expression of grievance. The public house, which became the focus of micro-communities, did not encourage the intellectual examination of economic conditions (nor perhaps, did the Tory landlord). The public house was a strongly functional leisure centre; it provided temporary escape from oppression

1. R.Roberts, op.cit., p.128.

2. See Quarterly Review loc cit p.152; M.G.Barnett, op.cit., p.9.
Rev.H.S. Pelham Training of Working Boy, 1914, p.50.

in loud noise and strong drink. It is notable that the density of public houses was higher in the poorer areas - where, logically, they could be least afforded - and that singing in pubs was more common in these areas.

The Music Halls, Court Concerts and later the cinemas were perhaps the only other real centres where a temporary feeling of cultural community, security and contentment were to be found. Three particular aspects of the material they presented were analysed, and from the volume of performances in which one or more of these three aspects were found it can be claimed they were important factors, conditioned by a real popular demand.

First, a large number of plays, sketches and songs were fashionably melodramatic and charged to a pitch of frenetic romanticism. In these, and in particular in the audience participation, can be detected a powerful almost neurotic corporate bursting forth of the repressed emotions of an audience otherwise oppressed by brutal economics and hideous environment.

Second, a significant body of performances reinterpreted perceptions of the working class world. Ordinary people assumed a new glamour and the 'characters' of society - tramps, thieves, costermongers, paupers and pawnbrokers - became dramatis personae often endowed with great charisma. These sort of plays at once presented the community with a view of itself, and "constantly skate over any cracks in the surface of life that are really disturbing".¹ Nothing was genuinely tragic for long; the drab streets became colourful, and the poorest the most oppressed, the swindled and the tricked in the end were promoted by Providence to become wealthy, famous, avenged, but above all, happy. The performances thus created a mythical Paradise of working-class wish fulfilment.

1. C. MacInnes, Sweet Saturday Night (1967), p.40.

Finally, patriotic, nationalistic or imperialistic material was popular in the music hall, cinema, Court Concerts and some youth literature. It appeared in particular profusion in wartime and at times of artificial national crisis (vg. 1909). The roots of its popularity clearly originated in the two aspects above. First, patriotic material was genuinely emotive and stirring; the Court Concerts gave but one example of the popular attraction of the music of nationalism. The occasional success of ritualist religion analysed above has indeed the same explanation - the joy of an emotive safety valve, and for a short time complete immersion and participation. Again, the success of military bands and imperialistic pageants in recruiting particularly unskilled workers, demonstrates this working class propensity to dwell in myth.

Second, patriotic material afforded the working class an opportunity to reflect upon themselves not as a working class but as a national community. It was perhaps an alternative vision, but in stressing national and imperial qualities, it too generated feelings of enhanced status and position. It too, glossed over the cracks in society. It too provided the working class individuals with a fleeting vision of corporate unity and community.

And this is surely what the "Mafficking" crowds of 1900-01 were all about. Like the extension of the Music Hall stage onto the streets, and in bursts of almost neurotic frenzy, the working class were experiencing the entertainment of victory woven into national solidarity and impressive status.

In what way, then, can working class people be said to "believe in" this patriotic material? As Hoggart says, all sentimental songs were

taken seriously ... (but) ... the taking seriously is not an unqualified matter. It subsists with an awareness that songs like this ... are 'very sentimental', and that awareness expresses itself in the strain of debunking songs about sentimentality. In one kind of comic song, the working class people¹ deliberately overdo the emotion they usually accept.

An example of course, is "Henry the Eighth", but it might have been unacceptable to deliver a parodied version of say, the National Anthem or 'Rule Britannia'.² Hoggart suggests that sentimentality "touches old chords; ... suggests values which people still like to cherish".³ The debunking songs laugh affectionately at emotions; they do not destroy them.

It is suggested that often "belief" was more an emotive matter, less an intellectual enquiry. The very lack of articulate working class political groups in the communities points to a certain indisposition to intellectual enquiry ...

in general, the striking feature is the unplanned nature of life, the moment-to-moment meeting of troubles or taking of pleasure; schemes are mostly short term ... All these things contribute to a view of life among working class people which can from some angles look like a kind of hedonism, which finds life largely acceptable so long as the big worries (debt, drink, sickness) keep away, and so long as there is adequate scope for 'having a good time'. But it is a mild hedonism, one informed by a more deeply rooted sense - that the big and long distance rewards are not for them. (4)

The evidence that recruits could become fired to enlist in the army for six years by martial ceremonial indicates again this 'moment-by-moment' approach to life. This factor would appear to add a new dimension to

1. R.Hoggart Uses of Literacy, (Pelican, 1971 edn.) pp165-6.

2. One cannot blame the working class for accepting a parody of the dreadful 'Jingo' song by Dan Leno - "I don't want to fight/ I'll be slaughtered if I do ... /I'aint a Briton true/And I'll let the Russians have Constantinople." (information direct from Peter Davison (see his "British Music Hall" 1970)).

3. Hoggart, op.cit, p.166.

4. Ibid.135.

concepts of 'belief' in ideological convictions in working class culture. But it was not exclusive of course, for the patterns of culture tended to vary normatively with status. Thus the highly skilled workers living with small masters in elite outer areas appear not to have been given to heavy drinking, but could even encourage their children from reading "penny trash", and attending cinemas and music halls.¹ In the outer areas flourished the intellectual adult schools and political clubs.

The study of entertainment therefore, informs us broadly of the popularity of the nationalist myth as an emotion in working class culture, and suggests it was more emotively acceptable, perhaps, among unskilled and semi-skilled people.

1. C. Stella Davies, North Country Bred, 1963, p.63; L. Jermy Memoirs of a Working Woman (Norwich) 1934, p.30. The music hall and theatre alike were though, still very popular with all parts of the working class and the lower middle class, which tends to account for the 'social class' differences between the Gaiety and Hippodrome above.

Chapter Sixteen

War

On August 5th 1914, war was declared by Britain on Germany for the violation of the territorial integrity of Belgium. This was no altruistic move; it was clear that should Germany hold Belgium then a strategic threat was posed to the British coastline. It was clear too, that a Power which might eventually succeed in conquering Continental Europe would not pause in turning its attentions to Britain.

July and August 1914 were not unremarkable months in their own right. The newspapers began July with stories of suffragette troubles, labour disputes and the crisis in Ireland.

Locally, the seeds of the labour militancy of 1910 were in full flower. The Birmingham Engineers and Allied Trades were demanding an extra 5s. per week,¹ the Warwickshire Miners' Association were threatening to strike for a closed shop at Birch Coppice Colliery², the Coventry building workers were on a prolonged strike,³ as were the Salt Workers at Bromsgrove⁴, and the Workers' Union representing farm workers of seven counties were proposing to withdraw harvest time labour in support of higher wages and better conditions.⁵ Nationally too, the Liverpool

1. Birmingham Daily Mail 25 June 1914.

2. Ibid. 25 June 1914.

3. Ibid. 26 June 1914.

4. Ibid. 29 June 1914.

5. Ibid. 27 June 1914.

Docks were on strike, and on July 24th the "ominous moves" for a national stoppage by the miners, the railwaymen and transport workers were noted in the newspapers.

The local Suffragettes were active too, particularly on Sundays when they broke up a number of religious services in Birmingham, occasionally pelting church processions with rocks.¹

But what commanded the greatest column space in the newspapers, increasing throughout July, was the very real possibility of civil war in Ireland. Private sectarian armies openly drilled with rifles on the streets of Belfast, and the Regular Army was clearly indisposed to take any action against them. On July 10th, Sir Edward Carson arrived in Belfast, to be greeted by armed volunteers - parading both Union Jacks and rifles - and the self-styled "Ulster Provisional Government" issued a declaration to the King, of resistance to any national Irish solution.

To Unionists the whole situation was grim with foreboding; the dangers of Home Rule and Socialism, so long prophesied, were to be soon realised. Sir Francis Lowe at Edgbaston warned

We had reached a critical and dangerous period in the history of the country than had been known for many centuries past, and it was to the Unionist party alone that the country had to look to save it from the many dangers and disasters ... threatening on every side. The country was never nearer an outbreak of Civil War than at the present time ... (2)

And against all this featured press reports of the monarchy - the King, Queen or members of the Royal Family visiting mines in Scotland or factories in Nottingham, reviewing the fleet at Spithead ("the most

-
1. e.g. Birmingham Daily Mail 23 June and 29 June 1914. Suffragettes pelted the vicar of St. Albans Church (Anglo-Catholic) in Conybere Street "and his bodyguard" with rocks. This unfortunate church seems to have been the focus of much suffragette activity - so much so that the unhappy incumbent needed a bodyguard.
 2. ibid. 23 July 1914. A conclusion with which Graham Dangerfield The Strange Death of Liberal England (1935, revised 1966) would substantially agree.

magnificent and powerful fleet ever known in naval history"¹), pacifying the Suffragettes who attacked them, and most significantly intervening in the Irish crisis. At an eleventh hour intervention on July 14th, the king invited all parties (except Labour) to Buckingham Palace; "fratricidal strife is unthinkable" said the King. It needed a very grave situation to justify this Royal intervention; but royal intervention had become far more commonplace those past few years. Symbolically there posed, in newspapers and popular public image, the picture of George to defeat the dragons of threats to the Nation and Empire.

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo on June 29th, as a newsworthy story, came and went the same day. Royal assassinations had happened before - eight Kings, Queens or Presidents had been shot since 1900.² Yet the B.D.Mail predicted with uncanny accuracy that the new Archduke

will succeed to a future big for forebodings
for international conflict, dark with problems
internal and external, which may well prove
beyond the power of any ruler to solve. (3)

And then the story all but disappeared, to be overshadowed four days later by the death of Joseph Chamberlain; the B.D.Mail carried two black edged pages of eulogy; the Daily Mirror brought out a special Chamberlain Memorial edition of 20 pages the next day, and Birmingham was reliably reported to be mourning.

1. B.D.Mail, July 17 1914.

2. Greece 1913, Portugal 1908, Russia 1905, Serbia 1903, U.S.A. 1901.
Italy 1900.

3. B.D.Mail June 29th 1914.

Not for three weeks did the Serbian crisis command any untoward attention in the newspapers; then from July 25th, the likelihood of war began to crowd out Ireland, labour troubles and suffragettes and the words "War Cloud" became larger, day by day. Yet the response to this, measured at the recruiting office was nil.¹ Clearly, few believed that war was about to dawn; the Bank Holiday was but one week away, the King had just inspected the "mightiest fleet" in the world, and anyway scares and alarms had become quite commonplace in the newspapers.

By Sunday August 2nd, everybody was aware that war was imminent. The Bank Holiday trippers even found their seaside trains cancelled and marshalled for logistic mobilisation, and the Territorials departed for their scheduled annual camp at Rhyl in an "atmospheric electric and full of tension".²

On Bank Holiday Monday, seaside trippers turned away from Snow Hill Station and Territorials arriving hurriedly back from Rhyl would have seen a "Stop the War" meeting in the Bull Ring of Birmingham Industrial Unionists, addressed by Councillor Kneeshaw.³ But the crowds ignored his advice to down tools and refuse to work in protest.⁴

The next day, Germany invaded Belgium. The Territorials were embodied and deployed on coastal defence at Portland and Weymouth.⁴ And the recruiting office in Thorp Street, Digbeth was "inundated with

1. A.B.303 study.

2. Carrington Lt.C.E., "War Record of the 1/5 Battalion, R.War Regt." Birmingham 1922, p.4.

3. B.D.Mail, August 3 1914.

4. West Birmingham Elector, Sept.1914.

enquiries from applicants who included not only young but middle-aged men!"¹

On August 5th, Britain declared war on Germany and the recruiting of the civil population began in earnest. The front page of the daily newspaper carried, in heavy type, the following invitation:

YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEEDS YOU
 "Will you answer your Country's Call?
 Each day is fraught with the gravest possibilities,
 and at this very moment the Empire is on the
 brink of the greatest war in the history of the
 World.

In this crisis your Country calls on all her
 young unmarried men to rally round the Flag and
 enlist in the ranks of her Army.

If every patriotic young man heeds her call,
 England and her Empire will emerge stronger and
 more united than ever.

If you are unmarried and between 18 and 30 years
 old, will you answer your Country's Call? and
 go to the nearest Recruiter

JOIN THE ARMY

TODAY

(2)

And in flocked tens of thousands, volunteering for a war that was to either kill or maim nearly all of them.³ Within that first month, down to September 9th, 20,859 of the young men of Birmingham, exclusive of Territorials, Reservists, Special Reservists (Militia) and of the newly formed middle-class City Battalions had taken the King's shilling, and yet the number who joined every day was increasing.⁴

1. Birmingham Daily Mail, 4 Aug. 1914.

2. Ibid., 5 Aug. 1914.

3. 11000 died out of the 130,000 who volunteered or were conscripted from Birmingham. R. Brazier and E. Sandford, op.cit., pp.5, 29.

4. Birmingham Daily Mail, 10 Sep. 1914.

By any measure, this was a remarkable and overwhelming response.

An overall picture of the social pattern of recruitment at Digbeth in the first two weeks of World War One is given in Table 16.1. Note how the distribution of individual groups (which is analysed later in this chapter) differs from the usual August pattern.

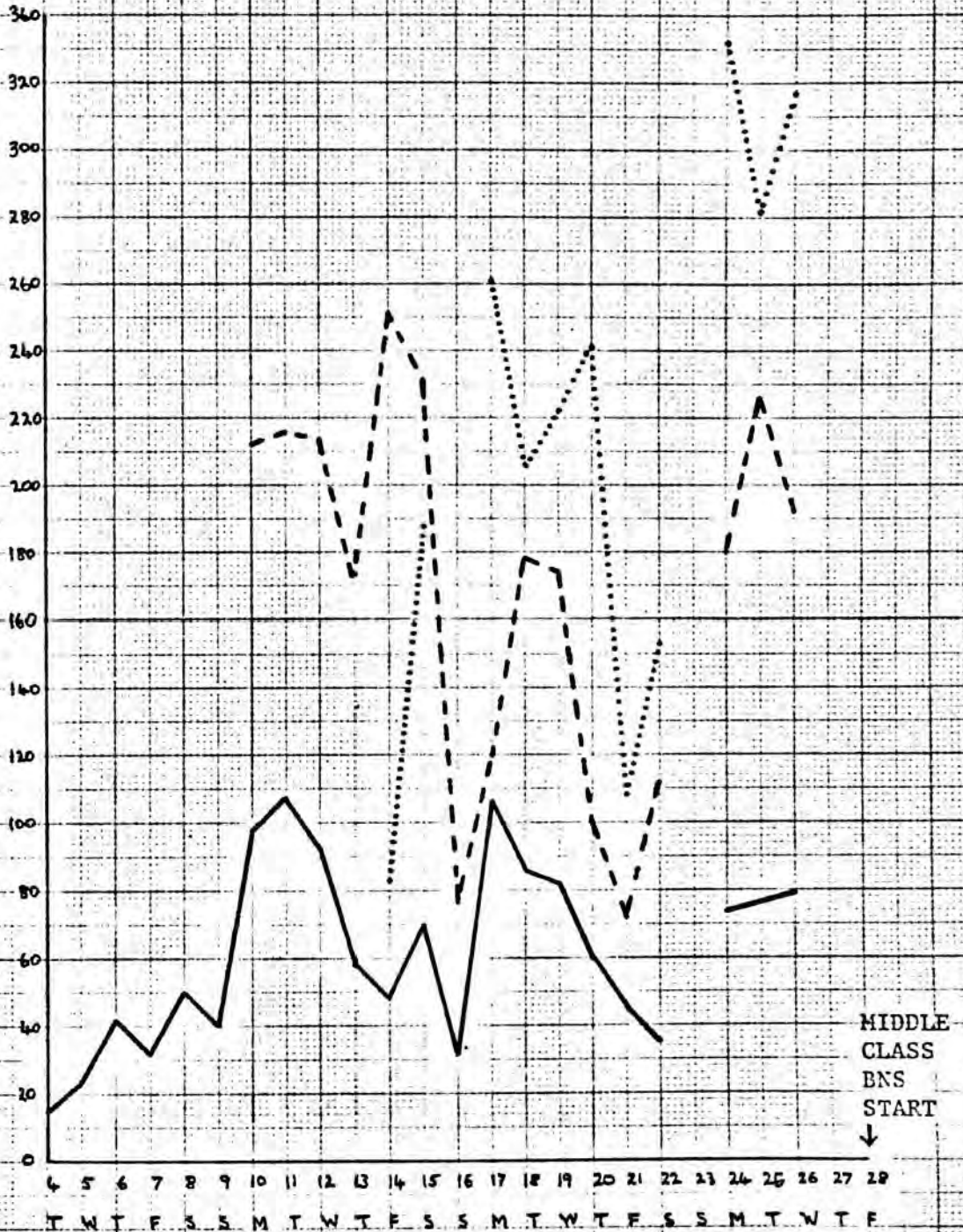
	August 1908-13		August 1914	
	%	n	%	n
Unskilled	52	33	41	355
Semi-skilled	30	19	20	180
Skilled ¹	17	11	17	145
Highly skilled	0	0	5	53
Lower Middle/Middle Class	1	1	17	146
Total	100	64	100	879

Table 16.1: Recruited at Digbeth 4-18th August 1914, and corresponding mean total August recruitment, 1908-13 for those without previous military experience; by social class

Digbeth was but one recruiting office. The Town Hall began work on August 10th, and another started at Suffolk Street on 12th August. Graph 16A shows the progress of recruiting for all three offices. The numbers escalated wildly upwards at the beginning of each new week. By Sept. 9th, counting in the total recruits, the Territorials and Special Reservists and the City Battalions, some 21.6% of the total available male population of Greater Birmingham had gone to war:²

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1. Although it has not been thought worthwhile to separate out semi-skilled and skilled up to this point, it does seem that the wartime recruiting shows different patterns for the two groups.
 2. 20859 recruits (*loc cit*); c.4500 in City Battalions (Sir W.H. Bowater ed. Birmingham City Battalions' Book of Honour Birmingham 1919 pp.2-3; c.7000 TF and 1000 S.R. = 33360. Male population 17-40 years = 154,472.

Graph 16A Recruiting in Birmingham, 4th-28th Aug 1914



- DIGBETH (PERMANENT REGULAR)
- - - TOWN HALL
- SUFFOLK ST

6,440 recruits

Men with uncongenial spouses, women with uncongenial husbands, youths with suppressed ambition, elderly men with their boredoms and faint yearnings for adventure, childless women and some wifeless men, the discredited ones who pine for a fresh deal in the game of life; all, and many more, find peace from mental fight in the intoxication of life in one historical hour and for one historic goal. (1)

The methods of recruiting are by now well documented history. Advertisements in the newspapers, followed by music hall and billboard propaganda, buses and trains commandeered to transport recruits, like tumbrils to the fete of slaughter. The Territorial Force, most of which saw no Front Line service until mid-1915, lent its bands to escort the recruiting sergeants around local villages, factories at lunchtime, and centres of social activity in the evening.²

Germany had been identified so many times before as an immensely dangerous enemy in popular propaganda, that the propagandist's task was relatively simple. As early as August 5th, the civil population was being galvanised together by threats of a "surprise attack" on the British mainland, and spy rings were being uncovered all over the country.³ The enemy rapidly became portrayed as brutal, heathen and barbarian: "Civilisation At Issue" ran the headline of the Evening Standard by August 8th.

All the churches of whatever denomination damned Germany. The congregation of the Primitive Methodist Church at Sparkhill for instance,

1. H.D.Lasswell, Propaganda Techniques of the World War 1938, p.58.

2. Tape recording by Mr.Russell, ex-soldier in NAM archive, unclassified.

3. Birmingham Daily Mail, 5 August and 8 August 1914.

so used to pacifist sermons, learned that Germany's aim was to make itself "the most efficient man-killing machine in the world, a nation which has dethroned the living God - the God of Love, and enthroned a false God, a monster of blood and iron, to which they are fatally sacrificing everything".¹

Political parties were in general united on this issue, and early on formed a local 'War Aims' Committee' for propaganda and recruiting work.² Recruiting meetings were addressed then, by the most unlikely advocates. Eldred Hallas, a fierce Syndicalist, and General Secretary of the Birmingham and District Municipal Employees' Association was practising oratory in the cause of war at Kings Heath by late August.

To shrink from our share in crushing the hydra-headed monster of Prussian militarism would be to brand ourselves with indelible disgrace, and to brand the British Empire an Empire of cowards!³

The Labour Party, continually fighting against conscription, itself organised Trade Union recruiting councils down to February 1916, and then assisted in drawing up the National Register of men liable for compulsory enlistment.

Support of 'anti-war socialism' seems to have been very slight; certainly the newspapers did not report it although that is hardly surprising. The Socialists of Rotton Park, led by Councillor Kneeshaw, violently opposed the war and held the anti-war meeting mentioned above on August 2nd. Their journal, "Forward", disappeared from July 1914;

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1. Joseph Pearce The Call of War. A sermon at Sparkhill, 13 Sep. 1914, pp.3-4 La Croix (organ of French clerics) of 8 Aug.1914 - "L'histoire de France est l'histoire de Dieu. Vive le Christ qui aime Les Francs!"
 2. R.Brazier and E.Sandford, op.cit., p.6.
 3. Municipal Employees Monthly Sept. 1914.
 4. Brazier and Sandford, op.cit., pp.17-23.

three issues appeared in mid-1916 denouncing the war, but "were suppressed by the authorities".¹ There were however, a few in 1915 to shout down Eldred Hallas as a "traitor" at a Town Hall Meeting.²

The scenes at recruiting offices of tears and red eyes reported with such patriotic pathos in the newspapers,³ fully confirm the histrionic and the epic. For the recruit then, as he underwent the ordeals of medical and dental examination and treatment, registration, haircut and attestation, the future would have held immense purpose where before it may have held boredom and goallessness. It would have been suggested to him that, for a little effort,⁴ upon his shoulders fell the yoke of Nation, Empire and civilisation - now indeed, did he become for an instant, a very important individual in his own eyes, and in those of his parents and peers. Germany, who had threatened for so long, now had broken forth and needed teaching a sharp lesson. How many notions of innate nationalistic superiority could have been so easily kindled? The chaos at the recruiting stations, the denudation of skilled labour from industry, the enlistment of under- and over-age recruits all stemmed from the fact that "no one in authority had anticipated the magnitude of response..."⁵

But here one must pause; it is too easy to be carried away by the rhetoric of the propaganda. For some groups, joining the army was motivated less by the spell of nationalism and more by the lure of money. For other groups, the nationalist explanation is too simplistic.

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1. Forward (Rotton Park) 1912-14 (BRL collection includes a letter from the ILP). The Socialist Centre was closed in 1915 for lack of support. Birmingham Socialist Centre. Annual Report 1915 (18).
 2. Municipal Employees' Monthly, Sep. 1915.
 3. e.g. Birmingham Daily Mail, 28 Aug. 1914, at Suffolk Street.
 4. A common myth was that the war would end by Christmas, 1914.
 5. G. Cousins, The Defenders. A History of the British Volunteer 1968, p.166.

The initial advertisement for recruits published in the newspapers from August 5th to the 8th inclusive, besides carrying its patriotic clarion call also mentioned that skilled men would be needed. The details were tucked away inside the newspaper, not figuring in the main appeal; the wage rates offered were far in excess of a normal soldier's pay:

Foremen Artificers	70/-
Coppersmiths, Electricians, Pattern Makers	52/6
Blacksmiths, Dispensers, Drivers of Motor Lorries, Farriers, fitters, moulders, painters, saddlers, turners, wheelers	42/-
Bakers, butchers, clerks, cooks, hospital subordinates, tailors	28/-
Labourers and loaders (packers)	21/-
Motorcyclists	35/- plus 15/- allowance for overalls etc. plus £10 bounty and further £5 on discharge, plus cost of motorcycle (valuation) (c.£60).

Table 16.2 Wage Rates for Skilled Personnel Recruited
to the Regular Army, August 1914 (Source: 'Mail Aug.5, 1914)

For many of these trades, wages were much higher than normal civilian levels as well. Again, real wages included food, housing and clothing provided by the army either free or at subsidised rates.

It is illuminating then, to study the day by day recruitment of specific groups. The recruiting office started business in earnest on 6th August. Although the war was but one day old, panic had gripped some of the population. Food supply in the shops was underpressure; there was a run on the banks, many city jewellers had become bankrupt overnight as orders were cancelled; more spies were being arrested in London.¹ When the doors of the office opened at 9 a.m. there was a

1. B.D.Mail, 6 Aug. 1914.

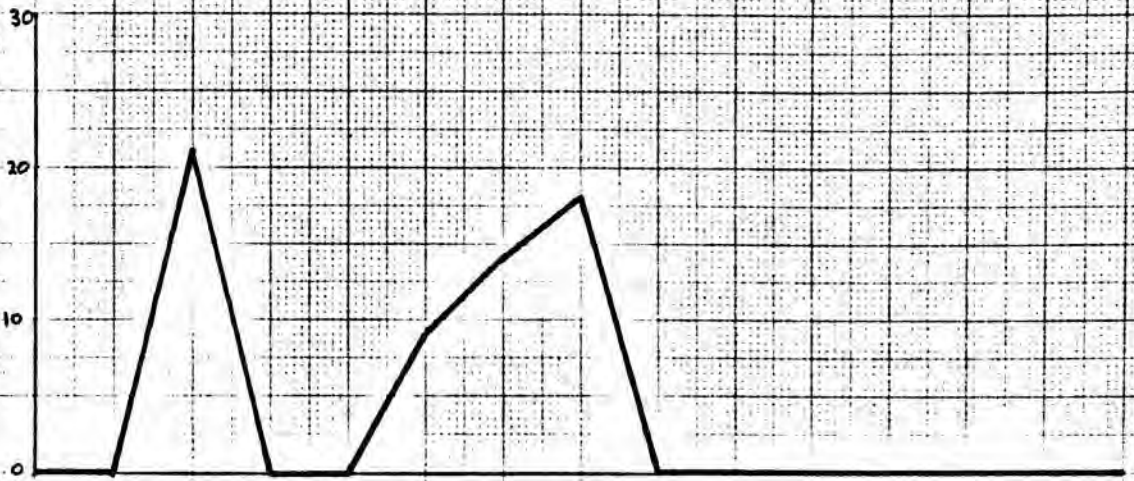
"great rush of patriotic young men". Because of the long clerical process, the police were controlling a queue of "a couple of hundred" by 10 a.m.

Half of the 42 attested on the first day were motorcyclists. The height and weight statistics for this group are *ceteris paribus*, far in excess of any working class groups and higher even than the lower-middle class group of clerks. The cost of a motorcycle at £45 - £60¹, put this particular hobby well out of the reach of the working class man. For these reasons,² motorcyclists were classified as lower middle/middle class. And for these brave motorcyclists there clearly existed an element of profitability in the terms of their engagement; the wage although not high, was comfortable and in addition they received substantial bounties, and payment for their motorcycles and kit. In other words, motorcyclists were being paid to pursue their hobby in the army. The enlistment of motorcyclists was suspended on 7th August, but more were allowed in from Sunday 9th to Tuesday 11th August. Thus the enlistment of one major sector of middle class recruiting was influenced by the desire to motorcycle in the army: as the terms of recruitment were suspended, they refrained from enlisting. (16B)

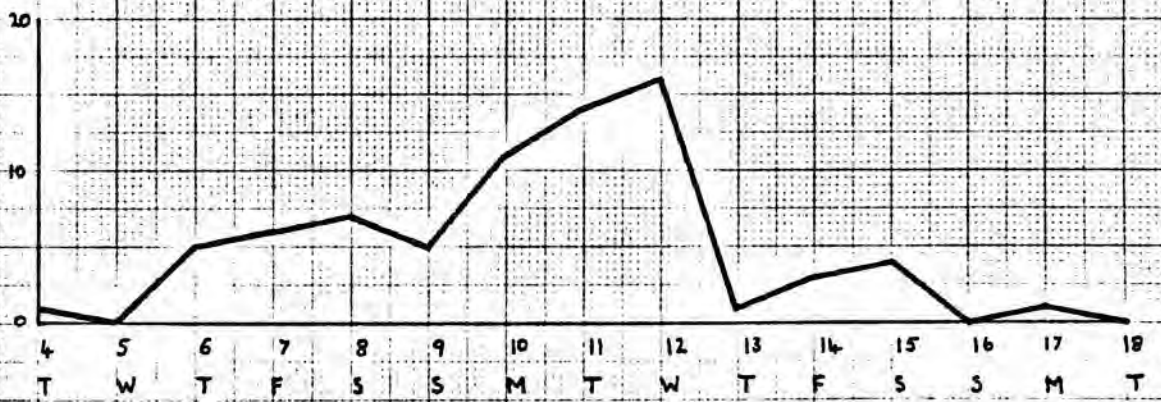
The other principal non-working class group identified were clerks. Their army wage, at 28s. per week, is thought to be somewhat lower than civilian levels. In all 74 clerks were recruited at Digbeth, being $8\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the total recruited over the period; normally only one or two clerks would have joined in the month of August. Some of the individual cases make pathetic reading: one clerk, aged 40 years weighed 121 lbs. and was 5'3" in height - having somehow passed the medical it is doubtful whether he would have survived the war. Enlistment of clerks

1. B.D. Post 23 Nov. 1909 (advert).

2. Appendix 2.



Graph 16.B Enlistment of Motorcyclists at Digbeth, 4-18 Aug 1914



Graph 16.C Enlistment of Clerks at Digbeth, 4-18 Aug 1914

was suspended on 12th August and numbers drop noticeably. (Graph 16.C)

However, on 10th August the Town Hall recruiting station opened and on 12th August, Suffolk Street. As shown in Graph 16A, these two were more efficient in clearing recruits - by 24th August, Suffolk Street was clearing 300 per day and the Town Hall could reach 250. It is clear that as the new stations opened, pressure on original stations was greatly eased. It is suggested then, that many clerks went to the Town Hall and Suffolk Street to enlist, for the Town Hall was sited more centrally and clerical processes were more efficient - although a residual 'trickle' remained at Digbeth.

In Prices' study¹ too, it was discovered that large numbers of clerks rushed to enlist at times of Boer War crisis. This Price ascribes to the peculiar social position of clerks as lower middle class. Sandwiched, as it were, above the working class but below the middle class, many clerks were the product of limited social mobility. Children of working class parents who had made good at school or even of lower middle class parents, clerks may be seen to be desperately striving to maintain a middle class appearance on a pitifully inadequate salary, and even more desperately trying to keep above the mass of the labouring population.² Their patriotic reaction to the Boer War then, was an attempt to prove their national worthiness, to be "even more middle class than the middle class themselves were". The tensions and strains of a clerk's social position bred neurotic political and nationalistic behaviour, of which militant patriotism

1. Price, R. op.cit. Chapter V, esp.p.201.

2. See R.F.Bullock, Robert Thame. The Story of a London Clerk 1907. esp.pp.247-50, for account of the struggle to live up to middle class aspirations.

was but one strand.

In studying the middle class reaction to the war at the Digbeth recruiting office, there are no other groups besides the clerks and motorcyclists of significance - a few hospital dispensers, the odd chemist and one doctor; no teachers, no lawyers, apparently no shopkeepers.

The principal middle class reaction awaited the formation of middle class "pals" battalions from 28th August onwards. One does not know of course, how many middle class were recruited to Kitchener's "New Army" at the Town Hall or Suffolk Street, but when the first middle class battalions were formed by the Lord Mayor (Bowater) in late August, there was clearly a considerable fund of bourgeois soldiers left:

Saturday and Sunday	350
Monday	943
Tuesday	829
Wednesday	678
Thursday	644
Friday	656
Saturday	600
Total	4500

Table 16.3 Formation of the 1st City Battalion, 14th Royal Warwickshire Regiment in one week, late August 1914 (Source: Bowater, op.cit. pp.2/3)

So many were there still wanting to join that two further battalions were raised by October (15th and 16th R.War. Regt.) These units were specifically for "non manual workers",¹ to carry on the "friendships

1. Bowater, op.cit., p.2.

of the offices and the King Edward schools".¹ Both Liverpool and Manchester raised similar units. It seems that, war or not, the middle class held back from joining the ranks of the common soldier - most probably because they felt out of place in this traditionally working class organisation. The "pals battalions", like the Imperial Yeomanry and the City Imperial Volunteers of the Boer War, provided them with respectable and almost genteel middle class soldiering. Besides reasons of altruistic patriotism, these "pals" units carried on the camaraderie of the large business firms and of the old King Edward schools; the spirit of patriotic adventure was inextricably woven together in this middle class war consciousness with the sport of the Rugby club and the old school tie.

To turn next to working class enlistment, it is noticeable that the highly skilled artisan stood to gain much from joining the Army - from 52/6d to 70s.Od. per week. Because of the nature of their employment, the bulk of these were recruited at weekends. Not very many were enticed away from their secure employments however. Only 53 joined in two weeks and after recruiting to most grades in this special category ceased on 12th August, the numbers fell away. Further many of those that did join found on reaching the R.E. barracks at Chatham that some misunderstanding had arisen; vacancies were very limited, too many had been recruited, and so they were offered reenlistment on an ordinary sapper's pay on their discharge. Most took their discharge.

In several local instances, men had given up good situations to join the Army, and difficulty has been experienced in regaining them. (2)

1. ibid., p.1.

2. B.D.Mail, August 19, 1914.

In general, only single men were accepted and married men were unwelcome. Some skilled artisans though, had domestic commitments which would have made a sapper's pay (at 1s.3d. per day) quite inadequate. One skilled mechanic for instance, wrote to the B.D. Mail that although he had served for seven years in the Volunteers and Territorial Force and although

"I am keen on serving, which is the duty of all young men"

he could not leave his widowed mother. He had "tried to get away as a mechanic" with sufficient pay to send back, but had failed.¹ Again the T.F. still contained large numbers of artisans and that organisation was now embodied and encamped in the West Country. It is nevertheless true to say that, for the higher strata of working class, the initial reaction to the war at the Digbeth recruiting office was not strong, nor did it escalate day by day as war fever apparently gripped other groups of the population.

The great bulk, 78% of recruits came from those same groups which in peacetime filled the ranks of the Regular Army. Within this large body the percentage distribution by industry was slightly changed from the normal August distribution. It was noted earlier that the propaganda activities of the National Service League from 1910-14 had proved most successful in smaller firms and industries, where the owner or manager appeared to exert a more direct influence on his employees. In time of war however, the percentage of recruits coming from those industries organised on a small unit basis is lower than the corresponding peacetime percentage.

1. B.D. Mail, Aug. 29 1914.

	Mean %	%
	Aug.1910-13	4-18 Aug.1914
Brass inc. bedsteads	11.7(8)	(53) 7.8
Small Metal, Light Engineering	25.8(17)	(154) 22.6

Table 16.4 Percentage of all recruits enlisted in the unskilled, semiskilled and skilled grades, from two major industries with small unit organisation; peacetime and wartime (bracketed figures are the absolute numbers).

This would tend to suggest that little encouragement was given by the smaller entrepreneurs, and that attitude would be clearly related to the greater effect a marginal loss of labour would have on the small firm. It is noticeable however that the exception to this rule was the jewellery industry:

	Mean %	%
	August figure 1910-13	4-18 August 1914
Jewellery	1.1% (1)	2.9% (20)

Table 16.5 Percentage of all recruits enlisted in unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jewellery grades, peacetime and wartime

Although organised into thousands of small firms, works, shops and garretts the jewellery industry suffered considerable bankruptcy at the beginning of the war. Men released from the jewellery quarter were thus more likely to enlist.¹

1. It is still not a question of men being "driven in" by unemployment; the number who actually joined up represent only 0.14% of the city's jewellery labour force.

For the larger unit industries, the proportion of their share of working class recruits rose; it only rose however, towards the proportion which their labour force represented as a part of the total Birmingham labouring population. i.e.

	Mean % Aug. figure 1910 to 1913	Aug. 4-18 1914 %	Labour Force as % of total Birmingham Labour population
Vehicle Makers, Cycles and Motorcycles	2.2 (1.5)	5 (34)	6.57 (17,633)

Table 16.6. Changing percentage in wartime of recruits from the large unit organised vehicle manufacturing industry, and a comparison with that industry's relative proportion of the total Birmingham labour force.

Poor peacetime recruitment was directly related to high wages and employment stability in this sector. In wartime, some of these workers were tempted to leave such security. There is some evidence too, that larger employers were more prepared to guarantee men that their jobs would be kept open for when they returned, and even give more positive encouragement, viz. provision for dependents. Even Cadburys agreed to give 6s. weekly to each wife and 1s.6d. for each child, and a guarantee that jobs would be kept open. Not that it was unusual for Cadburys to be philanthropic, but it did of course clash somewhat with the family's tradition of Quaker pacifism. It was with mixed feelings no doubt that the family published this advice in August 11th:

We feel it is the duty of every one of us to be willing to sacrifice our own immediate interests on behalf of our country. Some have felt it their duty to go to the front, but it is no less incumbent

upon those who, for conscientious or other reasons, cannot let their patriotism take this form, to bear their share. (1)

Besides the T.F. and Reservists of Cadburys who were embodied (74), another 30 joined up by mid-August. There was then, no great flood of recruits; and although it is true that the proportion of men coming from secure employment increased, it is also true that it did not rise to completely match the corresponding proportion those industries held as part of the total labour force. Much of Birmingham industry presented traditionally insecure employment, however, and many workers were used to seasonal job switches. It is not surprising then that percentage decreases apart, the bulk of recruits in wartime was still drawn from such industries. Workers who acquired the habit of changing jobs regularly would be more likely to leave sooner and join the army than those habitually in secure employment. Working class reaction to war was initially affected then, by a slight reticence to throw up secure jobs in some sectors.

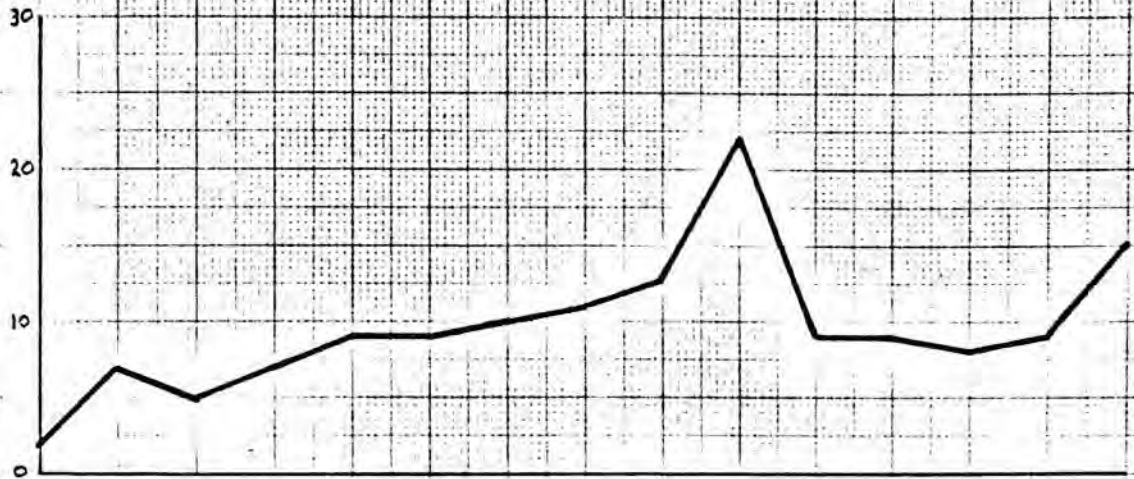
Next, much larger numbers of older recruits presented themselves. In peacetime, only 12.35% were aged 21 years and over; this became 56.18% in August 1914; 27.98% of recruits were aged 25 and over, and 10.82% aged over 30 years of age - despite that age being the alleged age limit. Older recruits were in a majority on the first recruiting day (73.7% over 21) and at weekends. During the week, being in jobs which were not so important to them, the younger element predominated. The older the recruit the greater the sacrifice in position, housing and friendships he is likely to have to make. Ceteris paribus, the older the recruit, the more deep seated and meaningful must be the reasons which impelled him to take the shilling.

1. Bourneville Works Magazine, Sept. 1914. pp. 261/2.

For most older recruits, joining the army cannot be explained as a flippant search for excitement; for some, it was the attraction of higher wages, for others an ideological commitment to the nationalism of the war. Again, though, the figures include the motorcyclists; further analysis of this distribution is unfortunately not possible.

Working class recruitment may also be analysed by skill, and here results are more fruitful. Skilled workers were distinguished from the highly skilled group by age. Those claiming skilled status but not being above the age of 21, were unlikely to have received adult skilled rates of pay and were very unlikely to have been accepted for a skilled position in the army. A boy aged 18 calling himself a "fitter" for instance, would have been neither fully trained or experienced; the possibility exists that he might have been undergoing training and in this would be distinguished from his semi-skilled contemporary working on the milling machine or the capstan lathe. The recruitment of such individuals takes a different pattern from the semi-skilled (Graph 16D).

The number of skilled recruited increased very gradually, not fluctuating at all at weekends. The peak on 13th was entirely due to an influx from one industry (light engineering) as perhaps, a group of friends enlisted together. Recruitment would not be affected by economic factors; the army would not take them as skilled men, and generally they are drawn from all industries. A possible explanation for the graph, combined with a study of recruiting from each industry, is that it gives the impression of disparate individuals becoming steadily more convinced that they ought to join up and, once having taken the decision, acting immediately upon it - not waiting until the week's end for their pay. If that were so, these would be individuals whose families were reasonably well off, and this would square with the hypothesis of more



Graph 16.D Enlistment of skilled men at Digbeth 4-18 Aug 1914



Graph 16.E Enlistment of semi-skilled men at Digbeth 4-18 Aug 1914

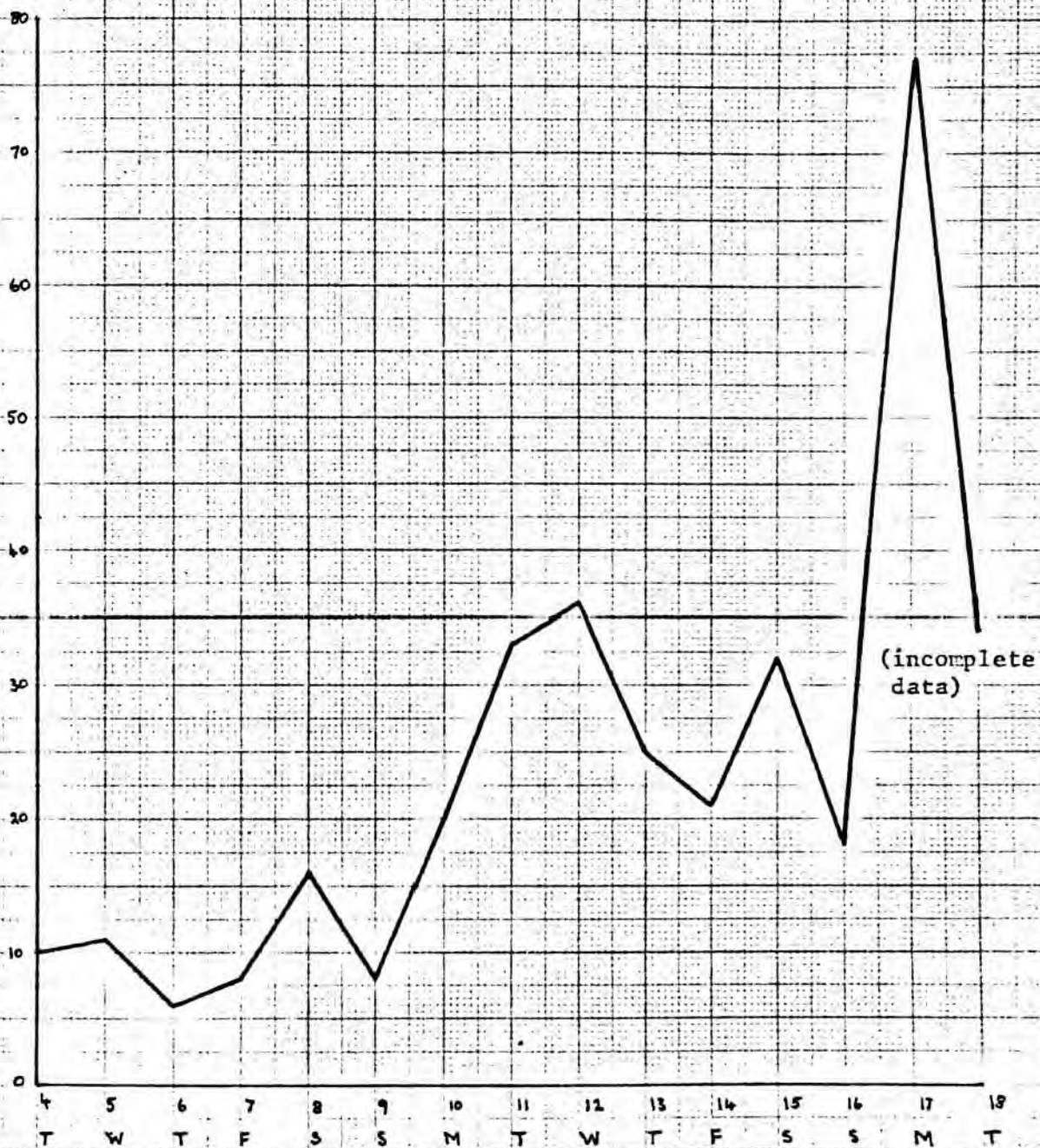
educated individuals under training.

The pattern of semi-skilled recruitment is rather different (Graph 16E). The numbers joining peaked at weekends as jobs were given up. Numbers fell away from a high point on 10th August, coincident with the opening of the Town Hall office, and fell even more steeply after 12th August as Suffolk Street opened.

The figures are inflated however, by two categories for which special wages were available. The largest proportion of those who joined on 10th and 11th August were motor transport drivers and those employed in the food industries (33 & 9 respectively, out of total of 57). By 12th August, recruiting to the special grades of Motor Driver (at 42/0, higher than civilian levels) and bakers and butchers (at 28/-, roughly in line) was stopped, and recruiting fell away drastically to one driver and two butchers on 13th August. The numbers that joined after this were generally young and belonged to the light engineering, brass, jewellery and house construction industries, i.e. to industries where employment was traditionally seasonal and who could well have changed jobs a considerable number of times before.

By far the greatest contribution to the recruiting figures was made, as had always been the case in peacetime, by the unskilled labourers.¹ The initial advertisement in the E.D. Mail had, it is true, offered 21/- a week to labourers which "all found" was perhaps a little above what they would have received in civilian employ. It is difficult to believe that many labourers were taken on in this capacity; for unskilled work, the army was by no means short of labour. Besides the Regular Forces,

1. Table 16.1 Unskilled == 41%. Chap. I, unskilled/casual workers = 18% of population.



Graph 16.F Enlistment of unskilled men at Digbeth, 4-18 Aug 1914

large numbers of Special Reservists had been embodied who were principally unskilled labour and further, nobody had quite decided what to do with all the embodied Territorials yet. Even after recruiting to these special categories was stopped on 11th August, yet large queues still stretched outside the Digbeth Office on 12th August,¹ and it is clear that the great majority in these queues were unskilled labourers.

August was generally a bad time for Birmingham trades, and was correspondingly a high point in the recruiting figures. The bankruptcies and business uncertainty caused by the war would have led to early layoffs and dismissal of unskilled men. For these two reasons, an economic "push" could have assisted the figures; but against this must be balanced the possibility of scarce labour resulting from the embodiment of the Reserve, the Special Reserve, and the Territorial Force. The mean total peacetime August recruiting figure for unskilled men lacking military experience was only 37 (1910-13), yet in two weeks of August 1914 355 had appeared at the Digbeth recruiting centre alone (Graph 16F).

The 2414 recruits at Suffolk Street and the Town Hall down to 18th August probably contained a similar percentage of unskilled labourers. The Navy Mission Society Commissioner David Smith, working among recruits at the Town Hall, noted "among them have been several hundred navvies".²

The numbers, unlike all the previous schedules, are shown to be dramatically increasing, literally overwhelming the Digbeth recruiters on 16th August. By the following August, 1915, so many unskilled labourers had joined the army that:

1. B.D.Mail, Aug.12, 1914.

2. Navy Mission Society, Birmingham Diocesan Board, Annual Report, 1913-14.

It might be said the Birmingham had given its last navvy, who was eligible for the "firing line" ... I estimate there are 250 Navvies on different contracts in the town, so scarce are they that employers are paying them 8½d per hour. (1)

Because it is not possible to say that the unskilled working class war reaction was motivated by economic pressures, two other major options lay open to hypothesis. One is that labourers joined for the excitement of travel and adventure, the other is that they joined because of genuinely patriotic convictions that Britain needed defence in its hour of danger.

The statistics cannot tell us which. But the hypotheses are too simple. No reading of the evidence, of the reports of recruiting scenes in the newspapers and elsewhere, allows such a separation of motives. The whole occasion of the initial months of the war was filled with frenetic propaganda. The cinemas showed films depicting Britain's peril,² the music halls were openly used as recruiting houses for the enlistment of men carried away by the charisma of stage soldiers, gay 'càntinières' and the ecstatic clapping and full-throated roars of the audience. The war was sold as an adventure, it was sold as an exciting carnival. The threads of patriotic argument, of aggressive racism, and of glorious hedonism were inextricably woven together. What better appeal than to the senses, to get men to fight? For reasons already identified in the preceding chapters, one would expect too that the unskilled, more than any other single group, would be overcome by the sway of this propaganda.

✓X. The National Film Archive has an interesting collection of these, as does the Imperial War Museum.

For the rest of the working class, conclusions are less clear cut. The numbers of semi-skilled at Digbeth were at first artificially high with drivers, bakers and butchers being attracted by a higher wage. If this is allowed for, then a general upwards movement may be noted. This gradual increase is also seen in the skilled groups. Highly skilled individuals clearly did not have (initially) demonstrably fierce patriotic reactions to the war; their enlistment was caused by high wage rates and when these ceased, no more came forward.

Overall, working class recruits came from industries where employment was traditionally unstable and in which the habit of seasonal job change was prevalent. For more secure jobs, a slight reticence to leave was noted; some of the bigger firms guaranteed the individual's security by holding jobs open, and by paying dependents' allowances.

Middle class war reaction may be grouped into two categories. The principal middle class recruitment was 'club' oriented - whether it be motorcycling club, or office or old school club. It held aloof, even in this time of 'one united nation', from participation in working class soldiering. The patriotism of the middle class was related to local loyalties and affiliations within their own social circles. The second aspect of middle class recruiting was provided by the behaviour of lower middle class clerks; the strains of their social status promoted a classic nationalistic commitment.

The analysis is open to the objection that Digbeth recruiting could have been atypical. Men joining the army to undertake specialised trades had to go to Digbeth, not to the other offices. However, because of this one is able to estimate the extent of economic motivation and contrast it to the situation when recruiting to the specialised grades was stopped. Again, the Digbeth office was the only recruiting centre open until the war was one week old. It is not thought that the

pattern at the Town Hall, or later Suffolk Street would have been so different. All recruiting stations were within reach of the unskilled and semi-skilled communities and it has been noted that even at the Town Hall, the number of "navvies" was quite high. Perhaps the more respectable kept away from Digbeth because of its close proximity to the lodgings and casual worker dwellings; but this will never be known.

The conclusions drawn above are widely at odds with Richard Price's conclusions for Boer War recruitment. Price too, uses quantitative techniques and his conclusions are that the principal reaction to the Boer War came from the middle class: that recruiting to the army by the working class was governed by unemployment and that such recruiting was of no significant size. Of the working man:

Patriotism as a concept was probably the last thing that would motivate him to volunteer for the army,

and if not unemployment then working men joined because they were bored and wished to travel.¹

Either then, the working man of the Great War had developed changed conceptions to his forbears of fourteen years previous, or the whole war situation was quite different, or Price is looking for something different from the concerns of this thesis.

All possibilities contain grains of truth. But the principal objection must be to Price's analysis, both in terms of the sources which he uses and the conclusions that he eventually draws. His principal sources for quantitative analysis are the attestation forms of two formations,

1. R.Price, op.cit., pp.230/2.

the Imperial Yeomanry and the City Imperial Volunteers.

Both the I.Y. and the C.I.V. are shown to have a strong "non working class" element. The CIV was formed from the London Volunteer Regiments in 1900; the finding that, of its members, 1006 were "non working class" and that 943 were working class ought to occasion no surprise.¹ For London had a tradition of middle class volunteering. Note the units that formed the CIV; the Honourable Artillery Company, Senior Volunteer Regiment and even today composed entirely of powerful business and legal 'barons'; the Civil Service Rifles, the many middle class Middlesex Regiments attached to the banks and university colleges, the Artists Rifles and so on. For the commercial community, the legal fraternity and the business families, the London Volunteers were an essential part of the social whirl wherein resided the 'eminence grises' of the City itself. It is difficult then to draw any useful conclusions from the CIV records about working class war reaction. Other cities throughout the United Kingdom provided drafts from local Volunteer battalions to reinforce the parent line units. Thus for instance, 8 officers and 392 men of the 1st Vol. Bn. R. Warwickshire Regt. volunteered for active overseas service on Dec 23 1899,² while 31 officers and 592 men of the battalion agreed to be sent abroad for garrison duty, or to do garrison duty at home. Only 57 men were at first selected - the 1st and 2nd Vol. Battalions being required to produce one company of infantry between them. Similarly, 39 men and one officer were selected from the 1st Vol. Bn. South Staffordshire Regt. over in Handsworth, and departed amidst crowd scenes of ecstatic jubilation and fervent patriotism,

1. Ibid., p.256.

2. Col. C.J.Hart, op.cit. p.229.

speeded by singing of "Soldiers of the Queen and gifts of individual Khaki bibles from the chaplain.¹ Repeated drafts in 1901 and 1902 brought a national total of 17,547. Price does not sufficiently consider these 17000 volunteers: given the social composition of Volunteers in 1903 as stated in the Norfolk Commission Report,² it is clear that of these 17,000, most were probably working class, albeit skilled working class.

Next, turning to the Imperial Yeomanry, Price shows that as war lost its popularity with the middle classes, the proportion of non-working class recruits fell, and conversely the proportion of working class rose. Apparently, the war was becoming more popular with the working classes; searching for an explanation, Price hits upon the unemployment statistics of the Labour Gazette.

	Recruits per 100	Unemployment per 100
1899/1900	32.6	2.6
1900/1901	62.6	3.8
1901/1902	76.6	4.2

Table 16.7: Alleged correlation between Imperial Yeomanry recruitment and unemployment index, 1899-1902 (Price op.cit. p.213).

There are at least two reasons why this approach is misleading. First, the Imperial Yeomanry was likely to be the most attractive of all units to join because its pay for troopers, at 5s. per day, was much in excess of the ordinary foot soldier at 1/- per day. Even in 1900, the numbers of working class men who wanted to join was far in excess of those

1. Handsworth Herald, Feb.17 1900.

2. See p. above.

who could join for standards were set very high. The recruiting sergeant at Digbeth (Q.M.Griffin) noted how many men he rejected:

We have to be very careful in accepting (I.Y.) candidates. You see, they are a very good class of men that are going out, and I want to see at least two "characters" for each applicant". (1)

Over 3000 had applied in Birmingham, but only 5000 were needed nationally. Most were rejected - principally on medical grounds - a number for instance failing because one tooth was missing.²

The bias against working class candidates, reinforced by the demand for "characters", was again added to by the need for a perfect physique, and the AB303 study makes clear that, ceteris paribus, the middle class were far healthier than the working class. To complete the middle class bias, the I.Y. were a mounted infantry; men who could shoot or ride a horse stood a better chance of being accepted.

This pressure by the working class to join the I.Y. is not given much attention by Price, nor the very stringent conditions of acceptance. As middle class recruitment fell - as the war became unfashionable, unpopular and particularly boring - the recruiters turned to the working class.

Statistics available on 1581 out of 2132 members of the London and North Western Railway who volunteered for service, when listed by skill show the continuing influence of unskilled workers:

Clerks and Apprentices	18.97%
Skilled	17.71
Semi-Skilled	19.03
Unskilled	44.28

Table 16.8: Percentage of 1581 recruits (incomplete data) of the LNWR Volunteering for war service 1899-1902, by skill.³

1. Midland Express, 2 Jan.1901.
2. Ibid. 22 Jan.1901.
3. Norfolk Commission loc.cit. q.6085.

What of Price's findings of correlation with the unemployment statistics? Disturbingly, Price fails completely to study recruitment to the Regular Army itself over the war.¹ Had he done so, he would have discovered the following:

	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901
Regulars	8363	9581	9665	16011	12810
Militia	12662	12642	12467	12679	10873
% Unemployment	2.7	3.9	2.3	2.2	3.3

Table 16.9: Regular Army Recruitment and Militia Recruitment Jan/ Feb/March, 1897 to 1901, and the mean percentage unemployed among members of certain trade unions which paid unemployment benefit in those months. (Sources: Cd.525(1901) Return showing the number of recruits who joined the Cavalry(~~inc~~-Household Cavalry) R.A., Infantry (including Food Guards) and Militia respectively in the first three months of each year from 1897 to 1901 inclusive: Labour Gazette 1897-1901)²

In other words, the war provided a fillip to Regular recruiting totally unexplained by the unemployment statistics. The number recruited in 1901, while down from 1900, is still substantially above the peacetime norm. Note that in 1901, 80 Militia battalions volunteered for service overseas (also unnoticed by Price). Since the Militia provided up to one third of recruits to the line battalions, its transfer to

1. "Regular Army records, then, are virtually non existent for the period" Price, op.cit. p.178. BUT see Cd.525 above.

2. It is only possible to give the Jan-Feb.-Mar figures, no others kept.

South Africa was bound to be reflected in the lower recruiting figures in 1901. Again, competition with the I.Y. grew more intense from 1901, as numbers of middle class recruits fell away. And the local fillip given to Birmingham's Regular and Militia recruiting was evident even in 1899, with only two months of war enlistment:

	Regular	Militia
Yearly Average 1890/98	837	903
1899	1501	2115

Table 16.10 Annual numbers of Regular soldiers and Militia recruited at Digbeth, average 1890-98 and 1899.¹

The Boer War then, did elicit significant working class support. Working class Volunteers throughout the UK (perhaps 80% of the 17000)² went to South Africa, and many more volunteered but were rejected. Working class militia (45,560) volunteered and were sent on overseas duty. Working class Regular soldiers (about 13000 in excess of peacetime expectations in the first three months of 1900-01 alone) too, took the shilling.

Price's analysis of 29,253 CIV and IY found 41.5% to be non-working class. To the above totals then, must be added c.16700 working class recruits who were lucky enough to join the I.Y., or fortuitously (943 of these) found themselves in the C.I.V. The total comes to well over 89,000. The economic explanation provided by Price is clearly inadequate; he also claims men went to war for excitement, and here he approaches this analysis. The evidence of this

1. Birmingham Daily Post, 2 Jan. 1900. On Jan 1st alone, there were 100 applicants at Digbeth.

2. Of the Volunteer Infantry in the UK, over 80% were working class (NC, loc.cit) - this however, need not apply to the war volunteers.

research would suggest that working class reactions to the Boer War and Great War were essentially similar. But in the Great War propaganda was more intense and based upon years of groundwork; it was a European war; reaction was therefore much greater and more enduring.

Chapter 17

CONCLUSION

First, the propaganda of nationalism and imperialism was extremely ubiquitous, being focused through children's education and Organised Youth, local and national politics, newspapers and military movements. Variations appeared in the schoolroom and in the drill playground. It invested juvenile leisure and juvenile literature. It was found in the workplace. It was found on the streets; at election times it leapt out from enormous hoardings, and in between elections it was quite overtly peddled in newspapers and pamphlets, and covertly hidden in commercial advertisements. Working men were accosted by the Regular Army, Territorial Force, Militia, Scouts, Boys' Brigade, Church Lads' Brigade, Boys' Life Brigade and other Organised Youth, regularly and noisily intruding in their recruiting forays, Royalist and other celebrations. And it appeared in the cinema, and on the music hall stage, and in the theatre, and in Court Concerts.

The local apparatus of propaganda was operated and sponsored by groups of employers and professional men, military men and churchmen (individuals of course, performing a combination of or all of, these roles) and by teachers and educationalists.

Employers and professional men held political power in Birmingham, and the dominant Unionist clique (headed by a leading Imperialist) controlled the principal newspapers. In local (as well as General) elections, the issues of government were befogged with nationalist myth,

as these powerful men fought off more fundamental social questions. And these men - the Chamberlains, the Ansell, the Bowaters and Kenricks, and many more local worthies - contributed money and organisation to the National Service League, Territorial Force, youth movements and Empire Day funds. In the workplaces, employers actively supported the Territorial Force, or National Service League, and were happy to take on members of youth movements so rigorously trained. Militarist men sat on the Education Committees, and the Established Church in Birmingham gave its support to the military organisations. The Territorial and Militia regiments and the cadet forces all had their own padres; the Sunday Schools (along with some of the Adult Schools) were recruiting grounds for Organised Youth, and the Bishop of Birmingham himself spoke at National Service League meetings.

The second principal conclusion must relate to the linking of ideas which formed the propaganda. The seeds of the nationalist myth were sown at school. Within the limited conceptualisation of deprived children, huddled in over-large classes and subject to unprofessional teachers, were peddled the grand bourgeois and aristocratic notions of honour, glory, duty and Empire. And it was through Empire, and the accounts of the vainglorious deeds by which it was won, that pupil contact could be most achieved. Even the moral lessons hinged, for their nationalistic stereotypes, on the Imperial heroes so quick to the tongue. But at school too, working class children were acquainted with a brutal discipline, a discipline which was, in its slavish adherence to rules and regulations, to be continued by the law and the police, employers and military, and Poor Law Guardians. In drill was to be seen the conscious preparation for this continuing social control, in the attempt

to implant a quasi-military discipline, one of the prime virtues which middle class people felt workers required for the ongoing harmony of society.

All of the ideas and values that appeared in the propaganda, were united in the common thread of "threat". Whether it was an internal threat of moral, ethnic or cultural dimensions, or a militarily or economically motivated external threat, it was always there. A sombre black ogre, an eternal Damoclean sword, its role was to incite or breathe life into beliefs that were thought to be always unconsciously present, the beliefs of nationality. There appears to have been an assumption by the propagandists of an undercurrent of clinging nationalistic faith among working people, an attachment to nationality which it would be unwise to ignore and beneficial to encourage. That such a belief existed among such widely diverse political propagandists of the left and of the right, gives some support to the view that the belief was not illfounded.

Nationalist movements were oriented to social, economic and political roles. Conversely, political parties embraced and mobilised nationalistic ideas, particularly in the three key areas of debate of economic policy, political power and constitutional control, and foreign policy.

Thus an economic role of all of the military and youth movements is to be seen in the clear and continuing drive for National Efficiency, of moral and physical fitness by drill and discipline. To the military propagandists, the military role of guardian of the temporal State was expanded to embrace the protection of established values from spiritual attack. By interpreting the situation in military terms, the National

Efficiency officers of the TF, youth movements, NSL and of the Regular Army, and the militant schoolmaster too, could all diagnose classic military remedies. But the very illiberality of drill and discipline was characteristic of these peoples' attitudes to the free development of beliefs and opinions. The established values which they defended were inalienable, unchallengable, ordered metaphorically into serried ranks and directed at the strait-jacketed goal of National Efficiency of production. It was stirred and prompted by the challenge of the disciplined and marshalled Prussian industrial giant. Patriotism was then linked with perseverance and punctuality, imperialism with industriousness, and duty with diligence. Boys trained as Scouts or Cadets or in the Street Boys' Union, men trained in the TF or even in the Regulars, were all said to be that much more hardworking and useful to their employers. Thus the wholehearted support as noted by employers, for these gratifyingly functional movements.

There was a second side to this economic nationalism, for propagandists strove to relate economic policies to working class experience through the medium of the nationalist myth. Thus the abstractions of Tariff Reform and unemployment were reduced to caricature of grasping and evil foreigners, the counter-arguments of Free Trade to horseflesh and black-bread; the complications of Transvaal Chinese were reduced to the slit-eyes and inscrutable pig-tail, and often housing problems, 'sweating' and economic depression were laid at the door of the unfortunate alien. But it was the German who, above all others, was increasingly pilloried, caricatured and perhaps even feared in this economic propaganda.

Second, to the leaders of the military and youth movements, the military structure of organised authority by ranks and by levels, was

a structure thought to provide the model for political and social re-organisation. Authority proceeded from the top downwards, and of the organisations studied, all either demanded or implicated such a hierarchical structure as necessary for society. All accepted the Sovereign's position at the apex of the pyramid, a position which school, the newspapers and organised Local Authority festivities did much to reinforce. Below that, in the tradition of the army leadership cadre, many of the movements adopted a deferential attitude to the aristocracy as a leadership born to be followed. Even the non-military Street Boys' Union saw it necessary to appoint a whole panoply of Prefects, Magistrates and Monitors. Every movement that advocates National Discipline has to invest in someone or some group, the authority to exercise it. Authoritarianism does not easily co-exist with liberalism and democracy. Thus the NSL and TF advocated compulsion of the civilian population into some form of military service. Thus the youth movements would tend to discount as presumptuous the freely formed beliefs of their members, and as dangerous the indiscipline of normal free child development. The Regular Army was never anything but authoritarian. The authority to exercise National Discipline therefore, needed no democratic legitimation; the military view of ordered society could be almost feudal in its hierarchical structure, and in its deference to "natural leadership".

Conversely, all those political parties which debated aspects of constitutional organisation and control, appear to have looked to nationalist beliefs for support because essentially such control was not only of the State but of the Nation and Empire. Thus the Unionist's Anti-Socialist crusade prophesied the imminent destruction of the national fabric, and all its protected and cherished institutions -

industry, religion and family; socialists were allegedly the cancer that would kill. Yet propaganda of Lloyd George's Land Tax budget, saw the peers as a cancer (caricatured as a distinctly Jewish one too) which attacked the "Peoples' Voice", the "Peoples' Will". The ideology of the collective national will appears to hark back to much earlier traditions of English political democracy.

Finally, in the field of foreign policy, all the principal debates hinged upon defence. To the Unionists, the Liberals and the military movements, the question became one of defence against Germany. The threat of hostile and malevolent Germans was developed and given weight in political propaganda, and fictional or pseudo-factual articles in newspapers, books, comics, plays and playlets. The National Service League was quite fanatic about this; the Territorial Force was led by officers who on all available public occasions, gave forth anti-German propaganda, the Empire Day Movement and numbers of teachers were clearly just as guilty. And even the SDF talked in terms of National Defence. The whole Irish Home Rule debate became bogged in this same quagmire.

It was then, the propagandist's task to mobilise the clinging yet unspoken basic patriotism which they felt the working class to hold, and extend elements of that belief to mesh with the particular strands of nationalism which credited the propagandist's policy. But the 'brands' of nationalism so produced were at times, mutually exclusive. 'Pacific patriotism', agreeing on the need for moral reform, was horrified at the excesses of naval and military expenditure. Philanthropic and religious Imperialists would not have agreed on the "our country first" premise as stated by the economic insularists of Tariff Reform. And again,

both Free Traders and Tariff Reformers were probably quite as militarist as one another.

Thus were the strands of nationalism woven into nearly all the key areas of political debate, linking together propagandists of separate faiths. Perhaps no other single ideology (or more realistically, set of ill-defined ideas) was so widespread, so all embracing, so adaptable, and so unchallenged. For unchallenged it was; no anti-nationalist movement existed in Birmingham. True, there were "Old Pacifists" - Non Conformist Primitive Methodists and Quakers - who objected to defence spending, but their efforts were as nothing beside the overwhelming navalist and militarist lobby. And "New Pacifism" ("Normal Angellism") appeared only as an intellectual diversion, for a time controlled by the Tory Party anyway.¹ The ILP and initially the Liberal Radicals, also objected to defence spending but more because resources were diverted from social policies. In war-time however, the ILP was as nationalist as any other party. The Birmingham Socialists, for all their anti-Royalism, were yet in favour of citizen defence armies. Indeed, the only movement apparently anti-nationalist was Syndicalism, which talked in terms of the restructuring of the whole social order.

But it was precisely this latter sort of philosophy that the propaganda of nationalism was designed to dissuade. Indeed, any sort of class radicalism was antithetical to the nationalists. In encouraging an identification of national with class interests, by a judicious use of the sticks of national discipline and veiled "threats", and carrots of political promise and militarist leisure, the propagandists were quite

1. H. Weinroth "Norman Angell and the Great Illusion" in Historical Journal 1974, Vol. XVII, no.3, especially pp.557-8.

deliberately manipulating nationalism to dissuade working people from mass radicalism.

The third principal conclusion must be to indicate the direct success of this propaganda. It is not of course possible to say that working class youth emerged from the schools as paradigms of patriotism, but it is at least true that they became sensitised to a number of nationalist ideas at an early age, and experienced such ideas being woven into, and thus giving "indisputable proof" to, whole ranges of applied propaganda.

The efforts of politicians were directed at enfranchised workers. The specious rationality of the nationalist propaganda was, it would seem, accepted by large numbers of working class voters in municipal and General Elections, helping to retard the growth of Birmingham radicalism. This propaganda rescued Unionist and Liberal fortunes after the slump in confidence 1900-02, for 1902 offered potential to a radical "take-off". Down to 1910, Unionist success was strongest when great efforts were made to push tariff reform (1903, 1906, 1910), anti-alienism (1905), anti-socialism (1905, 1907) and naval defence (1910). The success was greater in the more destitute wards and constituencies. The solid core of anti-Unionism resided in the more educated and affluent skilled and highly skilled workers, who clearly looked below the surface logic of nationalist myth. The Unionist vote weakened as social reform policies were introduced by the Liberal Government (1908-9); and after 1910, working class support for the whole edifice of political nationalism appears to have progressively crumbled, with the growing agitation of organised labour and increasing popular radicalism.

The success of military movements in attracting the support of different working class strata is listed in Table 17.1. It shows the enormous influence of military organisations in working class society,

which parallels the strong influence of military ideologies in the propaganda examined above. This whole influence is one of the most important of the original findings of the thesis.¹

In terms of propaganda effort and directly measurable success, Birmingham was probably atypical. True, the same sort of propaganda was used elsewhere, in part attracting the same sort of response - the success of Tory voting in depressed areas of London has been noted,² and the involvement of artisans with the Volunteers has been researched for late nineteenth century Edinburgh.³ But Unionist voting was stronger in Birmingham than elsewhere, and this reflects the very firm hold by the party, mediated through employers, and political and military organisations, and their grip on the sources of information - the local press. Clearly too, much more research of military organisations in local society is now called for in other provincial centres, before a complete comparison can be made.

The structure and organisation of Birmingham's working class society could have affected the working class response to nationalist propaganda.

The separation of a highly skilled elite away from the rest of the working class would have removed, and for a time accommodated the more articulate leaders of protest. Living in such different communities of the suburbs, and outer wards, many in mixed areas with

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1. In terms of involvement in youth movements, it modifies (for Birmingham at least) J.O.Springhall's assertion of the lack of success of such movements among working class children. "Youth and Empire"... Unpublished D.Phil.Thesis, Sussex, 1968.
 2. See G.Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford) 1971 pp.343-4, H.Pelling Social Geography of British Elections 1885-1910 1967, pp.42-54, 56-50; P.Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour. The Struggle for London 1885-1914 1967 pp.86-9.
 3. R.W.Gray "Styles of Life. The Labour Aristocracy and Class Relations in later nineteenth century Edinburgh". International Review of Social History XVIII (1973) p.437.

Movement	Year (MAX)	n	Involvement
Regular Army	1911	1167	Between 1:5 and 1:23 males 18-20 yrs. in Greater Birmingham, depending upon social class. Highest among unskilled workers.
Militia/Special Reserve	1904	3500	Between 1:4 and 1:26 males 18-35 years in Birmingham and Aston, depending upon social class and unemployment. Highest among unskilled and casual workers.
Territorial Force	1911	6000	1:11 males in Greater Birmingham 17-25 years, irrespective of class. Higher among the skilled.
National Service League	1911	1644	1:160 of all male and female workers aged 20 plus. Support of shopkeepers and publicans
Boys Brigade/ Church Lads Brigade/ Boys Life Brigade/ ICSP	1913	6000	1450 in six central wards = 1:5 of working class boys 10-17 years. Higher in outer areas.
Birmingham Street Children's Union	1913	5000	c.2000 boys (and 2000 girls) in six central wards = 1:4 working class boys 10-17 years

Table 17.1 : Summary of Working Class Organisational Involvement
in military and quasi-military movements in Edaardian Birmingham

lower-middle class people, this elite would have been driven by a desire to achieve social relationships that could explain the higher church attendances, and relative success of Adult Schools and Conservative Working Mens' Clubs. The increased affluence and comfort, the possible self-promotion to small-master, and the general desire for the social mobility of children through the King Edward and Municipal Technical Schools, could have given impetus to a limited degree of identification with the lower middle class among whom they lived. The very low ratio of public houses, and the complete absence of music halls from the suburbs tend to indicate a general move away from traditional working class culture.¹

It is possible that the general middle group of working people identified, from secure unskilled to low paid skilled workers, lived in communities which were fragmented by high removal rates, occupational seasonal mobility, and a status consciousness of occupation and residential area. Certainly this helps to explain the lack of working class clubs, the failure of working class political movements, and the traditional Conservatism that showed in political voting. In this way social subgrouping could have accommodated economic deprivation.

The final principal conclusion is that it would appear that there existed among working people a level of latent and inchoate nationalism, upon which propaganda was designed to act and into which it was assimilated and modified. Expression of this latent nationalism may

1. More evidence is required here. As noted in Chapter I, although the artisan's search for social respectability showed an acceptance of certain values held by the "Hegemonic Class", yet research elsewhere suggests that artisans remain self-consciously working class, interpreting and reformulating those values in terms of their own situation, mediating and diffusing them through their own working class institutions, Friendly Societies Lodges, soirrees etc. R.Q.Gray, *op.cit.* pp.451-2; G.Stedman Jones "Working Class Culture ..." in Journal of Social History Vol. 7, No.4 (1974); G.Crossick Social Structures ... (Unpublished paper, York Univ.) 1973.

be glimpsed in the institutions^s of popular leisure. The Court Concerts, and Music Hall performances, allowed working class people to enjoy themselves together, expressing a common cultural identity in song and movement. The plays, playlets, sketches and songs functionally provided working class society with a vision of itself, at the same time skating over, or in imagination healing the cracks in the fabric of society. The dull cares and monotonies were transformed into exciting happiness, and a status given to the least important among the working class. The nationalist myth played an important part in this function. It too, gave the community a vision of itself and a sense of belonging. It too, conferred status. And aspects of this appeal are to be found in popular literature.¹

The volatility of working class nationalist expression was rooted in what Hoggart described as a "moment by moment approach to life" - a disposition to find life largely acceptable providing there was "adequate scope for having a good time". So men could be fired to enlist in the army by grand military spectacle or display, or the prospect of active service, and this was more common among unskilled workers. Indeed, for a part of the unskilled working class, there existed a tradition of involvement with the military which rested upon, and was stimulated by, this sort of appeal.

1. Perhaps then, this sort of appeal was more commonly found in a socially fragmented society. The implications of researching this are wide, comparison being needed between areas of solidarity and of fragmentation. A deeper analysis is required of the complicated relationship between the level of latent nationalism, its origins its internal function, and its modification by external propaganda.

Again, it would appear that the appeal of ritualist religion and spiritual revivalism was markedly stronger among unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Thus recourse to emotional expression appears to have been stronger among poorer people, providing a social safety valve against economic deprivation and social discipline.

In terms of "identity" and "status", the working class nationalist myth would appear at times to have been both xenophobic and racially conscious. First, it was vulnerable to the arguments of propagandists who claimed that jobs, housing and families were all in danger from foreign economic competition, alien immigration and foreign invasion. The clear and strong support for Unionist policies, which oriented upon these cardinal concepts, 1902-10, indicates this, and it seems too, that such arguments were again more likely to be accepted by less affluent skilled and semi-skilled workers. Second, the myth appeared to find that foreigners, when not malevolent or posing ethnic and cultural threats, were profoundly funny - as witness the popular stereotypes reflected in advertisement and leisure. Imperial ideas of colonial power, fetched back by ex-soldiers, would have reinforced this.

The myth was Royalist, too. Certainly, Royal progresses were marked by holiday and festivity and patriotic bunting unparalleled at any other time (than war). Certainly this Royalism was substantially prepared for in the schools; and at times of Royal celebration, recruiting figures soared. It was too, a principal virtue given expression in all the military and youth movements the working class so avidly joined.

But this latent nationalism had few intellectual roots. True, politicians attempted to mobilise it, to extend it to mesh with their own ideologies. But the increasing failure of nationalistic politics after 1910 did not mean a consequent weakening of latent nationalism. For this latent and functional nationalism had few deep intellectual roots, and was not thus discredited by the failure of an ideology which attempted to mobilise it. Working people failed to maintain a vision of conflict between their inchoate nationalist ideas, and class based politics. As Roberts claimed:

Whatever their arguments with local employers, the ultrapatriotic mass remained intensely loyal to the nation and the system as a whole. One week a striking docker might hurl stones at the police, and the next, assured of his daily bread applaud the marching Territorials or cheer a passing prince to the skies. (1)

Many unskilled people, disenfranchised anyway, had little time to care for politics, for "the big and long-distance rewards in life were not for them".² The immense output of the propaganda machines glanced them, leaving vague and inchoate ideas to modify nationalist conceptions. One study of the ideas of 17 year old boys for instance, found one (of unskilled parents) evidencing:

The Tories want to lower rates and stop the foreigners coming in ... Lloyd George is trying to make England worse than what it is.³

1. R.Roberts, op.cit. p.69.

2. R.Hoggart, op.cit.

3. A Freeman, Boy Life and Labour, 1914, p.157.

But at times of crisis, in periods during the Boer War for instance, the latent nationalism inspired positive working class patriotic reaction.¹ Like Music Hall and Royal Celebration, the crowds rejoiced at the Relief of Mafeking with "every street blazoned with bunting and bonfires, and mass hysteria surged up in wild and reckless revelry."² In the cinemas the crowds were said to be cheering the pictures of generals, and (fake) war film.³ And when a Birmingham Volunteer returned to his working class court:

the whole street paraded to give him a welcome befitting a public hero. Flags and streamers linked up every window, and excitement ran high when the news flashed round that the hero had arrived. Presently he came, like the Sultan of Turkey, mounted on a chair, with the South African sun beaming from under a broad brimmed hat and crowds of people jostling and cheering him along in a mad frenzy of delight. I was one of the drummer boys who tapped tin cans and marched to patriotic singing. (4)

And besides this emotionalism, this 'sense of belonging' and of 'status' so much threads of the nationalist myth, there was the uglier side of aggression when the myth was directly challenged. Thus the successful attempt by a number of working men to disrupt Lloyd-George's meeting, and perhaps the general support they received from elements in the 100,000 strong crowd. Price too, cities evidence of ugly crowds outside houses and shops said to be flying Boer flags, or

-
1. Even before of course - as the Labour Leader, 10 Sep. 1898, remarked that the working class were more interested in avenging Gordon than in the Welsh Coal Strike.
 2. V.W.Garratt, Men in the Street 1939, pp.63-4.
 3. Birmingham Daily Post 2 March 1900.
 4. V.W.Garratt, op.cit, pp.63-4.

displaying inverted pictures of Queen Victoria.¹

The final crisis of August 1914, as queues built up outside recruiting offices shows again and most convincingly the mobilisation of this latent nationalism. The German foreigner, so long a menace to jobs, home and family had struck. Now the working class could feel both united and purposeful in the Nation, galvanised into the common effort of the defence of Britain, and her Empire, against the "hydra-headed monster" of Prussian militarism.

Inside the stations as the trains pulled out, there would be tears for departing husbands and fathers, but the general tone was one of hilarity and new found happiness...
The end of dullness! (2)

-
1. R.Price, op.cit. Chap.IV. And yet he fails to connect together these, and the celebratory "Mafficking" crowds. The former he claims, were rarely genuinely working class - often students, or middle class led. The latter, he claims were "irrational actions induced by crowd mentality" (p.177) although, even for the working class, Mafficking Night "was a time for rejoicing; England had regained her honour" (p.133). And so the question again - how does Price measure working class nationalism?
 2. Pat O'Mara, Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy 1934 p.140.

APPENDIX I

Map of Birmingham showing the Parishes and corresponding
Municipal Wards and Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

1900

Sources: ERL 149417 Map of Birmingham and Suburbs by Wards, Hall
and English No.71 Dec.1895 ERL 124718 Map of Birmingham

Midland Educational Company c.1894 Plan of Birmingham
No.63 by Parliamentary Divisions c. 1900

Scale: Divided into Mile Squares.

PARISHES (Blue viewfoil)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. S.Clement | 24. S.Asaph |
| 2. S.Anne | 25. S.Thomas |
| 3. S.Matthew | 26. Immanuel |
| 4. S.Lawrence | 27. Christ Church |
| 5. S.Mary, Aston Brook | 28. S.Martin |
| 6. S.James | 29. S.Philip |
| 7. S.Ryder | 30. S.Jude |
| 8. S.Nicolas | 31. S.David |
| 9. S.Stephen | 32. S.Allan |
| 10. S.Matthias | 33. Trinity, Bordesley |
| 11. S.George | 34. S.John |
| 12. S.Saviour | 35. S.Gabriel |
| 13. S.Paul | 36. S.Bartholomew |
| 14. All Saints | 37. S.Peter |
| 15. S.Cuthbert | 38. S.Mary |
| 16. S.John, Ladywood | 39. Ch.Ch. Sparkbrook |
| 16a. S. Augustine | 40. All Saints, Small Heath |
| 17. S.Mark | 41. S.Andrew |
| 18. S.Margaret | 42. S.Saviour, Saltley |
| 19. S.Barnabas | 43. S.John, Harborne |
| 20. S.George, Edgbaston | 44. S.Peter, Harborne |
| 21. Edgbaston | 45. S.Thomas-in-the-Moors |
| 22. S.James, Edgbaston | 46. S.Paul, Balsall Heath |
| 23. S.Luke | 47. Ward End |

PARLIAMENTARY DIVISIONS
(Black viewfoil)

1. West
2. North
3. East
4. Central
5. South
6. Bordesley
7. Edgbaston
8. Aston Manor

WARDS

- (Red Viewfoil)
1. All Saint's
 2. S.Bartholomew's
 3. Bordesley
 4. Deritend
 5. Duddeston
 6. Edgbaston
 7. S.George's
 8. Ladywood
 9. Market Hall
 10. S.Martin's
 11. S.Mary's
 12. Nechells
 13. S.Paul's
 14. Rotton Park
 15. S.Stephen's
 16. S.Thomas's
 17. Balsall Heath
 18. Saltley











APPENDIX 2

A Synopsis of Method and Results in the AB303 Study1. Content of Army Book 303

a. A 200 page register in manuscript, giving details of 7040 recruits to the Regular Army at the Birmingham Recruiting station in Thorp Street, Digbeth, from 1st February 1908 to 18th August 1914 (this last day apparently being incomplete and continued to the next register).

b. The Birmingham recruiting district appears to include the following areas:

Birmingham	Halesowen
Dudley	Wolverhampton
Oldbury	Walsall

but other areas mentioned in the book, giving fewer recruits, are:

Cheltenham	Bilston
Wednesbury	Chipping Norton
Darlaston	West Bromwich
Willenhall	

c. The details given of each recruit are:

Name
 Regular Unit joined
 Age in years and months
 Height in inches
 Chest Expansion in inches.

Weight in Pounds

Colour of Hair and Eyes

Comment on General Physical Appearance (v.g. "sallow")

Occupation

Name of Previous Volunteer or Militia unit, if any

Date and Place of recruitment

Date of Attestation, and occasionally Religion

2. Analysis Method

a. Categorisation: Each recruit was reduced to a 16 digit entry on card, representing 11 variables:

	<u>Variable Name</u>
1. Regular Unit joined	REGUNIT
2. Age in years	AGE
3. Height in inches	HEIGHT
4. Weight in pounds	WEIGHT
5. Previous Volunteer or Militia service	VOLUNIT
6. Whether (5) and (1) same Regiment	SAMEUNIT
7. Industry	INDUSTRY
8. Skill	SKILL
9. Date	DAY
10. Date	MONTH
11. Date	YEAR

Table A2(1) is a computer printout of the data categorisation instructions. The "Value Labels" entry gives details of the various groups within each variable.

RUN NAME FIRST TEST
 FILE NAME MREC.SURVEY OF ARMY RECRUITING RECORDS
 VARIABLE LIST REGUNIT,AGE,HEIGHT,WEIGHT,VOLUNIT,SAMEUNIT,INDUSTRY,SKILL,DAY,
 MONTH,YEAR
 INPUT FORMAT FIXED(2A1,F2.0,F3.0,2A1,A2,A1,F2.0,2A1)

IGNORING INDEFINITE REPETITION, THE INPUT FORMAT PROVIDES FOR 11 VARIABLES. 11 WILL BE READ.
 IT PROVIDES FOR 1 RECORDS ('CARDS') PER CASE. A MAXIMUM OF 16 'COLUMNS' ARE USED ON A RECORD.

INPUT MEDIUM CARD,SSBLANCHMREC
 # OF CASES 7040
 RECODE REGUNIT, AGE, SAMEUNIT, SKILL, MONTH, YEAR
 ('A'=1)('B'=2)('C'=3)('D'=4)('E'=5)('F'=6)('G'=7)('H'=8)
 ('J'=9)('K'=10)('L'=11)('M'=12)/
 VOLUNIT ('A'=1)('B'=2)('C'=3)('D'=4)('E'=5)('F'=6)('G'=7)('H'=8)
 ('R'=9)('S'=10)('W'=11)/
 INDUSTRY ('AA'=1)('AB'=2)('BA'=3)('BB'=4)('BC'=5)('BD'=6)('BE'=7)
 ('BF'=8)('BG'=9)('BH'=10)('BJ'=11)('CA'=12)('CB'=13)('DA'=14)
 ('DB'=15)('DC'=16)('DD'=17)('DE'=18)('DF'=19)('DG'=20)('DH'=21)
 ('EA'=22)('EB'=23)

Table A2(1)

File Construction, Data

Modification and

One Job Instruction

VAR LABELS REGUNIT,REGULAR UNITS NAME/
 AGE,AGE IN YEARS/
 HEIGHT,HEIGHT IN INCHES/
 WEIGHT,WEIGHT IN POUNDS/
 VOLUNIT,VOLUNTEER UNITS NAME/
 SAMEUNIT,IF JOINED SAME UNIT
 VALUE LABELS REGUNIT (1)GUARDS(2)CAVALRY(3)RWAR(4)WORCS(5)STAFFS(6)ARTY
 (7)WELCH(8)OTHER INF(9)OTHERS(10)RFC(11)GS(12)MCS/
 AGE (1)UNDER 16(2)16(3)17(4)18(5)19(6)20(7)21(8)22(9)23(10)24/
 VOLUNIT (1)NONE(2)YEOMANRY(3)RWAR(4)WORCS(5)STAFFS(6)ARTY
 (7)OTHER(8)MILITIA(9)RWARMIL(10)STAFFSMIL(11)WORCSMIL/
 SAMEUNIT (1)YES(2)NO/
 INDUSTRY (1)MINING(2)FARMING(3)PRECIOUS(4)BRASS(5)METAL
 (6)NEW INDUST(7)WOOD(8)HOUSES(9)DRESS(10)PAPER(11)OTHER MANUF
 (12)FOOD AND HOTEL(13)OTHER SHOPS(14)DOMESTIC(15)MUNICIP(16)TNSPT
 (17)POST(18)ENTS(19)CLERKS(20)PROFESSN(21)OTHER SERV(22)GEN LAB
 (23)MCYCL/
 SKILL (1)UNSKILLED(2)SEMISKILLED(3)SKILLED(4)VERY SKILLED/
 MONTH (1)JAN(2)FEB(3)MAR(4)APR(5)MAY(6)JUN(7)JUL(8)AUG(9)SEP
 (10)OCT(11)NOV(12)DEC/
 YEAR (1)1908(2)1909(3)1910(4)1911(5)1912(6)1913(7)1914
 (*SELECT IF (VOLUNIT GT 1 AND VOLUNIT LT 8)
 PRINT FORMATS REGUNIT,AGE,VOLUNIT,SAMEUNIT,INDUSTRY,SKILL,MONTH,YEAR,
 HEIGHT,WEIGHT,DAY(0)
 FASTABS VARIABLES=INDUSTRY(1,23)/MONTH(1,12)/SKILL(1,3)/YEAR(6,7)/
 TABLES=INDUSTRY BY MONTH BY SKILL BY YEAR
 STATISTICS ALL
 READ INPUT DATA

b. Some of these variables require explanation:

1. REGUNIT

1. Guards, inc. Household Cavalry
 2. Cavalry excluding Household
 3. Royal Warwickshire Regt.
 4. Worcestershire Regt.
 5. Staffordshire Regt.
 6. Artillery
 7. Royal Welsh Fusiliers
 8. All other infantry regiments
 9. Other service regiments/corps
 10. Royal Flying Corps
 11. "General Service")
 12. Motorcyclists enlistment)
-) Wartime grades

2. Age in Years

From less than 16, then by year up to 23 years old, then 24 and over.

5. VOLUNIT

1. No previous Volunteer/TF/Militia/SR experiences
2. Yeomanry
3. Royal Warwickshire Regiments, T.F.
4. Worcestershire Regiment, TF.
5. Staffordshire Regiment, TF
6. Artillery (not possible to distinguish TF and Special Reserve, thus assumed as TF unless obviously otherwise)
7. Other TF regiments
8. All Militia Regiments except 9, 10, 11 below
9. Royal Warwickshire Regiment Militia/SR
10. Staffordshire Regiment Militia/SR

11. Worcestershire Regiment Militia/SR

Because of the effect of the Haldane Reforms in mid-1908 on battalion title numbers, it is not always possible to distinguish between Militia and territorial battalions before 1909. Thus 5th and 6ths Bns. R.War R. were Militia till April 1908, then these titles were assumed by the 1st Vol. Bn. as it split up into two units. The Militia faded away slowly as men joined the Regulars then, they could claim service in 5 R.War.R. and mean either Militia or TF. The distinction in the analysis was not drawn until August 1909; until then, all units were assumed to fall within groups 2 - 7.

7. INDUSTRY

22 separate industries were used, with a 23rd reserved for a special job entry of "motorcyclist" which occurred only during the Great War:

1. (Primary) Mining
2. " Farming
3. (Manufacturing) Precious Metal and Jewellery
4. " Brass including bedsteads
5. " General metal industry, light engineering and machine tools.
6. " New metal industries: cars, motorcycles, bicycles, and including electrical equipment
7. " Woodworking.
8. " Housebuilding and Construction Industry
9. " Dress, clothing
10. " Newspapers, books, newsprint
11. " Other categories
12. (Retail) Food, drink, tobacco, hoteliers
13. " All other shops
14. (Services) Domestic, private servants etc.
15. (") Municipal including Police

16. (Services) Transport including Railways
17. " Postal
18. " Entertainment
19. " Clerical
20. " Professional
21. " Other, v.g. barbers
22. General Labourer category
23. Motorcyclists

These grades were shown on the basis of the Census return, being the larger industries of Birmingham. Clerks entering the recruits occupation were careful to be precise: 513 separate occupations were identified.

8. Skill

Four grades

- i. Unskilled; Needing no training or special ability. In a depression or recession, likely to be laid-off first. Wages less than 25/-.
- ii. Semi-skilled: Training of from two or three months up to about a year. At risk in lay-offs, but less so than unskilled. Wages c25/- - c30/- time rate.
- iii. Skilled. Training of more than one year required, but of such an age that the likelihood of having held that grade for any long period previous to enlistment slight. Adult time rate more than c 30/-.
- iv. Highly skilled. Skilled and of such an age that job held for several years OR claiming one of the few rare highly paid esoteric skilled jobs.

Sources used in this classification: (in addition to general)

Smirke R.S. Report on the Birmingham Trades prepared for use in connection with the Juvenile Employment Exchange Established by the Central Care Committee of the Birmingham Education Authority in conjunction with the Board of Trade

	HMSO 1913-16
a. Printing and Allied Trades	1913
b. Electroplate trade	1913
c. Manufacture of Sporting Guns and Rifles	1913
d. Jewellery	1913
e. Manufacture of Flint Glass and Allied Trades	1913
f. General Brush Trade	1913
g. Possible Trades for Physically Handicapped	1913
h. Vanboy Labour	1913
i. Tool Making Trade	1914
j. Brass Trade	1914
k. Engineering and the Allied Trades	1916

Cd 5814 (1911) LXXVII i Report of An Enquiry into the Earnings and Hours of Labour 1906. P de Rousiers Labour Question in Britain 1896. J.H.Muirehead Social Conditions in Provincial Towns: Birmingham (publication abandoned) c.1911. G.A.Auden ed. Handbook for Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Journal (various industrial journals (Kalmagazette, Austin Advocate, Bournville Works Magazine)).

Table A2(2) gives those occupations, which appear more than once each in the study, by industry and skill. A number of trades appear in both semi- and skilled columns; this was where it was not possible

to say, by the name of the trade, which was the most applicable e.g. "painter", and then a guess was made by age. Extreme trouble was experienced by youths upgrading themselves - e.g. "turners" and "fitters" being alleged, at the age of 18 years. They were graded as skilled because they may have been training for those trades. Subsequently the analysis (Chapter 11) combined both semi-skilled and skilled recruiting in peacetime, as one general grade of "semi-skilled", since analysis (below) of height and weight statistics failed to maintain any population differences between these two. Skilled workers in most grades over 24 years were arbitrarily placed in the highly-skilled category, along with those claiming jobs of accepted high-skill status, in wartime recruiting.

Table A2(2)

Industry	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Highly Skilled
<u>PRIMARY</u>				
MINING	Coalman. Horse Driver in Coal Mine. Coal Loader	Collier. Miner. Slater. Quarryman	Collier. Face Worker. Miner	Mining engineer Miner
FARMING	Farm labourer. Farm waggoner. Dairyman	Tractor/Ploughman. Rancher. Market Gardener. Farm pupil	Farmer	Farmer
<u>SECONDARY</u>				
PRECIOUS METALS ETC.	Gold polisher. Silver polisher	Camera maker. Clock case fitter. Gilder. Gold blocker "Jeweller". Silver stamper. Wire drawer	Chaser. Engraver Gem driller. Gem setter. Gilder. Gold beater. Leaf beater. Preparer Spectacle frame maker. Silver- smith	Diamond cutter

INDUSTRY	UNSKILLED	SEMI-SKILLED	SKILLED	HIGHLY SKILLED
BRASS	Barrelling. Bedstead worker Dresser. Edger-up. Frazer. Getter-down. Miller. Polisher. Skimmer. Tube polisher	Bedstead chipper. Brazier. Bronzer Burnisher. Dipper. Driller. Filler. Grinder. Japanner. Riveting. Stamper. Tapper. Tube Drawer	Coppersmith, Fitter Foundry Furnace man. Moulder. Pourer. Screwer. Turner.	Caster Strip-Caster Pattern maker
METAL inc. Electroplate and guns	Browner. Capstan boy. Chequerer. Dipper. Dogger- Up. Dragger-Out. Dresser. Electroplate worker. Expander. Fitters Assistant. Fork Roller. Galvaniser. Grid Maker. Hammer Boy. Heaver-out. Knife and Fork Dresser. Iron plate worker. Lathe hand. Nut facers. Pointers. Polishers Fitters Assistants. Pullers-In. Putters-Out. Pullers-Over. Press Worker. Rivet Boy. Roller. Scale Maker. Scourer. Scratch. Brusher. Spelter. Steelworker. Tube Cutter	Annealer, Art Metal worker. Automatic lathe workers. Barrel Burnisher. Bolt maker. Caulker. Chain Striker. Chandelier worker. Chiseller. Crane driver. Cruet hand. Die Sinker. Driller. "Engineer". Enameller. Finisher Filer. Grinder. Hardener, Holder-up. Hydraulic tester. Improver. Jelly-Hand. Kettle maker. Lamp worker. Machine-minder Maker-up. "Mechanic". Metal Refiner. Miller. Muffleman. Nut Caster. Planer. Puncher. Rim Setter. Rim Worker. Rivet man. Rod Binder. Rough Filer. Scale Filer. Spring maker. Straightener. Striker. Tank maker. Tinner. Tinsmith. Tube Bender. Tube Drawer, Tube Prover. Tube Screwer. Wireworker.	Anchor Smith. Bird Cage Maker. Blacksmith. Borer. Chaser. Coremaker. Embosser. Engine Turner. Engraver. Fitter. Flat Hammerer. Gun Galvaniser. Gun Filer. Gun Finisher. Gun Screwer. Gun Stocker. Iron Moulder. Metal Mixer. Odd Work Forger. Planer. Radial Drillers. Rifler. Riveter. Smith. Safe- maker. Tinsmith. Tinner. Tool Finder Tool Maker. Tool Setter. Turner. Welder. Wire Rope Maker. Electric Welder.	Borer. Pattern Maker Plater Riveters. Smith. Spinner. Template worker. Turner.

INDUSTRY	UNSKILLED	SEMI-SKILLED	SKILLED	HIGHLY SKILLED
NEW INDUSTRY metal electrical	Cycle Fitter. Cycle Viewer. Cycle Polisher. Cycle Worker. Engine cleaner, Fender fitter. Motor tyre fitter. Motor lamp fitter. "Rolling over tyres". Waggon runner.	Axle bar maker. Brake fitter. Brush hands. Cycle driller. Cycle Finisher. 'Electrician' Electric improver. Flatter. 'Machinist'. Rubber. Varnisher. Wireman.	Coach Builder. Electric Armature Winder. Electrician. Electric Fitter. Electric Tester. Electrical Engineer. Liner. Motor Fitter. Motor Mechanic. Trimmer. Turbine Blade Examiner. Wheelwright Wire Tester.	Coach builder Coach Smith
WOOD	Billiard Marker. Rule Maker, Sawyer. Wood Cutter. Wood Machinist. Wood Polisher.	Caneworker. Cooper. Cricket Bat maker. French Polisher. Frame Fitter. Packingcase maker. Pipe maker. Picture framer. Planer-Woodwork machinist.	Boat builder. Cabinet maker. Carpenter. Coffin Maker. Joiner. Wheelwright. Wood Turner.	Wood turner Car penter
HOUSE GEN. CONSTRUCTION	Brick burner. Brick maker. Builder's labourer. Painter's Labourer. Plasterer's labourer. Plumber's assistant.	Bricklayer. Bridge Erector. Casement maker. Glazier. Painter. Paper hanger. Plasterer. Plumber. Slate and Zinc Worker. Tile Fixer.	Bricklayer. Painter and Decorator. Stone mason Terracotta worker.	

INDUSTRY	UNSKILLED	SEMI-SKILLED	SKILLED	HIGHLY SKILLED
DRESS and fabrics	Boot coverer. Currier Labourer Shoe Hand	Bridle cutter. Case Maker. Draper. Leather Bag Maker. Leather worker. Shoe Maker. Skate Maker. Tailor's Cutter. Tanner. Umbrella Maker	Boot Maker and Repairer. Case Maker Military Saddler. Tailor Wig Maker.	
PAPER and printing	Cardboard Box Maker. Newsorter. Paper Maker. Printing link maker. Taker-off	Forwarding "Printer"	Battery Man. Binder. Black Shop hand. Composition. Electrotype printer. Etcher. Finisher. Mounter. Operator Proof-reader. Prover	
OTHER MANUFACTURE	Bottler. Bottle Washer. Colour grinder. Carpet Starcher. Creeler. Clipper. Factory hand. Fibre Dresser. Flock Maker. Emery Bobber. Packer. Rubber worker. Ruler. Plate Finisher. Shearer. Spring Mattress Maker. Stoker. Shaper. Thong maker. Warehouseman	Glass Decorator. Glass Mould Maker. Glasssilverer.. Potter glazier. Rope Maker. Willower.	Glass Beveller. Glass Blower. Glass Cutter. Piano Maker.	
RETAIL FOOD HOTEL	Barman. Butcher's Assistant Cellarman. Chocolate moulder. Fruiterer. Greengrocer. Ham Dresser. Milkman. Milk Setter. Pickler. Steward. Waiter. Confectioner.	Baker. Brewer. Butcher. Fishermonger. Ostler. Slaughterer. Waiter.	Cook. Cattle dealer	Journeyman butcher

INDUSTRY	UNSKILLED	SEMI-SKILLED	SKILLED	HIGHLY SKILLED
RETAIL OTHER	Coal Merchant. Florist. Hawker. Newsagent. Shop Assistant	Bookseller. Chemists. Assistant. Draper. Marine Store dealer		Threadmill foremen
SERVICES DOMESTIC	Indoor servant. Page. Stable lad.	Chauffeur. Footman. Gardener.	Valet	
MUNICIPAL	Gas worker "Labourer at Pumping Station". Lampman	Gas man. Gas stove fitter	Gas fitter. Sanitary engineer	
TRANSPORT	Boatman, Carman. Carter Cleaner (railway). Engine Cleaner. Porter. Groom. Vanboy	Cab driver. Driver. Currier. Gas engine driver. Horse dresser. Merchant seaman. Loco Fireman. Ticket collector. Tram Conductor. Tram Driver. Shunter	Engine Driver. Farrier. Platelayer. Railway Checker. Shoeing. Smith	
POST	Postman. Messenger. Telegraph Labourer		Telegraphist.	
ENTERTAINMENT	Assistant linesman. Busker. Comedian	Bioscope operator. Film repairer. Musician	Musician, Professional Football. Professional golfer	
CLERKS		Assistant Auctioneer. Agent. Clerk. Time-keeper	Solicitors Clerk	

INDUSTRY	UNSKILLED	SEMI-SKILLED	SKILLED	HIGHLY SKILLED
PROFESSIONAL		Draughtsman. Dispenser	Dental mechanic Dispenser. Draughtsman. Surveyor. Valuer.	Dentist Chemist
OTHER SERVICES	Bill poster. Cleaner. Laundryman. Motor attendant	Asylum Assistant. Barber. Chimney sweep. Fireman. Hairdresser. Lighthouse engineer. Compounders assistant. Gymnast. Sand Blaster. Vet's Assistant. Ward worker.	"Manager" Ammunition Examiner. Musical instrument repairer	
GEN.LAB.	Town Labourer. Labourer. General Labourer.			
Motorcyclist				Motorcyclist

Table A2(2) Grading of 430 Occupations mentioned more than once in AB303 by skill.

c. Method of Analysis

Using the package "Special Package for Social Scientists" (SPSS) and the university series 1900 computer, a number of programmes were designed to examine the relationship between and within the variables listed.

d. Programmes

1. Recruiting from each industry by month from 1908-1914 was studied for each of the skill variables, from three populations
 - i. Those with no military experience,
 - ii. Those with previous Volunteer/TF experience
 - iii. Those with previous Militia/SR experience.
2. Recruiting from each industry day by day, from 4th - 18th August 1914, for each of the skill variables was studied.

These two operations provided a picture of the pattern of peacetime and wartime recruiting and enabled a detailed analysis to be made of the recruiting behaviour of separate groups (by industry, skill, and previous military experience) at times of unemployment, and at periods of heightened popular nationalism.

To answer further questions that arose and to seek out the other meaningful relationships, the following extra programmes were submitted:

3. Industrial distribution of recruits from the Volunteer/TF, from the Militia /SR, and from those with no previous service.
4. Skill distribution, as 5 above.
5. Skill distribution by age.
6. Propensity of ex-Volunteer/TF and ex-Militia/SR recruits to join the same territorial Regular Line battalion.

7. Height and weight statistics for each industry 1908-13.
8. Height and weight statistics for each skill 1908-13
9. Height and weight statistics for the ex-Volunteer, the ex-Militia, and the non-service recruits.
10. The three operations above were repeated for the height-to-weight ratio instead, (a new variable calculated by the computer called NEWVAR) for those aged 17-20 years only.

3. Results

Some of the results are given in Graph 11.1. There are too many to include a comprehensive precis: repeated below are only those results which are of importance to the text of this thesis.

a. Validation of Skill Categories

If the unskilled were paid less and had less steady employment, then their health might be marginally lower than other groups. Further, 'highly skilled' as a group ought to be well above every other category.

Statistical calculations show a significant difference to exist in both height and weight between the means of the unskilled and all other groups, and also between the highly skilled and all other groups.

This calculation is based upon the standard error of the difference between the means (S)

$$S_{\bar{x}_i - \bar{x}_{ii}} = \sqrt{\frac{\delta_i^2}{n_i} + \frac{\delta_{ii}^2}{n_{ii}}}$$

where \bar{X} = mean, δ^2 = mean square deviation (standard deviation squared)
 n = size of sample population, and subscripts (i) and (ii) indicate the
two different samples involved. If the difference between the two
means exceeds three times the standard error of the difference, such
a difference, arising from random sampling would (according to the
properties of the normal curve) be accounted for only once in 370
times. Such a difference would therefore be considered statistically
significant, as indicating that there is a real difference between the
populations from which our samples were drawn. This calculation
may be made more roughly, by adding together the standard errors of the
means; the standard error of the mean = $\frac{\delta}{\sqrt{n}}$

as calculated in Table A2(3)

below. Again, if ^{threetimes} the sum of the standard errors is less than

the difference between the means, then there is likely to be a
significant difference between the populations.

	n	\bar{X}	δ	standard error	n	\bar{X}	δ	standard error	
Unskilled	3670	66.051	2.290	0.038	-	124.775	12.242	0.202	
Semiskilled	2170	66.372	2.264	0.049	-	126.339	12.889	0.277	
Skilled	1117	66.329	2.159	0.065	-	126.245	11.884	0.356	
Highly Skilled	83	66.518	2.689	0.295	-	136.434	17.780	1.952	
All Groups	7040	66.200	2.272	0.027	-	125.637	12.544	0.130	
		Height in inches					Weight in pounds		

Table A2(3) Height and Weight Statistics by Skill for 7040 recruits
to the Regular Army

b. General findings:

1. The pattern of recruitment annually cyclical, both for those with no previous military experience and for those with it.

Graph A2(A) demonstrates this: the lower schedule includes all TF/Volunteer/Militia/SR groups.

2. This reflects local employment patterns: Birmingham labour however moved from trade to trade, and slumps in one would be offset by rising expectation in another.

3. The monthly recruiting statistics fail to correlate with national unemployment figures published in the Labour Gazette.

Correlation coefficients are:

$r = + 0.1706$ (personnel with no previous military experience)

$r = + 0.3440$ (previous military service). This is in part of course due to the unreliability of the Labour Gazette's figures, and to the atypical nature of Birmingham industry. Over the long run it is clear that as the national depression of 1908/9 recedes into the relative prosperity of 1910/14, so too do recruiting figures fall markedly.

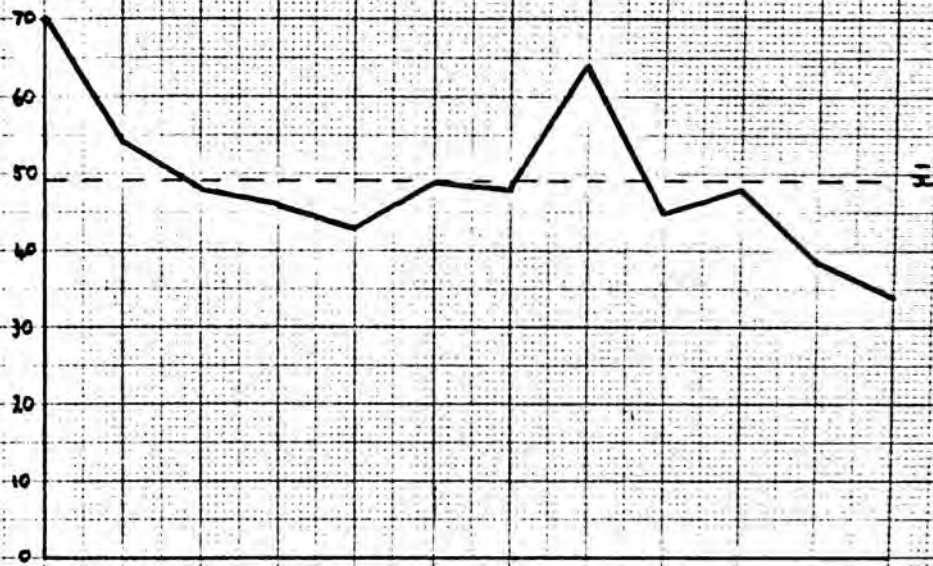
4. Comparison of monthly fluctuations between those with no previous military experience, and those with Militia/TF Service, shows again only a very slight correlation if any.

$r = +0.5575$: clearly these two groups are influenced partially by different factors.

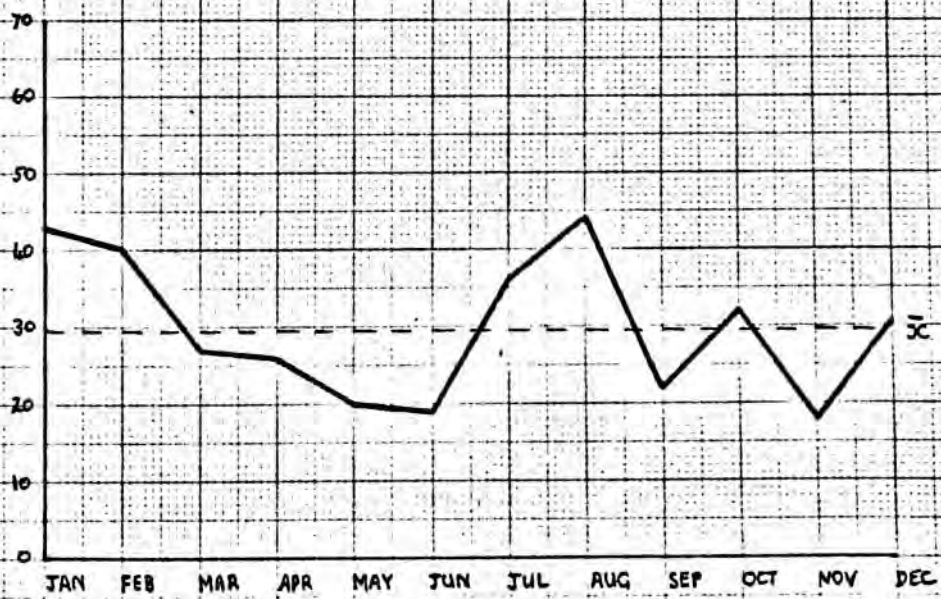
5. These factors are:

(a) Different socio-economic status.

Graph A2(A) Mean Enlistment by month, Feb 1908 - July 1914



(i) Without previous military experience



(ii) With militia or TF experience

	Militia	Non-Mil	Terr-force	n
Unskilled	60	55	48	1990
Semiskilled	27	30	31	1059
Skilled	13	15	21	551
n	794	2332	474	3600

Table A2(3) Percentage of Recruits from the Militia, Territorial Force, and with no previous military experience, in the different skilled categories: Jan 1910-Dec.1913.

This same phenomenon is reflected in the height and weight statistics:

	Height (ins)		Weight (lbs)		n
	\bar{X}	Std.Error	\bar{X}	Std.Error	
Militia	65.422	0.072	121.721	0.350	797
Non. Mil.	66.346	0.048	125.303	0.262	2346
Terr.Force	66.543	0.097	125.394	0.503	477

Table A2(4) Height and Weight Statistics for those with previous Territorial and Militia Force Service, and for those without. Jan.1910-Dec.1913.

Members of the T.F. joining the Regular Army were therefore probably drawn from a slightly higher socio-economic group than those with no experience, those joining from the Militia/S.R. from a lower socio-economic group than the other two.

b. Variations of membership of the TF and the Militia within industries. This indicates the relative strength of the TF, or of the SR, within particular trades; thus in table A2/5 below it is clear that in Brass and in General Labouring (insecure employments particularly) the percentage of Militia is high, and of TF low. In the six biggest areas of recruitment then:

% of all recruits		Non-Mil	TF	Militia/SR
Metal (Light Eng.)	23.4	60.7	17.7	21.6
Gen. Labourers	20.3	62.4	9.0	28.6
Brass	9.7	58.8	11.0	30.2
Transport	9.2	72.7	9.4	17.9
Food/Hotels	5.6	78.3	8.6	13.1
Other Manufacturing	5.5	59.3	13.6	27.1
Mean Distribution		<u>64.8</u>	<u>13.2</u>	<u>22.0 %</u>
% of Total Recruits in all these above industries	73.7	73.0	70.1	82.0 %

Table A2(5) Variations of Membership of the TF and Special Reserve within the six biggest industries. 1910-1913.

It is notable that membership of the Militia or Special Reserve is above average for those industries where employment notoriously fluctuates and which employ large numbers of young labour on a casual basis. In many of the cases where Territorial membership is above the 13.2% average, employment was steady and stable - clerks, municipal workers, domestic service, retail (other than food).

c. Local recruiting response

On occasion, the monthly recruiting figures do not relate to normal cyclical patterns and cannot be explained in terms of unemployment caused by industrial depression, bankruptcy or strike. The figures for the Royal visit to Birmingham, the Coronation, the railway strike and the Naval Scares are discussed fully in Chapter 11.

6. Age and Skill Distribution of Recruits 1908-14

a.			%
	Unskilled		52.6
	Semiskilled		30.2
	Skilled		16.0
	Highly Skilled		1.2
b.	<16 yrs.	0.8	20
	16	0	21
	17	2.8	22
	18	46.8	23
	19	21.0	24+
			%
			10.8
			6.2
			3.8
			2.4
			5.8

7. Units joined by ex-TF and ex-Militiamen

a. Of 3620 Recruits from Jan.1910 - Dec.1913:

	%
No previous experience	64.8
TF	13.2
Militia	22.0

b. A greater than average percentage of TF men (> 13.2%) went to the Guards, the Cavalry, Artillery, the Scottish regiments, and the Royal Flying Corps. A low percentage went into their own line battalions

to which their TF unit was attached.

c. A greater than average percentage of ex-Militiamen went into their own line battalions, and into the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Thus the percentage of militiamen joining their own line regiments in the three principal local battalions were:

Royal Warwickshire Regt.	36.8%
Staffordshire Regt.	25.5%
Worcestershire Regt.	54.0%

8. August 1914

The analysis is more fruitful in providing information on recruitment during the first two weeks of World War One. Since both the TF and the SR were embodied, all of the recruits have no declared previous military experience.

A distinct middle class group is identified, formed of clerks professionals (very few), and motorcyclists; a larger number of highly skilled workers too, present themselves than ever before.

The height and weight statistics for these groups given below, show motorcyclists to be very much taller and very much heavier than the highly skilled. Clerks too, are significantly taller but are not as heavy as the highly skilled group: this could be in part due to a difference in age and pay, the latter group being older and wealthier than the clerks.

	n	\bar{X}	Std. Error		\bar{X}	Std. Error	
Skilled	1117	66.329	2.159	0.065	126.245	11.884	0.356
Highly Skilled	83	66.52	2.689	0.295	136.43	17.78	1.952
Clerks	144	67.29	2.33	0.19	127.99	12.57	1.05
Motorcyclists	63	67.97	2.37	0.3	138.48	15.56	1.96
			Height			Weight	

Table A2(6) Height and weight statistics of skilled, highly skilled, Clerks and Motorcyclists 1908-14.

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5. Collections The Birmingham Reference Library contains large numbers of miscellaneous collections of posters, pamphlets, cards, leaflets, photographs, MSS and newspaper cuttings. Those used are listed by BRL catalogue number.

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115846	<u>Birmingham Parliamentary Elections</u>	1906
134606	<u>Leaders of the Provincial Press</u>	1895
138391	<u>Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee</u>	1897
147989	<u>Crowley's Orphanage</u>	1899-1901.
148956	<u>Bordesley Palace, Programmes</u>	1899-1928
149660	<u>Bordesley Palace, Posters</u>	1899-1928
153312	<u>Tivoli Theatre of Varieties, Programmes</u>	1900-1914
169098	<u>Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Aston</u>	1894
174048	<u>Lloyd George Riots</u>	1901-1902
175494	<u>Unemployed Workmens Labour Aid Committee</u>	1902-1903
181888	<u>Familiar Figures</u>	1903-1906
189285	<u>Young British Liberals' Society</u>	1904-1914
189286	<u>YMCA</u>	1904-1914
189287	<u>Duddeston Ward Liberal Unionist Association</u>	1890-1903
189288	<u>Nechells Ward Liberal Unionist Association</u>	1892-1903
189289	<u>Saltley Ward Liberal Unionist Association</u>	1899-1909
202820	<u>Birmingham School Board, Election</u>	1900
202821	<u>Birmingham Municipal Elections</u>	1901
204191	<u>Gaiety Theatre of Varieties, Posters</u>	1907-1921
204192	<u>Alexander Theatre, Posters</u>	1907-1961
204193	<u>Gaiety Theatre of Varieties, Programme</u>	1907-1920
204194	<u>Alexander Theatre, Programmes</u>	1907-1961
204339	<u>Birmingham National Association of South African Ex-Service Men</u>	1906-1908
205457	<u>Metropole Theatre, Posters</u>	1907-1912

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205762	<u>Grand Theatre of Varieties, Posters</u>	1889-1933
218421	<u>Royal Visit (Edward VII) July 7 1909</u>	1909
218652 and 3	<u>Royal Visit (Edward VII) pamphlets</u>	1909
220828	<u>Birmingham, Aston, Handsworth Liberal Unionist Association</u>	1909-1910
222481	<u>Birmingham Parliamentary Elections</u>	1911
229251	<u>Birmingham Parliamentary Elections 1832-1910</u>	1910
229706	<u>Workers Educational Association</u>	1910
231585	<u>Birmingham Conservative and Unionist Associations</u>	1890 etc.
238532	<u>Coliseum (Saltley) Sunday Concerts</u>	1912-13
240036	<u>Edgbaston Liberal Association</u>	1904
240637	<u>Birmingham Municipal Elections</u>	1913
241914	G.H.Osborne: <u>Council</u>	1898-1906
243199	" <u>Music Entertainment</u>	1874-1907
243209	" <u>Handsworth Scrapbook</u>	1860-1901
248971	" <u>Birmingham Volunteers</u>	1871-1900
244447	<u>Labour Copartnership Association</u>	1912
248697	G.H.Osborne: <u>Hamstead Colliery</u>	1875-1909
248949	<u>Handsworth Liberal Association</u>	1880-1914
249666	<u>J.MacMillan: Railway Strike</u>	1913
249865	<u>Birmingham Industries and Commerce</u>	1914
254519	<u>Birmingham Rifle Reserve</u>	1914
259301	<u>Aston Scrapbooks</u>	1810-1911
259707	<u>Birmingham City Battalions</u>	1914 etc.
260534	<u>Birmingham Courts and Alleys' Association</u>	1901
263318	<u>1st Warwicks R.G.Artillery Volunteers</u>	1904
274540	AND 5 <u>E.Worcs.Liberal Unionist Association cuttings and MS minute book</u>	1893-1913

279760	<u>Duddeston and Nechell's Ward Conservative Working Men's Club</u>	1876
280000	<u>Royal Warwicks Regiment</u>	1869 etc.
286536-7	G.H.Osborne: <u>Handsworth Liberal, Liberal Unionist and Conservative Association</u>	1875-1906
286538	" <u>Handsworth Volunteers and Handsworth Parliament</u>	1871-1906
286526	" <u>Boulton and Watt factory</u>	1832-1907
292201	Sir J.B.Stone: <u>Photographs of Birmingham (18 boxes)</u>	c.1896-1910
295030	<u>Birmingham Open Air Court Concerts Association</u>	1898-1909
296063	J.MacMillan: <u>Birmingham Portraits</u>	c.1880-1910
296069	" <u>Authors, Editors, Literature</u>	1815-1908
301864	<u>Ladywood Working Mens' Conservative and Constitutional Club</u>	1884
302134	<u>Railways</u>	1885-1913
303239	J.MacMillan: <u>St.Asaphs</u>	1893-1938
310045	H.S.Pearson: <u>Birmingham Men</u>	1890-1923
323545	<u>St.Pauls, Balsall Heath</u>	1902 etc.
324581	<u>Balsall Heath Liberal Unionist Association</u>	1901 etc.
386140	<u>Coronation of George V. festivities</u>	1911
386541	<u>Birmingham Technical Colleges</u>	1905 etc.
393616	<u>Christmas Tea Party for Aged Poor</u>	1883-1910
407949	<u>Deritend Conservative Club</u>	1902
413127	<u>Midland Volunteer Officers' Association</u>	1900-1902
436345	<u>Norton Street Council School</u>	1880-1918
441916	<u>King's Heath Working Mens' Club</u>	1904-1918
521411	<u>Revision of Birmingham Voters' List</u>	1874-1909
529346	<u>St.Johns Ambulance Association</u>	1913 etc.

529347	<u>Birmingham School Board, Volunteer Schools' Defence Association, Midland Education League</u>	1867-1902
529772	<u>Birmingham Municipal Elections</u>	1885-1914
535024	<u>Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association</u>	1889-1900
535033	<u>Balsall Heath Conservative Association</u>	1892-1926
535706	<u>Duddeston Conservative Working Mens' Club</u>	1892-1900
536016	<u>ASRS concerts</u>	1896-1904
537512	<u>Birmingham Municipal Elections</u>	1903-1904
539272	<u>Birmingham National Association of South African Service Men</u>	1906-1908
566648	<u>T.P.Salt: 1st Warwicks (Birmingham) Rifle Volunteer Corps</u>	1860-80
586853	<u>South Midland Brigade, R.F.Artilery</u>	1912-37
610931	<u>Birmingham Daily Mail Reservists' Fund</u>	1899-1903
662030	<u>Bedstead Workmens' Association</u>	1889-1926
774524	<u>Warwickshire Yeomanry</u>	1912
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