

THE MARCONI SCANDAL AND RELATED ASPECTS OF BRITISH ANTI-SEMITISM, 1911-1914

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SUMMARY

The thesis sets out to examine the political importance of the Marconi Scandal and also to study the use of anti-semitism during the affair and the wider implications of this hostility to Jews.

Using a wide variety of sources, the first three chapters analyse the Scandal and its significance in Edwardian politics, suggesting that the parliamentary tensions traditionally described had little fundamental influence on the governing elite and its institutions.

The press coverage of the Scandal is considered, indicating the political divisions and also the role played by anti-semitism in the affair. From this general approach, there develops a close study of the two journals most prominent in the anti-semitic campaign. These chapters examine the principal characters involved with the journals, their views on the Jews and the translation of this journalistic hostility into practical action, a previously undocumented episode.

Finally, the Scandal is placed in its wider context of British anti-semitism before 1914. A comparative study of contemporary attitudes towards other minority groups in Britain and towards Jews in other areas of the world is also made. In this section, the main stereotypes of Jews are identified and from this approach it can be shown that British anti-semitism before 1914 is an important indicator of attitudes after the First World War. The conspiracy theory of anti-semitism is apparent well before the Russian Revolution of 1917, usually claimed to be the impetus for the British anti-semitism of the 1920s and 30s. The conclusion is that the Marconi Scandal and its ramifications mark an important transitional period in the continuum of British anti-semitism.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the significance of the Marconi Scandal has been the subject of some debate, largely due to the appearance of various political scandals in both Britain and America. Attempts to predict the outcome of the Watergate affair led a British journalist, Colm Brogan, to use Marconi and the Teapot Dome Scandal in the U.S.A. as historical evidence for his forecast, which turned out to be incorrect.¹ The financial corruption associated with John Poulson, the architect, and the allegations of politicians' involvement, also led to journalistic publicity of historical precedents; one of the articles referred to the Marconi affair as 'the most controversial case'.² Even Private Eye, whose treatment of such matters is usually serious, produced a 'letter' from Sir Herbert Gussett K.C.M.G. on 'Corruption in high places', referring to his experiences of Lloyd George. 'Apparently he had been buying a lot of shares in some Italian television company. If it had got out at the time, it would have caused quite a rumpus.'³

Since attention has been focused on the Scandal, it seems appropriate that a study of its events should be made. There is only one standard account, that of Frances Donaldson, published in 1962,⁴ and some of her judgements are open to question, as might be expected after sixteen years. In addition, there is still some confusion over basic facts, a confusion reproduced in text-books such as the Oxford History of England.⁵ Therefore, the first purpose of this thesis is to re-examine the Marconi Scandal within the context of recent research in Edwardian Britain. If, as Cox and Dyson report, 'the concept of pre-1914 England as a long summer afternoon is quite false; it was filled with conflict, political, social and ideological',⁶ then the implications of the Scandal must be tested against what now appears to be the generally accepted model. The Liberal press of the time ascribed events to this kind of atmosphere. 'All the floating animosities of the hour - anti-Liberal, anti-Ministerial, and anti-semitic - here combined with these suspicions to make a particularly odious

chemical brew...'⁷ A closer examination of the Scandal, however, suggests the need for a more specific description of the breakdown of Edwardian society. The ruling elite in parliament present some superficial differences but no fragmentation of purpose. The Scandal was not exploited to its utmost and this suggests the need to revise any hasty or unscientific verdicts about the irreconcilable party divisions of the pre-war era.

Some indication of the superficial differences between parties was displayed by the various political journals. The outrage of the Liberal press that allegations should be made and the splutterings of Conservatives at the utter corruption of the affair give the impression of great dispute. In fact, the Scandal was reported along the lines of a Victorian melodrama and this similarity extended into another facet of the affair, the most significant one for this study, the involvement of Jews. 'Realism consisted not in seeing the Jew steadily and whole, but in treating the English reading public to the edifying and detailed scandals of the very rich.'⁸ This description of the treatment of Jews in the Victorian novel fits equally well the coverage of the Marconi Scandal and therefore suggests something about the nature of British anti-semitism at that time.

Bearing in mind the developments of the 1920s and 30s, the significance of this pre-war period has perhaps been underestimated. This study attempts to redress the balance. The importance of the Marconi Scandal in the history of British anti-semitism, although featuring in a very sophisticated German anti-semitic study during the Second World War,⁹ has been rather neglected. Contemporary accounts have been glossed over and so the language of anti-semitism in the period has not been analysed. Work on the recent history of anti-semitism in Britain concentrates on two periods, 1870-1910 and the inter-war years. There has been little attempt to relate the two. For example, Colin Cross, in his study of the British fascist movement, wrote: 'As a coherent system of thought, British anti-semitism can be traced back to a Rhodesian, Henry Hamilton Beamish, who in 1919 founded an anti-Semitic society in London called the Britons.'¹⁰

Thus, the impression given is that the two periods were totally unconnected. One of the claims of this work is that the period 1911-1914 is an important transitional phase, in which the ideas behind the theory of Jewish conspiracy, resulting in the publication of an English version of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in 1919, became a dominant feature. The oft-cited 'cause' of the conspiracy theory in Britain is the combined effect of war with Germany and the Bolshevist Revolution in Russia.¹¹ Possibly we need to look more closely at the events of the pre-war period to obtain a clearer picture of the 'causes'.

Indeed, in spite of two recent studies by Garrard¹² and Gainer,¹³ it is still necessary to establish the extent of anti-semitism in Britain at this time. Its existence was frequently underestimated or ignored by contemporaries¹⁴ and even modern texts continue this trend. The researcher comes across some amazing statements, such as

'Though England received many Jewish refugees - thus tripling the Jewish population there - no anti-Semitism resulted, a fact that may be attributed to the prestige of the Earl of Beaconsfield, Benjamin Disraeli, a baptized Jew who brought much glory to England.'¹⁵

It is clear that some definition of 'anti-semitism' is needed in order to be certain of the exact use of the term in this thesis. Indeed, by coming to a definition, the limitations of a historical study can be explained. The historian must accept that any survey of anti-semitism cannot tell the full extent of the hostility. As Robb suggests, 'Research such as this gives no indication of the actual distribution of attitudes but only of the distribution of certain kinds of expressions of those attitudes.'¹⁶ However, the historian has the techniques for such a survey, albeit a limited one. When he tries to draw on the tools of the psychologist and the sociologist, he finds their exact use almost impossible. Consider the question of prejudice, a concept which the historian might well feel he should use in a discussion of the anti-semitism surrounding the Marconi Scandal. The acid test of prejudice, or the 'sociologically important feature' of prejudiced views is 'their unreasonable retention in the face of countervailing

evidence or argument.' Since most of our judgements are formed unreasoningly, it is only the unreasonable retention of those views which is significant.¹⁷ For the historian, it is impossible to decide whether or not countervailing evidence has been presented and rejected, and therefore he cannot use the strict sociological concept. One might ask whether he is justified in using the term 'prejudice' at all.

As a result, when the word is used in this work, it conforms to the definition given by Allport of negative ethnic prejudice as 'an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalisation.'¹⁸ This makes no claim to test the ultimate significance of the concept. The antipathy 'may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group.'¹⁹ 'Anti-semitism', as used in this study, is a particular incidence of this negative ethnic prejudice. The particular concern of an historical approach is that it indicates the particular kinds of expressions of antipathy, and, therefore, we are interested in the ascription of 'general qualities to groups, irrespective of - and, indeed, often in defiance of - manifest differences between one member and another.'²⁰ The simplest and most useful definition for our purposes is that of Robb, who states that anti-semitism is 'an attitude of hostility towards Jews as such' and that the hostility 'must be associated definitely with the quality of being a Jew.'²¹

The main purpose of this thesis is to pursue this particular approach to anti-semitism. It is concerned with the various images of the Jew and with the way particular elements in the images were stressed. By identifying these elements, it should be possible to fill in the gap left between the anti-immigration lobby and the conspiracy theory of the inter-war years. Modern British anti-semitism can then be viewed as a continuum, rather than as a series of disjointed outbursts, a far more realistic and rewarding approach to the topic.

Whilst there will be some attempt to identify the leading exponents of anti-semitic attitudes, history through psychological analysis of a few

individuals is not the main purpose of this thesis. To gain an insight into the particular nature of British anti-semitism at the time of the Marconi Scandal, the study will focus on the cultural patterns which contribute to the peculiarity. The newspaper sources inevitably mean that only certain cultural patterns are reflected. For the reasons stated above, no study can hope to be definitive. However, the Marconi Scandal does draw attention to questions about British society before 1914 and about the development of British anti-semitism in the first forty years of the twentieth century. This work begins to provide some answers to those questions.

INTRODUCTION: FOOTNOTES

1. See 'After the scandal, who pays the price?', Daily Telegraph, 30 June 1973
2. James Margach, 'Scandal in the House: a painful history', Sunday Times, 5 May 1974
3. Private Eye, 17 May 1974
4. Frances Donaldson, The Marconi Scandal, (London, 1962)
5. R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, (London, 1936). On p. 457, there are two errors:
 - a) that the Le Matin trial took place before October 1912
 - b) that the Select Committee discovered that Ministers held American Marconi shares
 For the correct chronology, see Chapter 1
6. C.B. Cox and A.E. Dyson, The Twentieth Century Mind: Volume 1, 1900-1918, (London, 1972), p. 476
7. Westminster Gazette, 20 March 1913
8. Edgar Rosenberg, From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction, (London, 1961), p. 160
9. See 'Der Markoni Skandal' in Peter Aldag, Das Judentum in England, (Berlin, 1943), pp. 400-413
10. Colin Cross, The Fascists in Britain, (London, 1961), p. 120
11. See, for instance, Norman Cohn, Warrant for Genocide, (London, 1967 - Pelican edition, 1970), pp. 164-172
12. John A. Garrard, The English and Immigration: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Influx, 1880-1910, (London, 1971)
13. Bernard Gainer, The Alien Invasion: The Origins of the Aliens Act of 1905, (London, 1972)
14. See the optimistic statements made by Albert Hyamson, 'Anti-Semitism', in L. Sacher (ed.), Zionism and the Jewish Future, (London, 1916), p. 86
15. Edward H. Flannery, The Anguish of the Jews: 23 Centuries of Anti-Semitism, (New York, 1965), pp. 193-4
16. J.H. Robb, Working Class Anti-Semite: A Psychological Study in a London Borough, (London, 1954), p. 210. See also Lucy Davidowicz, 'Can Anti-Semitism be measured?', Commentary, July 1970, pp. 36-43
17. Robert Brown, Rules and Laws in Sociology, (London, 1973), pp. 8-9
18. Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 9
19. Ibid.
20. W.J.H. Sprott, 'Introduction', in Robb, op. cit., p. v

21. Robb, op. cit., p. 11

CHAPTER 1

AN OUTLINE OF THE SCANDAL

The story of the Marconi Scandal begins with Guglielmo Marconi's experiments in wireless telegraphy in his native Italy in the last decade of the nineteenth century. When these experiments began to show some promise, his father gave him full support, and his mother wrote long letters to her influential relatives in Ireland. She was the daughter of Andrew Jameson, a well-known Irish whisky distiller, and, as a result of her activities, Marconi was able to come to England in 1896 to further his scientific investigations.² According to Crowther, Marconi's aim from the first was to acquire a monopoly of wireless, patenting everything possible. 'His mother's connection helped him to secure financial support for founding the first wireless company in 1897'.³ The Italian government had shown little interest in his ideas, but shortly after the arrival in England, he was arranging practical demonstrations for the British War Office and the Navy. The potential of wireless was already clear. 'An obvious application for wireless telegraphy lay in the bridging of narrow stretches of water, as an alternative to submarine cables, which were expensive and, in busy seaways, extremely vulnerable; at Plymouth one particular cable was severed four times in four months'.⁴

So, in July 1897, the English Marconi Company was founded. The initial capital was to be £100,000 in £1 shares; 60,000 going to Marconi himself and the remaining 40,000 being put on the market for public subscription. Without going too deeply into the history of the development of the company,⁵ it is important to note the amount of important research undertaken in the following few years. By December 1901, Marconi had succeeded in sending wireless waves across the Atlantic, a feat generally believed to have been impossible.⁶ The need to translate his theories into practical application had meant a large financial outlay for demonstrations, the construction of wireless stations and new equipment. Initially, there was very little financial reward. 'By 1900, the Marconi Company was able to offer a

system that was, within limits, technically viable. Its financial position, however, was less healthy; although its one pound shares had on occasions been quoted at six pounds, virtually no order had been received'.⁷ Thus, the idea of the Atlantic communication was the breakthrough planned to make a real impact upon the public. It was for this purpose that the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America was registered in 1899. After the success of December 1901, the American company went public, in order to profit from this new advance.

By 1906, the English Company felt that sufficient progress had been made in technical achievements for a proposal to be submitted to the British Colonial office. This was a plan for an Imperial Wireless Scheme, linking the mother country with its Dominions by means of wireless stations at thousand mile intervals. The idea was too radical for the government, who rejected it. This was a serious blow for the company, which was now faced with a rival in the shape of the Telefunken system, which had the financial support of the German government, and Geddes refers to the policy of jamming operated by these two companies.⁸ The Marconi Company was unable to transform its technical achievements into financial success. The main factory at Dalston had to be closed down. There had been relatively little profit in manufacturing wireless equipment, and, in order to survive, the company had undertaken the mass production of ignition coils for cars. However, a recession in the motor industry meant no more orders for coils, and, in a rationalisation policy, the main works were axed.⁹

In an attempt to produce vital liquid capital, a quarter of a million preference shares at £1 were put on the market, but Marconi, who always identified himself very closely with company policy, ran into further problems. Through resignations, he was forced to take over the managing directorship of the company. This involved him in the business aspects of the Company, as well as the scientific experimentation, and he found this extra responsibility very burdensome. On the Stock Exchange, the £1 shares

had dropped to 6s.3d. and Marconi began to look around for an experienced businessman to take over the managing directorship and stabilise the company's financial situation. This would allow Marconi to devote himself to the necessary research and development needed to keep pace with possible competitors. He was recommended, by his brother-in-law, Donough O'Brien, to consider Godfrey Isaacs, a very young but fairly experienced businessman and brother of Rufus Isaacs, at that time Liberal MP for Reading, but soon to become Solicitor-General.¹⁰ They met in the autumn of 1909, and Marconi was impressed by Isaacs, chiefly because of his City connections, and his influence with finance houses in London and Europe.¹¹ After several meetings, Isaacs agreed to become joint managing director with Marconi for a trial period of six months. This decision appears to have been the turning point in the fortunes of the Marconi Company.

On 7 March 1910, a few weeks after his initial appointment, Isaacs wrote to the Colonial Office, suggesting once again the idea of an Imperial Wireless chain. The proposal was that the British government should give the company twenty year licences for a chain of eighteen stations throughout the Empire - run by the company but giving preferential terms to the government. The Colonial Office did not reply to the suggestion. Isaacs, however, was a persistent man, and wrote again. This time he was told that his suggestion would be considered at the Imperial Conference the following year. In August 1910, Isaacs' trial period came to an end, and believing that he could make a success of the job, he became sole managing director.

There is little doubt that Isaacs' contribution to the development of the company was crucial. Although Donaldson claims that there was little in his past to suggest that he would be a success,¹² he undoubtedly blossomed into a very astute and businesslike manager. Recent studies have praised his 'brilliantly successful appointment', describing him as 'vigorous, agile and enterprising in business',¹⁴ and commented upon the long term impact of his 'imaginative aggressive policies',¹⁵ on the company. By the end of 1912,

his achievements were considerable.

'He set out first to consolidate the Company's hold on the key wireless patents. Then he sought to increase turnover by offering new technical services, by using aggressive salesmanship to capture business from rivals in established markets, and by building up the financial interest of the parent company in associate companies abroad'.¹⁶

As part of its determined policy, he pursued the question of the Imperial scheme and pressed the government for a decision. In a letter of January 1911, he mentioned the threat that could be posed by a German wireless chain, using the Telefunken process, and emphasised the importance of being first in establishing a network of this nature. Largely due to his persistence, the matter was referred to the Cables (Landing Rights) Committee, the most relevant body constituted at that particular time. He rejected the idea of a privately-run Imperial chain of stations and suggested that a state owned system, to be built by the Marconi Company, would be a better idea. That summer, the matter was referred from one committee to another - in May it was the Imperial Wireless Conference; in June, a sub-committee of the Committee for Imperial Defence. Each committee added its own recommendations, stressed the urgency of the situation, and then delegated it to someone else for another opinion. In spite of this, in the autumn of 1911, serious talks had begun between the Post Office and the Marconi Company. These negotiations were protracted, and many difficulties arose over such matters as the payment of royalties, the estimated cost of the stations, patent rights and how much should be paid for the total project. After months of discussion and haggling, a preliminary agreement was signed on 7 March 1912, although the actual contract was not drawn up and signed until 19 July, and even this had to be ratified by Parliament before work could begin.

However, having virtually concluded the dealings with the English government in March 1912, Godfrey Isaacs set off for New York, with Marconi, ostensibly for a legal action against the American Marconi Company's chief rival, the United Wireless Company of America, over a question of patent

infringements. Whilst they had been busy with negotiations for the Imperial scheme, news had reached them from the United States that United Wireless was in serious trouble. Some of the directors had been imprisoned for fraud and it seemed likely that the company would go into liquidation. If the intention was to eliminate their rival, then the American company would have to act quickly. All bargaining on behalf of United Wireless had been taken over by a group of shareholders,¹⁷ who might well have been able to re-establish a viable company.

Thus, one of the aims of the trip to America was to obtain the assets of United Wireless. Some indication of this intention is given by the fact that, accompanying Isaacs and Marconi, was Percy Heybourn, a partner in the firm of Heybourn and Croft, leading jobbers in Marconi shares. If the United Wireless assets were obtained, or made available, they would be of benefit only if the working capital of the American Marconi Company could be increased to use the new assets productively. It is fairly obvious that an injection of capital, through a new issue of shares, had been planned for the American company, before Isaacs and Marconi undertook their journey. Heybourn's presence would enable these new shares to be distributed more easily, since he had previous experience of Marconi shares and some concept of the potential that existed for such stock.

On their arrival in New York, Isaacs and Marconi discovered that a banquet had been arranged in their honour by the New York Times. At this function, messages from distinguished personalities in England were received at the top table by a Marconi apparatus. One of the messages came from Godfrey's brother, Rufus. In general, these messages were simple and flattering, congratulating Marconi on his achievements. The text of the Attorney-General's tribute was:

'Please congratulate Marconi and my brother on the successful development of a marvellous enterprise. I wish them all success in New York and hope by the time they come back the coal strike will be finished'.¹⁸

Rufus Isaacs was later to defend his statements as being just as meaningless as the rest of the messages, but it became one of the incriminating pieces of evidence in the minds of those who felt there was a conspiracy between him, his brother Godfrey, and the Postmaster-General, Herbert Samuel. Since all three were Jewish, a conspiracy theory was created. The message was interpreted as a reference to the recent agreement that had been signed by the Post Office. There were even suggestions that the reference to the coal strike was some kind of code, and that secret messages were being passed between the conspirators.¹⁹

Marconi's business in America went as had been anticipated. The assets of United Wireless were acquired and, in order to pay for these, and put them to full use, the capital of the American Marconi Company was increased from 1,600,000 dollars to 10,000,000. To pay United Wireless, 1,400,000 dollars of this new issue would cover the acquisition of the assets, leaving 7,000,000 dollars to be used for expansion plans. The extent of this expansion programme was considered by many to be rather hasty, and some experts considered that the company was over-capitalised.²⁰

There was also a problem of ensuring that the shares would be taken up. The demise of United Wireless had created an uneasy impression with the American public, and those involved in stocks and shares were uneasy about dealing in wireless. Added to this was the fact that the American Marconi Company 'had never paid any dividend and its shares stood at a heavy discount'.²¹ The directors of American Marconi insisted that, before they would agree to the increase in capital, the English company should guarantee the 'whole amount to be subscribed'.²²

Marconi was apparently reluctant to take on this financial burden and insisted that Godfrey Isaacs should be personally responsible for 500,000 of the 1,400,000 new shares at 5 dollars each, the English company guaranteeing the balance of 900,000.²³ Godfrey immediately negotiated with Heybourn that the jobber should underwrite 250,000 of these shares at par value of five

dollars (21s3d), on condition that he introduce them to leading dealers in New York and London at no more than 25s. Isaacs placed 150,000 himself with bankers and brokers in the States before he left, which meant he had 100,000 to distribute personally on his return to England.²⁴ However, before leaving, Godfrey concluded another decisive business deal. An agreement was made whereby the Western Union Telegraph and Cable Company agreed to give all Marconi wireless messages preferential rates for internal delivery. This was a major saving, since the alternative would have been to establish their own system in opposition to Western Union.²⁵ The time spent in the States was an important period in the development of the company.

Godfrey returned to England on 8 April, and, the following day he lunched with his brothers, Rufus and Harry.²⁶ Both were given a chance of some of the American Marconi shares that Godfrey had at his disposal, offered at the par value of 21s3d. Rufus was cautious because of his position in the government,²⁷ not particularly wishing to deal with his brother, who was still technically negotiating for a contract with the Post Office. He was anxious about the relationship between the English and American companies, in case it might be thought that the purchase of American shares was the same as buying the shares of the English company. This would have meant that, as a member of the government, he was buying the shares of a government-contracted company and receiving favours from the head of the firm. Although this was not strictly illegal, it was contrary to parliamentary behaviour, and would have forced Isaacs to resign. Godfrey reassured his brother that the American Company held no shares in the English firm, and therefore could not benefit from the government contract, but Rufus decided that he ought not to deal with his brother, for the sake of appearances. Harry, who had no official position, and no need to question the relationship of the companies, bought 10,000 shares at par; later in the day, he acquired another 6,000 for his wife and her relatives.²⁸

Although the share dealings mentioned above were private placements, since the official market in the new issue of American Marconi did not open until 19 April, there was a tremendous general rise in Marconi stock. The preliminary agreement of 7 March between the English company and the Post Office had been published by the company, and share prices soared. 'After remaining quiet for a few days, the market in Marconi shares burst out into fresh activity, and prices were carried mainly upward. The advance on the work is substantial'.²⁹

'There is simply no holding the Marconi market. It has got into strong hands, and the buying is said to be of a very substantial character The ordinary and preference shares are about 15s. higher compared with last week. Canadian and Spanish Marconi issues have also been very lively'³⁰

By the middle of April, the price of shares had risen even higher. 'The gamble in Marconis has gone on with tremendous vigour, and while Canadians have hung fire the shares of the parent company have touched new high records'.³¹

'Buying of Marconi shares went on at a furious pace, and liberal profit-taking scarcely checked the rise, even temporarily. The American company, which is now controlled by the English concern, is supposed to have a big deal on hand which will give it control of practically all the wireless business in the United States, and fabulous dividends will be forthcoming right from the start. The ordinary and preference shares have each risen about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ '.³²

American Marconis rose way above par, despite the fact that they had not yet officially appeared on the market, whilst the English shares reached a high point of over £9.³³ One of the reasons for this sudden rise, apart from the government contract, was the Titanic disaster of 14 April. In a summary of some Stock Exchange gambles of 1912, one writer suggested that the disaster 'seemed to advertise the commercial possibilities of the Marconi system' and 'gave a fillip to the movement (of the share price), which was based originally on the important foreign contracts entered into by the company'.³⁴ Those who survived the shipwreck almost certainly owed their lives to the presence of a wireless telegraph on board the ship, a fact that impressed a great many British investors.

When Rufus met his brother Harry again, on 17 April, he was told of the increase in the price of the American shares, which were now at £2, though still as yet not on the open market. Harry was convinced that they were an excellent investment, and this time Rufus seemed to agree with the suggestion that he himself should purchase some shares. He bought 10,000, justifying these dealings by claiming that since he was buying from Harry, he could not be accused of taking favours from a government contractor. To emphasise this point, he paid the full £2 per share, although Harry offered them at par. Thus, he felt, it could not be claimed that he was taking advantage of Godfrey's generosity the previous week.

That same night, Rufus gave two of his close friends a chance to participate in his investment. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Alec Murray, the Liberal Chief Whip, were offered a thousand shares each, at £2. Since the shares were not yet fully in existence, Isaacs simply said that they would each take a tenth of his investment, and settle at a future date. Lloyd George and Murray were pleased to take advantage of this offer.

All the Marconi shares continued to rise, and by the time the market in American Marconi was officially opened, the unofficial price was 65s, three times par value. Prospective buyers were very lucky to obtain any shares unless they had a broker who received preferential treatment from Heybourn, and even then applications were scaled down.³⁶ Rufus Isaacs' brokers advised him on 19 April, the opening day, to sell his shares, believing that the price was artificially high and that there would be a subsequent slump. He agreed to sell half his stock, as did Lloyd George and Murray, obtaining an average price of 70s. Lloyd George and Murray reinvested in a further 3,000 at a later date. However, such was the volatile nature of the Marconi market, that, by the time Lloyd George and Isaacs appeared before the Select Committee (March 1913) they had, along with Murray, made a net loss on their transactions.

It was these transactions which formed the basis of the subsequent 'Scandal'. Confused and confusing rumours had begun to circulate around the agreement for an Imperial Wireless Chain. From a host of gossip, two themes seemed to emerge. The first was that the Attorney-General had been persuaded by his brother Godfrey to influence the negotiations for the contract. In addition, the Postmaster General, Herbert Samuel, had helped in this conspiracy to give the contract to the Marconi company, all three being Jews. The second point was that some government ministers, most often named as Lloyd George, Rufus Isaacs and Herbert Samuel, had been buying Marconi shares³⁷ at a low price, and selling them at the height of the boom, thus making huge profits. They were able to do this because of the confidential information they had about the forthcoming contract and the effect of its announcement on share prices. The situation was not improved by the strange reticence of the Postmaster-General in publishing details of the agreement. The day after the preliminary agreement had been signed in March, the Marconi Company brought out a circular with details of the tender. This was publicised widely, and yet the Post Office made no comment whatsoever, even although the Marconi circular omitted a certain clause to give the agreement an even more presentable appearance on this point.³⁸ The Post Office insisted that the contract had not yet been signed, and that there were still terms to be arranged, promising to provide information once this had been done.

The Post Office had some justification for taking this stand. There was a certain amount of inter-departmental wrangling long after 7 March. The Admiralty wanted more concessions from the company, the War Office was not happy about some details, and it was not until 19 July that the final contract was drawn up and signed. Samuel refused to answer any questions in the House until all negotiations had been completed.³⁹ Whether or not this attitude was correct procedure, it did help to create an uneasy atmosphere. If the Marconi Company were so eager to give details, why was the government anxious not to do so? What was there to hide? Perhaps the agreement was not a good

bargain for the government? No other tenders had been invited, as was usual with government contracts. The Post Office experts had maintained that only Marconi was capable of transmitting the required distances with any reliability. Could it be that there was a real basis of fact to all the rumours of corruption?

By July, many of these rumours had been put into print. What seems to have been the first article appeared in The Outlook, and was written by William Ramage Lawson. Lawson was a financial writer of some repute, having been, at one time, editor of the Financial Times. He had had a long journalistic career, and described himself to the Select Committee as 'a writer on Finance and Economics'. He had been following the question of an Imperial wireless scheme very closely, and in July, the editor of The Outlook asked him to contribute his criticisms of the contract. This article led to others, and aroused the interest of amongst others, Leo Maxse, owner and editor of the National Review. Maxse asked Lawson to summarise his arguments against the contract, and to comment on subsequent developments. The phrase 'Marconi Scandal', however, was coined by another journal, The Eye-Witness. This paper was founded in 1911 by Hilaire Belloc, largely to oppose what he felt was the corruption of party politics at that time.⁴⁰ Cecil Chesterton, younger brother of G.K. Chesterton, worked with Belloc and became editor in succession to him just before the first article on the Marconi Scandal was published. It was this piece, in August 1912, which coined the phrase 'Marconi Scandal'.

'What progress is the Marconi Scandal making? We ask the question merely from curiosity and under no illusion as to the inevitable end of the affair. Everybody knows the record of Isaacs and his father, and his uncle, and in general of the whole family. Isaac's brother is chairman of the Marconi Company, it has therefore been secretly arranged between Isaacs and Samuel that the British people shall give the Marconi Company a very large sum of money through the agency of the said Samuel, and for the benefit of the said Isaacs. Incidentally the monopoly that is to be granted to Isaacs no.2, through the ardent charity of Isaacs no.1 and his colleague the Postmaster-General, is a monopoly involving antiquated methods, the refusal of competing tenders far cheaper and far more efficient, and the saddling of the country with corruptly purchased goods...'.⁴¹

This article shows the development of a conspiracy theory, as mentioned previously, and clearly contains libellous statements against both Isaacs brothers and Herbert Samuel. Rather surprisingly, the politicians involved chose not to sue the journal. The question was contemplated, but Asquith suggested that 'a prosecution would secure notoriety and might bring in subscribers'.⁴² The Prime Minister was anxious not to bring about too much adverse publicity in what were difficult times for the Liberal party.

At this time, Parliament was in recess. The contract had come up before the Commons for ratification early in August, but had been referred till the next session. Opposition to the contract was very strong, and Samuel was forced to abandon the attempt to have ratification by the end of the summer session. The Liberal party had to agree in principle to investigation of the matter by a Select Committee, and to a debate in October when the new parliamentary session began. The rumours had reached the ears of many MPs, and the subsequent opposition was another blow to the establishment of the Imperial chain.

In the October debate, Isaacs, Samuel and Lloyd George all denied that the contract had been given to the Marconi company as the result of any conspiracy or corruption. They also denied holding any shares in the English Marconi Company. However, they were somewhat precise in the phraseology of their denial. Reference was made to 'this' company, 'that' firm, which meant they avoided any mention of the fact that they did hold, in the case of Isaacs and Lloyd George, American Marconi shares.⁴³ Both Asquith and Samuel were aware of the ministers' dealings in American Marconis, but said nothing and took a similar attitude i.e. that American Marconi shares had nothing to do with English Marconis. Although the Ministers later expressed a degree of regret that they had not revealed their holdings at this particular time, they maintained that this had been done simply to prevent any confusion in the October debate. Sir John Simon, who became Solicitor General in 1910 when Isaacs was made Attorney General, described Isaacs' attitude on the question.

'Isaacs told me of the American shares immediately after he had made his disclaimer in the House and I begged him to make a supplementary statement next day. His answer was that the actual transaction was irrelevant, for the American company was entirely independent financially, and "there are others in this besides myself"'.⁴⁴

In spite of this rationalisation, it seems likely that the decision not to mention American Marconis in October saved the political careers of Lloyd George and Rufus Isaacs. Donaldson is of the opinion, as are most other historians of the period, that both men would probably have been forced to resign if they had given full statements in the October debate.⁴⁵ However, given the circumstances outlined in the following two chapters of this study, the strength of the parliamentary Liberal party and particularly the support of the ministers by Asquith, this seems unlikely. If the ministers were not forced to resign by the revelations of the Le Matin trial and subsequent events, a full statement, with regrets and apologies, in October 1912 could hardly have been more damning. External pressures would have been the same; given Asquith's determination not to accept their resignations, the ministers' position would have been safe, albeit uncomfortable. The resulting motion from the debate led to the formation of a Select Committee to investigate the circumstances surrounding the contract.⁴⁶ The majority of those selected for the Committee were lawyers, although George Faber and Sir Frederick Banbury had financial experience, Banbury being chairman of the Stock Exchange.⁴⁷ The first meeting of the Committee was on 23 October, and evidence was to be heard from 66 witnesses, lasting, in all, some seven months. A grand total of 29,276 questions were asked, many of them repeating a familiar pattern for the sake of some party point.

Until the end of January 1913, the Committee was concerned solely with the technical merits of the contract and the way in which the terms had been settled. Experts from the departments involved, the Admiralty, the Post Office, the War Office and others not linked to the government, gave their assessment of the negotiations. An interim report was produced at this

stage, calling for the establishment of a technical committee to examine thoroughly the existing wireless systems, including Marconi, to confirm the Post Office's claim that only this system could reliably carry out the requirements of an Imperial scheme.⁴⁸ The main reason for this technical committee was that claims for other systems had been made since the contract with Marconi had been signed in July 1912.⁴⁹ Four other systems, Goldschmidt, Poulsen, Galletti and Telefunken, were tested to check on any recent developments, but the committee came to a general conclusion that these claims were not justified, and that the Post Office had been right to assert that only Marconi could do the work.

Having deliberately chosen to hear the technical evidence first, the Select Committee then proceeded to examine the rumours of scandal and corruption which surrounded the contract. For this purpose, they began hearing evidence from journalists. Lawson was the first to be examined; in total, he was on the stand for seven days. The questioning was very precise and correct, pursued often to relentless lengths, especially by the Liberal members of the Committee, who held Lawson responsible for the creation of much of the hostility towards the contract.⁵⁰ By adopting such an approach, Lawson was made to retract many of his statements about the contract and allegations of corruption because he had no evidence. But this victory was also a rather seamy affair. Before the journalists had begun their evidence, Rufus Isaacs had taken the precaution of informing two Liberal members of the Committee, Falconer and Booth, of his dealings in American Marconis. The object of this was that the pair should steer away the journalistic evidence if it seemed to be nearing the thorny subject of ministerial share dealings.⁵¹ The information was given only to these two members of the Committee, and indeed, when the facts of the cover-up became known, led to the resignation of Harold Smith from the investigation.⁵²

Undoubtedly the pressure on Lloyd George and Rufus Isaacs was great. In January, they had gone to Asquith and offered their resignations, but he

had refused to accept them, although admitting that they had made an error of judgment in purchasing the shares and then concealing the deal.⁵³ In spite of this error, Asquith felt there was no slur on their honour as ministers, and was determined to defend them. The pressure was brought to a head and then relieved by the evidence of Maxse, editor of the National Review. The French financial journal, Le Matin, published a garbled version of Maxse's statements, giving the impression that the two ministers, Samuel and Isaacs were involved in corrupt share dealings in the English Marconi Company. Although an apology appeared shortly afterwards, the ministers decided to sue Le Matin for libel. The action was undefended, and when it was heard on 19 March 1913, the ministers appeared in the witness-stand to defend themselves. They had procured the services of two prominent Unionist opponents, F.E. Smith⁵⁴ and Sir Edward Carson,⁵⁵ as counsel. Although the case against the libel was proven, it was decided that Carson, as Isaacs' lawyer, should tell the story of the dealings in American Marconi shares. According to Herbert Samuel, this should have been the end of the affair.

'The case went very well in all respects, as we anticipated, and the newspaper apology could not have been more ample. The court was crowded to overflowing, largely with reporters, of whom there must have been forty or fifty; and inside there were fully ten newspaper photographers standing in a row, so that one could appreciate the feelings of a man stood up against a wall to face a platoon of soldiers at a military execution.

The statement about Rufus's and Lloyd George's American shares was received with equanimity, and although most of the posters of the evening papers are devoted to the case, only one, The Star, refers to that aspect of it, with a placard MARCONI LLOYD GEORGE SENSATION. They will have to pass through a somewhat unpleasant time for a few days, and it will then be forgotten'.⁵⁶

Samuel was, however, rather hasty in his judgment, for the morning papers the next day dwelt on the 'sensation' of Isaacs' and Lloyd George's shares, and it lasted more than a few days.

As a result of these revelations, Isaacs, Lloyd George and Samuel quickly appeared before the Select Committee to enlarge upon the outline of the dealings mentioned at the trial. Both Isaacs and Lloyd George allowed their bank

books to be inspected, in order to prove that they had had no other dealings in Marconi shares. Nothing untoward was discovered, and the Committee returned to the questioning of journalists and brokers and jobbers.

Meanwhile, another legal action was pending. As part of his general campaign against the Marconi agreement, Cecil Chesterton had been attacking Godfrey Isaacs in a series of articles in The New Witness.⁵⁷ These contained a detailed account of Isaacs' previous enterprises, none of which seemed to have been particularly successful. The title of one of these articles was 'Godfrey Isaacs: Ghastly Record'. Sandwichboard men bearing this legend paraded outside the House of Commons when the Select Committee was in session and outside Marconi headquarters in the Strand, selling copies of the journal. Godfrey Isaacs was naturally upset by this behaviour, especially as the articles suggested some discrepancies in the financial organisation of the companies he had been involved in. He gave notice of his intentions to sue Cecil Chesterton for criminal libel, proceedings which could have resulted in a prison sentence if Chesterton were to be found guilty.

This somewhat unusual step (the recent proceedings for criminal libel by Sir James Goldsmith against the editor and publishers of Private Eye were the first against a journalist for thirty years)⁵⁸ appears to have been taken by Isaacs as a punitive measure against Chesterton and with the aim of discouraging other potential critics. R.D. Muir, Isaacs' counsel, pointed out that a civil action would simply have resulted in the award of damages and Chesterton's retreat 'to the security of the Bankruptcy Court. It was not for libels such as these that civil proceedings were appropriate'.⁵⁹ The main justification for allowing criminal proceedings was undoubtedly the allegations of corruption at ministerial level. Under the 1888 Law of Libel Amendment Act, a libel could be considered serious enough for such an action if it raised an issue of vital public importance, as Chesterton's articles did.⁶⁰

The preliminary hearings were at Bow Street on 26 February, and it was decided that the case should go for jury trial. Isaacs v. Chesterton was delayed for some weeks because of Cecil Chesterton's ill-health and it was not until 27 May that the trial began at the Old Bailey. Carson and Smith appeared on behalf of Isaacs, maintaining a kind of continuity of the defence of the contract and its negotiations. Isaacs' case rested on the two main lines of libel, one concerning the companies that Isaacs had previously been concerned with, and the other with the allegation that Godfrey, Rufus and Herbert Samuel had entered into a corrupt bargain in the negotiations. The ministers involved gave evidence, and both Godfrey Isaacs and Cecil Chesterton were subjected to extensive cross-examination. The result was that Chesterton was found guilty on five of six counts, fined £100 and ordered to pay costs. Donaldson suggested that Chesterton withdrew many of his accusations during the course of the trial,⁶¹ but Chesterton's friends regarded the verdict as a moral victory, since they had expected a prison sentence, were he to be found guilty.⁶²

Hardly had this legal battle ended, when another shock revelation was brought to light. It was thought that the Select Committee had concluded its task, having heard all the necessary witnesses, but this was not to be. The new development involved Alec Murray's stockbroker, Charles Fenner, who had recently been declared bankrupt, and had fled from the country. An article in the Daily Express of 31 May 1913, headlined 'MYSTERY OF MISSING STOCKBROKER', suggested that this gentleman's books and accounts ought to be thoroughly investigated, since they contained some very interesting information on Marconi share dealings. Three days later, the Globe gave some further details, mentioning that Murray was involved in some way.⁶³ The Committee called before them Mr Solomon, trustee in bankruptcy of Fenner's estate, and it transpired that Murray, apart from his known private investments with Lloyd George, had bought 3,000 additional American Marconi shares for a trust fund. After some deliberation, it was established that this trust was for the Liberal Party funds. Murray had invested £9,000 of Liberal Party money in American Marconis,

but as he had retired from office in August 1912 due to ill-health, these investments were not revealed until this rather unfortunate bankruptcy. Murray had gone to South America, as an employee of Lord Cowdray,⁶⁴ and it seems to have been party policy, both for Liberals and Conservatives, that a Chief Whip's successor was not told of the previous office-holder's policy or investments.⁶⁵ Thus, Percy Illingworth, Murray's successor as Whip, found himself saddled with this rather undesirable burden. In addition, it was revealed that £30,000, entrusted to Fenner by Murray in his position as Chief Whip, had gone missing with the broker.⁶⁶

Telegrams were sent to South America by Sir Albert Spicer, the Select Committee chairman, requesting that Murray return to give evidence on these new findings, but he declined. He was on important business, and it would not be finished until July 1913 at the earliest.⁶⁷ When Murray eventually returned to England, early in 1914, he found that he still had to face an inquiry. Having been created Baron Murray of Elibank on his retirement from politics in August 1912, he was entitled to sit in the House of Lords and it was the Lords which produced another Select Committee. This was set up to investigate Murray's part in the Marconi Scandal, in March 1914, after a debate in which Murray had explained his dealings and offered his regrets at his actions. The Committee found him guilty of an error of judgment, but decided that there was no element of corruption involved.⁶⁸

The House of Commons Select Committee had to produce a report after hearing the evidence about Murray's dealings in American Marconis. The chairman, Sir Albert Spicer, began the process by drafting a document chiefly on behalf of the Liberal members of the Committee. By this time, the Committee had become hopelessly split into party factions. In opposition to the Spicer draft, Lord Robert Cecil and Leo Amery produced a minority report. However, despite the political differences, there were similarities in the two versions. The purchase of the shares was called 'indiscreet' and the ministers' lack of frankness in the October debate was 'regretted'. Their conduct was censured

by both reports, though the Cecil version was somewhat harsher than Spicer's.

The Cecil report concluded:

'We are of the opinion that the Attorney-General acted with grave impropriety in making an advantageous purchase of shares in the Marconi Company of America upon advice and information not then fully available to the public given to him by the managing director of the English Marconi Company, which was in the course of obtaining a contract of very great importance - a contract which even when concluded with the Government had to be ratified by the House of Commons. By doing so, he placed himself, however unwittingly, in a position in which his private interest, or sense of obligation, might easily have been in conflict with his public duty.

We think that the Chancellor and the then Chief Ministerial Whip, in taking over a portion of the Attorney-General's shares on the same advice and information are open to the same censure; and we hold this to be also true of the purchase of shares for the Liberal Party funds by the Chief Whip, so far as such purchase was due to the same advice and information'.⁶⁹

This Tory minority report was rejected by the Liberal/Labour/Nationalist majority of the Committee. Then, whilst discussing the details of the Chairman's report, so many amendments were put forward that the final version bore little resemblance to Spicer's initial draft. Falconer, one of the Liberal stalwarts on the Committee, was largely responsible for the final version, which became the official report, the language of which was considerably muted in comparison with the other two original drafts. The conclusion of the official version, provided a stark contrast to the criticisms of these earlier attempts.

'... all the Ministers concerned have acted throughout in the sincere belief that there was nothing in their action which would in any way conflict with their duty as Ministers of the Crown'.⁷⁰

The report was published on 13 June 1913, but 'such a blatantly whitewashing document could not be expected to satisfy the Conservative Opposition in the House of Commons'.⁷¹ A censure motion was immediately put down and a debate, lasting the best part of two days, took place on 18 and 19 June. After the introduction of the motion, Isaacs and Lloyd George made speeches, expressing some regret about the purchase of the shares. This regret was chiefly because such a sinister interpretation had been applied to the dealings, not really an admission of some indiscretion or worse. Finally, by virtue of their

parliamentary majority, the Liberals, along with the Irish Nationalists and the majority of Labour members, carried an amendment to the censure motion, acquitting the ministers of acting other than in good faith, and declaring the charges of corruption to have been proved totally false.⁷² Thus, their parliamentary integrity was officially preserved, if in a rather battered condition.

There was also several extra-parliamentary events which helped to conclude the story of the Marconi Scandal. Yet another inquiry, this time by the Stock Exchange, in November 1913, took place. The objective of the investigation was the flotation of American Marconi shares. Several firms of stockbrokers, and the jobbing firm of Heybourn and Croft appeared before the committee, and were questioned on several aspects of the share launching. The broking companies, which included the firm most involved in Marconi shares, Billett, Campbell and Grenfell, were acquitted of all charges, but Heybourn and Croft were suspended from dealing on the Stock Exchange for five years. They were found guilty of a breach of trust between themselves and the brokers who left orders with them.⁷³ The Stock Exchange verdict appeared somewhat vindictive to some observers. 'Doubtless the business was not beautiful, and the firm sinned, but it did not sin by acting in defiance of Stock Exchange habits'.⁷⁴ As Alan Jenkins points out, since the American Marconi shares were privately issued, company law at that time did not require the publication of a prospectus and 'dealing for allotment' was not illegal.⁷⁵ There had been many similar issues in the recent past and whilst there was general agreement on the financial press that new regulations should be drawn up, the feeling was that this particular case had been dealt with unfairly. The Investor's Review called it a 'cruel, not to say vengeful, punishment'.⁷⁶ and the Stockbroker asked for similar treatment for all offenders or for none.⁷⁷ Some Conservatives, however, interpreted the matter in a very different way. In one instance, the verdict was described as 'a vote of censure on the Government ... no plausible distinction can be drawn between the conduct of brokers and that of the late Attorney-General and the Chancellor of the Exchequer'.⁷⁸

Also, prompted perhaps by the suggestion of Justice Phillimore, the judge in the Isaacs v. Chesterton case, an action was brought against the Marconi Company officials, Heybourn and Croft, Harry Isaacs and the Company.⁷⁹ It was hoped that the profits made by Isaacs and Heybourn and others, over the issue of American Marconi shares, would be distributed amongst the shareholders of the English company, since these new American shares were legally in the possession of the English company, and therefore belonged to all shareholders.⁸⁰ The action seems to have had some political motive, since the writ was issued by Oliver Locker-Lampson, a Conservative M.P., and Peter Wright, a prominent Conservative outside the Commons. They both bought one share each in the English Company, later increasing their holdings to ten, in order that they might act on behalf of the shareholders.⁸¹ Despite delays due to problems of obtaining documentation for the case and an attempt by Isaacs to prevent the action in the autumn of 1915, it eventually came to court, with 'an array of advocates ... that made legal history'.⁸² The hearing had only just begun when it was announced that the matter had been settled out of court. Wright's account claims that Isaacs' solicitor offered a settlement and, after advice, he and his colleagues accepted. Although they still doubted Isaacs' explanations about the shares, they were prepared to overlook the discrepancies and agree to an amicable agreement. As Wright put it, they were prepared to sacrifice victory for the good of the country during time of war. The defence was to contribute £14,000 towards the prosecution's costs, a figure Wright claimed to be far short of actual expenses. Donaldson points out that it was Heybourn who footed the bill, an indication of who had made the profits on the launching of the American shares.⁸³

The original contract between the government and the Marconi Company, as drawn up in July 1912, was cancelled early in 1913, on the request of the company, because of the long delays due to the Select Committee investigations. A new contract was swiftly drawn up after this inquiry had ended, and was signed on 30 July 1913. A week later, it was ratified by parliament, in spite

of some protests. The terms of the contract were very similar to those proposed by the first agreement; the only significant change being in the choice of sites, since many stations had been built by other countries during the wrangling of 1912-13.⁸⁴ Work began almost immediately on construction of stations, but, on 30 December 1914, the contract was cancelled by the Post Office. The pressures of war forced the government to alter its priorities, and it took over the stations already in existence. The question of compensation for the company was set aside until after the war. Eventually, in 1919, the company sued the government, and was awarded compensation of £600,000.⁸⁵ After this, there was a great deal of discussion about the possibility of a new contract, but nothing definite could be decided. Donaldson suggests that Godfrey Isaacs had acquired an unsavoury reputation in the eyes of the Post Office as a result of the Scandal,⁸⁶ and therefore the major obstacle to negotiations was his presence as managing director of the Marconi Company. The company attribute the delay in the authorization of an Imperial chain to 'political indecision and bickering'.⁸⁷ There is, indeed, strong evidence that relations between the company and politicians were damaged to a very great extent. On hearing that the Ministry of Information, under Beaverbrook, planned to send as its South American representative, a man connected with the Marconi Company, Stanley Baldwin wrote to Beaverbrook advising him against it.

'I know the House of Commons pretty well, and it would be a fatal error to employ anyone connected however remotely with the Company.

The House has for the time being swallowed up your business men, but they would throw this particular appointment up.

I know the feelings of the silent men as well as the vocal'.⁸⁸

Similarly, Jimmy Thomas recalled that, in 1924, as an M.P. in the first Labour government, he met Marconi, who complained that the Post Office were slow to take up his new inventions. Consequently, Thomas arranged a meeting between the two sides.

'It was painfully apparent that the relations between the Post Office and the Marconi Company were exceedingly strained at that time. Mr Godfrey Isaacs was the managing director of the Marconi Company, and so keenly did he feel that his own personality was influencing the Post Office in its antagonism that at the very first meeting he offered to resign so that Marconi's invention should be given a fair chance. The offer was immediately refused: ⁸⁹it was not the time to allow personal feelings to retard progress'.

Isaacs died in 1925, and by 1927, an agreement was reached with the Post Office for the Imperial scheme. This time the system was to be built by the company, but was owned by the government concerned.⁹⁰ Thus the company was reduced to virtually the status of building contractor. It had taken nearly twenty years to achieve the objective envisaged in the early pioneering days of the twentieth century, and whilst the Marconi Scandal has perhaps more important significance in other fields, such as political and social history, its impact on wireless development, as suggested in the company's own history, cannot be ignored. The 'political indecision and bickering' of the scandal retarded the growth of wireless significantly in these early years.

There were other consequences of the Scandal which deserve attention. British foreign policy was affected to some extent. Arthur Murray, brother of Lord Elibank, was private secretary to Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary - '... a fact which gave ample scope to American businessmen, politicians and officials who disliked Elibank's activities on behalf of Lord Cowdray in Latin America'.⁹¹ American commercial rivals could suggest that Cowdray's exploits were on behalf of the British government and that this was a breach of the Monroe doctrine. After all, had not Elibank recently been part of a British government scandal involving the alleged dictation of national policy by a commercial company? Could it not be that Cowdray was seeking to do the same for British foreign policy?⁹²

The Marconi affair was also a domestic political weapon, which could be used by opponents of the Liberal government for some time after the matter had died away. Some Conservative journals made certain that this was done.

'The noisome fog of the Marconi affair stifles and poisons the entire political atmosphere. So it will and must continue to do till a General

Election sweeps out of office the men who have been responsible for this deplorable chapter of Ministerial impropriety and default'.⁹³ Many journals and Conservative politicians continued to make great play of the Liberal Party's involvement in the Scandal long after 1913. It was even used by Liberals when the party split into Asquith and Lloyd George factions in 1916. Thus, Lord Fisher, an Asquithian Liberal, could criticise Lloyd George's appointment as War Minister by referring to the affair.

'Lloyd George's incursions into the military sphere seemed to Esher to be blatantly political. He brought an entourage which was known as the "Marconi gang" - headed by Lord Reading and Godfrey Isaacs, with Murray of Elibank. He breakfasted with newspaper men, posed for their cameras on dugouts eating bully beef, and turned up late for appointments with numbers of followers too large for his hosts' tables'.⁹⁴

Esher's war journals, in fact, contain much evidence of his hostility to Lloyd George and the 'Marconi gang'. An entry for 17 September 1916 referred to the Welshman as a 'clever political adventurer', surrounded by satellites such as Lord Reading, 'who lowers the dignity, authority and status of the great office he holds by dabbling in finance and politics, Murray of Elibank, whose reputation for honest dealing is more than doubtful and lesser lights of equally questionable character'.⁹⁵

Perhaps the man who came in for the most harsh treatment was Sir Rufus Isaacs. His appointment as Lord Chief Justice in October 1913 produced a great outcry, not the least from Rudyard Kipling, whose poem Gehazi, directed at Isaacs, was so full of venom that his executors refused permission for Lady Donaldson to quote it.⁹⁶ He found himself the centre of a campaign in the Financial News during the war which focused on the Marconi Scandal as the major cause of Germany's access to British classified information. The journal's investigation of the 'Unseen Hand' led them to point the finger at Rufus Isaacs as the key figure of German influence in Britain.

'We ourselves, at the end of last year, conjectured that the source of the "influences" was a German "hold" over somebody high up. We pointed to the unexplored recesses of the Marconi case, and to the undeniable fact that some very big man - of course, a politician - operated in English Marconis, on a gigantic scale, via Hamburg. Further discreet investigation and consideration leaves us in little doubt that the German Government know the identity, and that a career can be destroyed by a disclosure. It would be superfluous to say more That is the price which (on this hypothesis, and we have the minimum of dubiety about its soundness) we shall pay for the "influential" secrecy which made the Marconi inquiry abortive by concealing some of the most damning facts and thereby putting a magnificent weapon of war in the hands of Germany'.⁹⁷

Peter Wright, who had been involved in the action against the Marconi Company, was in constant correspondence with H.A. Gwynne, editor of the Morning Post, from late 1917 onwards over the possibility of a strong campaign against Rufus Isaacs because of his involvement in the Marconi Scandal. It was not until January 1919 that the paper finally decided that a libel action, based on Wright's accusations in a letter of September 1917, could not be defended and so decided to abandon this particular angle of possible attack.⁹⁸

Indeed, practically every new appointment taken up by Isaacs in the years after 1914 found him forcefully reminded of the Scandal and his activities in the affair. When it was announced that he was to be a British delegate to the Peace Conference following the war, G.K. Chesterton wrote his Open Letter to Lord Reading, which revealed all the hatred that had built up over the years.⁹⁹ It also saw the launching of a body called 'The Society for Upholding Political Honour', whose propaganda was directed against Isaacs.¹⁰⁰ The Financial News was closely involved in its activities, giving publicity to the campaign, and there were reports that mass meetings were to be held early in 1919 to demand that Lloyd George should confine British representation to British blood, free from German taint, an obvious reference to Isaacs.¹⁰¹ When news of his appointment as Viceroy for India became known in January 1921, the attacks were renewed in many journals. For example, Gwynne sought information on Isaacs' 'murky' past from Powell of the Financial News in order to make his campaign more effective.¹⁰²

Vendettas against the Marconi Company also included Isaacs in the target material. J.W. Hamilton, an ex-employee of the firm, who was sacked in a reorganisation in 1913, largely for taking on other work as a representative for the 'Kinnecott Water Softener and Purifier', sought damages for breach of contract and loss of commission.¹⁰³ This was followed by a long drawn out wrangle against the Marconi Company, waged at great expense since it involved circularising members of parliament and the press with details of his grievances and his general complaints about the Scandal.¹⁰⁴ He was the author of a pamphlet entitled The Marconi Scandal, published in 1921¹⁰⁵ and in 1923, he circularised shareholders, seeking proxy votes which he could use to attack Godfrey Isaacs for fraud and misappropriation of funds.¹⁰⁶ The Company also had to face attacks from across the Atlantic. Hugh Bauerlein, from Denver, Colorado, was a persistent pamphleteer, basing his arguments on the assertion that the Marconi Company had stolen the assets of United Wireless back in 1912.¹⁰⁷ All these campaigners used the material produced in the Financial News, which is described in the following chapters. Their persistence meant that publicity about the Scandal and those involved survived well into the 1920s.

Thus the Scandal fulfilled a number of roles. It enabled disgruntled individuals to extend publicity of their grievances. It provided political ammunition both for individuals and for groups. A launching-pad was provided for the expression of anti-semitism, particularly in relation to the conspiracy theories which developed during and after the First World War. But its immediate impact, in the years 1911-1914, has been glossed over, given superficial coverage, and little thorough investigation has been carried out since Donaldson's study. We need to know more about the affair, how it gained so much publicity, who was involved and why it developed in the way that it did. To have a better understanding of its relevance, we need to ask more and better questions.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 1

1. This narrative of events relies heavily on the texts of major secondary works, since its purpose is merely to outline the events of the Marconi Scandal and its ramifications. The most important study is Frances Donaldson, op.cit. Other substantive accounts can be found in H. Montgomery Hyde, Lord Reading, The Life of Rufus Isaacs, First Marquess of Reading (London, 1967) and W.P. Jolly, Marconi (London, 1972).
2. J.G. Crowther, 'Guglielmo Marconi', New Scientist, 25 April 1974, pp.166-7. The two most recent biographies of Marconi are Keith Geddes, Guglielmo Marconi: 1874-1937 (London, 1974) and the full-scale work of W.P. Jolly, op.cit. Other works on the life of Marconi include Norman Wymer, Guglielmo Marconi (printed and published by the Marconi Company Limited, Chelmsford, Essex).
3. Crowther, New Scientist, p.168.
4. Geddes, op.cit., p.9.
5. For details see Jolly, op.cit.
6. 'For some time prior to 1901 Marconi's wireless experimenting had shown him that the wireless waves were reaching further than theory predicted. This was because of the existence of ionised layers encircling the earth which act as a kind of radio mirror, reflecting the signals to follow the earth's curvature. Neither Marconi nor anyone else knew of the existence of the layers at the time: in fact their physical existence was not thoroughly proven until as recently as the 1920s. But Marconi had found that the waves were not radiating tangentially into space at the horizon, and that, for the moment, was enough', W.J. Baker, Message Communication (Chelmsford, by the Marconi Co. Ltd.). N.B. This pamphlet is a reprint of three articles which appeared in The Standard Bank Review, October-December 1969.
7. Geddes, op.cit., p.14.
8. Ibid., p.23.
9. W.J. Baker, A History of the Marconi Company (London, 1970), p.147.
10. Hyde, op.cit., p.122.
11. Jolly, op.cit., p.172.
12. Donaldson, op.cit., p.255.
13. Geddes, op.cit., p.28.
14. Jolly, op.cit., p.172.
15. Geddes, op.cit., p.28.
16. Jolly, op.cit., p.190.
17. See Donaldson, op.cit., p.272 for information in Lord Robert Cecil's Minority Report.

18. Reproduced in Hyde, op.cit., p.124.
19. Isaacs was questioned in the Select Committee hearings about the nature of the message. George Faber referred to the various interpretations put on the telegraphed sentiments, but Isaacs denied that they had any significance. He had merely sent a simple message, based on what concerned him at that time. He had been involved in attempts to settle the coal strike, and had simply padded out the message with this particular reference. Proceedings of the Select Committee on the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, Limited Agreement Cd 152 (1913), Volume 2, p.15 (hereafter S.C.).
20. Rufus Isaacs' initial reaction to Godfrey's offer of American Marconi shares in April 1912 was refusal, partly because he believed that the additional \$ 7,000,000 was an excessive amount of capital for the American company.
S.C., volume 2, p.4.
Daly, one of Lloyd George's brokers, from the firm of Smith, Rice and Co., reported that there was much discussion on the Stock Exchange about American Marconis. He himself did not believe that they were a sound investment, because of over-capitalisation. (S.C., Volume 2, p.156). A senior partner of the firm, William George Rice, confirmed this viewpoint, although later evidence shows that he was not sufficiently aware of developments in America to make a reasoned judgment of the case. (S.C., Volume 2, p.201).
21. Hyde, op.cit., p.125.
22. Donaldson, op.cit., p.50. Hyde's account (op.cit.) suggests that the company only guaranteed the \$ 1,400,000 for the United Wireless assets, but Godfrey Isaacs' evidence to the Select Committee shows this was not the case.
23. Donaldson, op.cit., p.50.
24. This was entirely separate from any holdings that the English Marconi Company had in American Marconi shares. Since the new capitalisation scheme gave preference to old shareholders, and the English Company held a great number of these, the English Company ended up with about 1,200,000 of five dollar shares in the American Company, See S.C., Volume 2, evidence of Godfrey Isaacs.
25. Donaldson, op.cit., p.51.
26. In the Select Committee evidence, Harry was described as 'ship broker and fruit broker', and from his dealings, it was evident that he was a wealthy man, accustomed to playing the stock market and making profits as well as losses.
27. He had become Solicitor-General in March 1910, and Attorney-General in October of the same year.
28. Hyde, op.cit., p.126.
29. Investors' Review, 23 March 1912.
30. Ibid., 30 March 1912.
31. Truth, 17 April 1912.

32. Investors' Review, 13 April 1912.
33. See Appendix
34. Charles Duguid, 'The Stock Exchange in 1912', Daily Mail Yearbook 1913, p.247. See also Investors' Monthly Manual, May 1912.
35. Many of the financial experts summoned before the Select Committee claimed that the Titanic episode was the main reason for the rise in share prices, whilst opponents of the company alleged that it was 'cashing in' on the disaster.
36. 'The English Marconi shareholders were coolly done out of their prior rights to the new shares. The "shop" brokers who flattered themselves that they had got well in on the ground floor were at the last moment cut down to 15 per cent of their expected allotments', W.R. Lawson in The Outlook, 26 April 1913. See also evidence of Edmund Lombard Eves, member of Dublin Stock Exchange S.C., Volume 2, pp.359-375.
37. Most of the rumours simply referred to 'Marconi' shares; little distinction was made between the parent English company and its subsidiaries in other countries. Rufus Isaacs confessed that 'Marconi' was, to him, synonymous with the English company, until his brother offered him the American shares.
38. This was the celebrated clause 16, subject of much controversy, whereby the government ceased to pay royalties if they were no longer using Marconi patents in the Imperial chain of stations.
39. S.C., Volume 2, pp.127-8. Samuel listed the questions asked in the House and defended his reticence, again using the argument that the contract (as opposed to the preliminary agreement) could not be produced until it was signed. As soon as this was done, he maintained, it was laid before the House. As to the question of the Marconi circular, he claimed that he had not corrected it because he had not been asked to do so. He freely admitted (ibid., p.131) that he had not noticed the omission of clause 16 until some time after the appearance of the circular.
40. The financial backers of this project was Charles Granville, sole proprietor of the printing and publishing firm of Stephen Swift and Co. (For further biographical details, see Donaldson, op.cit., p.161). When questioned by Handel Booth about the foundation of The Eye-Witness, Granville was specific about its original purpose.
 'They say that the "Eye-Witness" was started in order to oppose the Employers Insurance Bill? It is not true. The general purpose, and that is the purpose in which I was in sympathy with Mr Belloc, was an attack upon the corruption of the Party system of government'. S.C., Volume 2, p.417, Q.8084.
41. The Eye-Witness, 8 August 1912.
42. Asquith to Rufus Isaacs, 15 August 1912, cited in Hyde, op.cit., p.132.

43. For example, part of Isaacs' speech on the accusation that he held English Marconi shares:-
 'Never, from the beginning, when the shares were 14s. of £9, have I had one single transaction with the shares of that company. I am not only speaking for myself, but I am also speaking on behalf, I know, of both my right hon. Friend, the Postmaster-General, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in some way or other, in some of the articles, have been brought into this matter'.
Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, Volume 42 (1912), Col 718.
44. Viscount Simon, Retrospect (London, 1952), p.91.
45. Donaldson, op.cit., p.250.
46. The composition of the Select Committee was in proportion to the strengths of the parliamentary parties and was as follows:-
- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| LIBERALS (6) | CONSERVATIVES (6) | IRISH NATIONALISTS (2) |
| Sir Albert Spicer (Chairman) | Lord Robert Cecil | William Redmond |
| James Falconer | Leo Amery | J.J. Mooney |
| Harold Booth | George Faber | |
| Gordon Harvey | Harold Smith | |
| Neil Primrose | D. MacMaster | LABOUR (1) |
| Sir Herbert Roberts | Henry Terrell | James Parker |
- Substitutions made were Sir Walter Essex for Primrose
 Sir Frederick Banbury for Smith
 J.G. Butcher for Terrell
47. Donaldson, op.cit., p.73.
48. The report from this committee, headed by Lord Parker, was produced in April 1913.
49. Beach Thompson, President of the Federal Wireless Company in America, gave evidence in November 1912 about the recent achievements of his company's modified Poulsen system in transmitting over 2,000 miles, the statutory test for the Imperial chain. S.C., Volume 1, pp.141-162. The report of the Parker Technical Committee showed that experts were not convinced of the effectiveness of the company's claim for this San Francisco-Honolulu link, although it confessed that there was little evidence either to support or to dismiss the assertion. In its conclusion, the report stated that, to that date, Marconi was the only proven system, although others had perhaps more potential. Since the Imperial scheme was supposed to be a matter of urgency, then the Marconi system ought to be adopted, although the terms of any contract ought to allow for the use of any future developments by other companies.
50. Falconer described Lawson as 'the gentleman who has stirred all this up' and announced his intention of testing every statement that the journalist had made on the topic. S.C., Volume 2, p.779. When Lawson complained about the harshness of the cross-examination, Falconer replied 'As I said before, I am not troubled by the protests but I am very anxious to get at the real facts'. S.C., Volume 2, p.810.
51. See Hyde, op.cit., p.138 and Donaldson, op.cit., pp.117-9.
52. Hyde, op.cit., p.138.

53. Hyde, op.cit., p.139. In spite of the protests by ministers that this was simply to allow them to make their "confessions" at the right moment, there is the possibility as The Outlook (7 June 1913) maintained, that if no evidence was forthcoming, the ministers would not have to make any revelations.
54. Conservative M.P. for Walton, later to become Lord Birkenhead.
55. Conservative M.P. for Dublin University, leading Ulster Unionist.
56. Samuel to his mother, 19 March 1913, Samuel Papers, A/156 435.
57. 'In October 1912 the financial backer of The Eye-Witness went bankrupt. Cecil Chesterton immediately went to his father and borrowed money to finance a new start. In November he issued the first number of the New Witness, with no break in continuity, although he had to leave the premises of The Eye-Witness and make shift in inconvenient and ill-equipped offices'. Donaldson, op.cit., p.72.
58. See Goldsmith v. Pressdram Ltd., (1976) 3 Weekly Law Reports 191.
59. The Times, 27 February 1913.
60. See Goldsmith v. Pressdram Ltd., op.cit.
61. Donaldson, op.cit., pp.185-9.
62. See, for example, Ada Chesterton, The Chestertons (London, 1941), p.111.
63. This is the basic account given by Donaldson, op.cit., p.191. The background to these press articles is referred to in Chapter 3, illustrating once again the lack of use of private papers by Donaldson, which makes her study rather lightweight.
64. Weetman Dickinson Pearson, b.1856, d.1927. Created baronet 1894. Liberal M.P. for Colchester 1895-1910. Created Baron Cowdray 1910. For details of his career as industrialist and politician, see J.A. Spencer, Weetman Pearson, First Viscount Cowdray, 1856-1927 (London, 1930).
65. The Conservatives may have thought of using this lack of information as a criticism of Liberal party policy, but a reply from Lord St. Audries, to a query from Bonar Law about Tory funds, scotched any prospect of so doing. St. Audries replied that he had been involved from 1902 onwards in the use of party funds, and that it was not policy to reveal to one's successor what investments one had made. Balfour, as leader of the party, St. Audries added, had never questioned him on where money came from. Lord St. Audries to Bonar Law, 18 June 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29.5.53.
66. Murray repaid in full the total sum of £40,000 which the party had lost, out of his own pocket, when he returned from South America. Donaldson, op.cit., p.235.
67. See text of telegram in S.C., Volume 2, p.546.
68. Donaldson, op.cit., p.232, refers to the 'rich language' of the proceedings, but says Murray was 'whitewashed' in much the same way as the other ministers had been, although he was found guilty of 'most unwise reticence'. (p.234).

69. From S.C., Volume 2, Appendices.
70. Ibid.
71. Hyde, op.cit., p.157.
72. The full text of the censure motion, which the parliamentary majority would not accept, was:-
 'That this House regrets the transactions of certain of His Majesty's Ministers in the shares of the Marconi Company of America, and the want of frankness displayed by Ministers in their communications on the subject to the House'.
 See Hyde, op.cit., p.158.
73. Donaldson, op.cit., pp.231-2.
74. Investors' Review, 15 November 1913. For full details of the judgment, see The Times, 12 November 1913.
75. Alan Jenkins, The Stock Exchange Story (London, 1973), p.132.
76. 15 November 1913.
77. 15 November 1913.
78. Our Flag, December 1913.
79. See announcement in The Times, 28 May 1913. The claim was for about one million pounds, the profit on the 500,000 American Marconi shares held by the English company.
80. See copy of the writ, Marconi Historical Archives, HIS 227.
81. Donaldson, op.cit., p.235.
82. Ibid. The account of the delays is contained in a letter from Wright to H.A. Gwynne, editor of the Morning Post, September 1917, Gwynne Papers, Box 1.
83. The account is from Wright to Gwynne, September 1917, op.cit., Donaldson, op.cit., p.235. Note that W.J. Baker, op.cit., p.147, is incorrect in stating a figure of £4,000 as the settlement.
84. Donaldson, op.cit., p.240.
85. Ibid. Cabinet discussions in 1914 show clearly the general reluctance of all departments to continue the construction of an Imperial chain and the various suggestions for suspending or breaking the contract. See memos from the Postmaster-General, Charles Hobhouse, Cab 37/121/105 and Cab 37/122/197.
86. Donaldson, op.cit., pp.243-6.
87. Some notes on the Marconi Company Limited (private publication of the Marconi company), p.2.
88. Baldwin to Beaverbrook, 7 August 1918, quoted in A.J.P. Taylor, Beaverbrook (London, 1972), p.155.

89. J.H. Thomas, My Story (London, 1937), pp.251-2.
90. Donaldson, op.cit., p.243.
91. Keith Robbins, Sir Edward Grey (London, 1971), p.279..
92. For full details and analysis of Elibank's activities in South America, see Peter Calvert, 'The Murray Contract: An Episode in International Finance and Diplomacy', Pacific Historical Review, Volume 35, No.2 (May 1966), pp.203-224. Note that, at the time, there were complaints about the harmful effects of the venture on British foreign relations (see The New Witness, 27 November 1913).
93. Our Flag, August 1913.
94. Peter Fraser, Lord Esher: a political biography (London, 1973), p.331.
95. Quoted in ibid.
96. Donaldson, op.cit., p.237. For reactions of another poet, Rupert Brooke, see the quotation in Jolly, op.cit., p.212.
97. Financial News, 25 May 1916. For further details of this campaign, see Chapter 2.
98. Gwynne to Wright, 2 January 1919, Gwynne Papers, Box 1. For full details of the lengthy correspondence about how, why and when to publish, see exchange of letters contained in Box 1.
99. See reproduction in Donaldson, op.cit., pp.256-9.
100. See correspondence between the leading light of the organisation, F.D. Fowler and St. Loe Strachey, editor of the Spectator, Strachey Papers, S/8/12/6.
101. Financial News, 23 December 1918. See later chapters for further details.
102. See correspondence and enclosures of January 1921, Gwynne Papers, Box 1. Note that the Morning Post's campaign was based on the fact that Isaacs was a Jew (Gerald Rufus Isaacs, 2nd Marquess of Reading, Rufus Isaacs, First Marquess of Reading: Volume 2, 1914-1935 (London, 1945), p.153).
103. For details see M.H.A., HIS 228.
104. For details of his rather one-sided correspondence with Lloyd George, Balfour et al., see letters and enclosures to Gwynne, 2 March 1921, Gwynne Papers, Box 1.
105. Copies in Gwynne Papers, Box 1, M.H.A., HIS 227. Hilary Blume 'A study of Anti-Semitic Groups in Britain, 1918-1940', thesis submitted for Ph.D. Sussex University, 1971, p.347, describes this pamphlet as anti-semitic but an examination of its contents does not bear this out. Blume notes the use made of the affair by the Britons, the anti-semitic publishing group. Lt. Commander H. MacLeod Fraser, one of the 'more prominent members' (p.84), was author of a 1922 pamphlet, Rufus Isaacs (Earl of Reading) and the Marconi Ramp (p.337).
106. M.H.A., HIS 227.
107. See pamphlet, Rotten to the core: Marconi Wireless stocks based on Private Property (1919), in ibid.

CHAPTER 2

ALLEGATIONS, RUMOUR AND CAMPAIGNS

Now that we have offered a descriptive account of the events of the Marconi Scandal, the following chapters will attempt to analyse and evaluate the affair. The standard account by Frances Donaldson does not achieve this satisfactorily, mainly because of its lack of depth in primary sources, particularly private papers and the press reaction. Some of Donaldson's comments reflect this rather shallow approach. She suggests that the Scandal is without 'much historical interest'.¹ Compared to the Great War, or the collapse of the Roman Empire, this may be true, but in context the Scandal is an illuminating case-study. Donaldson sees its significance, or rather lack of significance, in the effect on standards of public behaviour. Without 'Marconi' 'the rules that govern public life would be much as they are'.² However, as mentioned in the introduction, events in the 1970s have re-focused attention on the Marconi Scandal, and Donaldson's verdict seems possibly too hasty.

In addition, her view of the term 'historical significance' is a very narrow one. One of the aims of a case-study is to suggest that an event is representative of broader themes. Only by examining the circumstances of the Scandal in detail can we attempt to establish its wider significance. For example, the main contention of this thesis is that the Scandal has much to say about the nature of British anti-semitism in this period. But before turning to this, there are other political aspects which deserve attention.

The purpose of these particular chapters is to build upon the foundations laid by Donaldson, and to ask questions not previously answered (in some cases, not yet asked). After a brief consideration of the short-term political effects of the incident, there will be a study of the background to the accusations of corruption and an attempt to identify that largely anonymous group, 'the opposition'. In addition, there are more general political questions posed by

the Scandal. As Donaldson has pointed out, it symbolised 'a time of political emotions with no comparison in modern history. The ill-temper of the Opposition who believed in their inherent right to rule was equalled only by the invective used and the storms that regularly took place in the House of Commons.'³ Just how far this atmosphere contributed to the Scandal and exactly how it functioned has never been spelt out, and it is the major role of these chapters to assess this.

Naturally, the Scandal was a useful stick with which to beat the Liberal Party. In later chapters, we will look at the campaigns connected with two journals, The New Witness and the National Review. For the moment, it is sufficient to provide a few illustrations of the political scoring points made against the party and the ministers involved, and to note the influence of the Scandal on subsequent by-elections.

Three reports from The Outlook, a Tory journal, give some indication of the opposition's attacks. Lord Willoughby de Broke, speaking at Newport Pagnell, claimed that Lloyd George's land campaign, launched just after the Scandal, 'was devised to distract people's attention from the fact that Cabinet Ministers had accepted tips from Government contractors, and in virtue of those tips, they speculated on the Stock Exchange.'⁴ Indeed, the general Conservative campaign against the land tax used the Marconi incident.

'A leaflet has been issued by the National Unionist Association concerning the increment land duty imposed by Mr Lloyd George. First it cites the well-known case of the Willesden road-sweeper who, out of his savings, bought a house for £295. He sold it at a loss of £55, but was nevertheless charged £4 15s 1d for increment duty. Next it sets forth that Mr Lloyd George bought eight hundred and fifty-seven American Marconi shares for £1,714. Inside three weeks he sold them at a gain of £1,029, but he paid no increment duty. The question is asked, Is this fair? What justice is there in saying that the increment in stocks and shares and movables like pictures and curios shall not be taxed, and that land, already unfairly burdened by taxation, shall be the sole form of wealth to bear this impost.'⁵

Lord Claud Hamilton, at Brighton, 'referred in scathing terms to the degradation of Parliamentary life, which was at once both the cause and effect of the

Marconi investments.'⁶ Sir Stuart Coats, at Deptford, noted the consequent loss of prestige abroad. 'In the United States, he declared, and we think truly, that Sir Rufus Isaacs, under the same circumstances, could not have been appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court.' Sir Stuart was sorry to admit that the acknowledgement of the superiority of the United States in this respect put Britain 'outside the pale of civilisation'.⁷

Annie Kenney, the militant suffragette, also made use of the affair. Whilst on trial with other members of the Women's Social and Political Union on charges of conspiracy to commit damage and inciting other persons to do the same, evidence was given about the investments of the W.S.P.U. Ms Kenney asked 'In the investments is there any mention of Marconis?', which produced laughter and earned a rebuke from the judge.⁸ Clearly, the Scandal provided plenty of ammunition for opponents of the Liberal government.

The immediate political consequences, in electoral terms, are harder to assess. There were three by-elections which might be said to reflect immediately the impact of the Scandal: Newmarket on 16 May 1913, Altrincham on 28 May and Leicester on 27 June 1913. Newmarket was a Unionist gain from Liberal, at Altrincham the Unionist held with an increased majority and at Leicester, the Liberal held on with a greatly decreased majority. This, however, fits into the general pattern of by-elections in the period. From December 1910 to December 1914, 21 seats changed hands. Of these, 14 were Conservative gains from Liberals and 2 Conservative gains from Labour, whereas Liberal gains were only 3 (2 from Labour, 1 from Conservative).⁹

Did the Marconi Scandal have any influence on these three results? It would be impossible to state categorically either yes or no; one can only look at the contemporary reports for any evidence that the Scandal was a factor of importance. Since in any case the electoral tide was turning against the Liberals, there are other significant issues to be taken into consideration.

At Newmarket, certain Tory journals, not unsurprisingly, greeted the

defeat of the Liberal as an omen. Given the political trend, to hold Newmarket would have been a Liberal miracle. As soon as the by-election was announced, the press were predicting the result - 'Newmarket is a "gonner"',¹⁰ The Throne greeted the result as the revelation of Lloyd George in his true colours,¹¹ and the Financial News was even more emphatic - 'Newmarket Condemns The Great Marconi "Corner".'¹² However, both candidates expressed the opinion that the election had been won and lost on the issue of the Insurance Act.¹³ The Scandal appears to have played little part in the campaign itself, although the Conservative candidate, Denison-Pender, was a director of three cable companies, and might, therefore, have been hostile to any wireless contract.

Similar Tory cries of triumph greeted the Altrincham result. Although the campaign was fought largely on the Insurance Act and Ireland,¹⁴ and the Labour Daily Citizen made no reference in its analysis of the result to Marconi, the word does seem to have been more prominent on the lips of Altrincham electors than in Newmarket. The Knutsford M.P., Sykes, had no doubts on this.

'He agrees also with the opinion of many of his colleagues in Parliament that the circumstances surrounding the Marconi contract have had a considerable effect, though Mr Hamilton (the Unionist candidate) did not refer to the matter in his speeches. Radical as well as Unionist members who addressed meetings testify that interruptions from their audiences prove that this subject has been very much in the minds of the electors and had a large part in deepening distrust of the Ministry.'¹⁵

Even the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News, Liberal journals, conceded that Marconi may have contributed to the increased Conservative majority, a confession which delighted the Tory press.¹⁶ The Financial News declared that, as with Newmarket, middle-class votes were won on Marconi and working-class votes on the Insurance Act, whilst the Spectator was more considered in its verdict.

'We do not doubt that the Marconi Scandal also played a very large part at Altrincham. Though cynical politicians in London on both sides may profess to think that the "Marconi business is overdone", we are convinced that it has made a deep and painful impression in the country. It was not for nothing that the announcement of the Altrincham figures on the Manchester Stock Exchange was greeted with cries of "Marconi!" What the ordinary Englishman especially detests is cant and hypocrisy in public

men, and the country, even though it may be indulgent to certain aspects of the business, has with an unerring instinct fastened on this side of it. "They were doing just the thing which only a dozen years ago they denounced as utterly unbecoming in Ministers. It's a bit too thick, and besides, they tried to keep it dark as long as they could." Whether that is a fair or adequate comment we shall not discuss now - our readers know our opinion - but without question it is most damaging.¹⁷

Strachey, editor of the journal, recounted to Bonar Law his personal feelings over the two elections.

'I feel it difficult to keep my delight over Newmarket and Altrincham within the bounds of decency. They are quite splendid. I feel convinced that the Marconi business had a great deal to do with them and will do more to bring down the organised hypocrisy ...'¹⁸

The situation at Leicester was rather different. It was a two-member constituency, traditionally shared between Liberal and Labour under the 1903 electoral agreement to prevent splits in the 'radical' vote. In the December 1910 election, eleven Labour MPs were elected in tandem with Liberals in two-member constituencies.¹⁹ In this particular vacancy, the previous Liberal member had held a majority of over 5000 and, although there was local pressure for an official Labour candidate to oppose the Liberal i.e. to break the electoral agreement, the eventual Labour Party decision was not to do so. The fact that the other Leicester seat, the Labour-held one, was that of Ramsay MacDonald provided the opportunity for claims that the insistence on preserving the electoral agreement was, in this case, to ensure the Labour leader's continued survival in that constituency.²⁰

In theory, the Leicester by-election was the testing ground for the parliamentary climax to the Scandal, the June debate. Certain Tory journals and newspapers again made great play of the reported emphasis laid on the affair by electors. 'It is generally admitted in Leicester that it is the Marconi affair which has stirred up the local Labour men to renounce the agreement between them and the Liberals and run a candidate of their own.'²¹ The effect of the Scandal on the vote was predicted as disastrous for the government.

'The Labour men have no thought of reticence on this subject, which has impressed itself deeply on their minds, and the Marconi argument will be used for all it is worth as a means of detaching working men's votes from the Liberal candidate.'²²

The Morning Post, ever eager, reported that 'the cry of the workers is, "Tell us about the Marconi job." It is evident that these incidents have made a deep impression on a large section of the electorate.'²³ A later column enlarged upon this claim.

'Leicester is the first by-election at which I have heard insistent shouts of "Marconis". There is nothing which arouses more swelling indignation in the breasts of Liberals, and already they are complaining of "Tory mud trhowing", of "cowardly insinuations and imputations", and of things being said on the platform by Unionist speakers which their leaders dared not utter in the House of Commons.'²⁴

Indeed, the Liberal Westminster Gazette recorded the suggestion that there should be a 'Marconi Day' in the campaign.²⁵ However, the Post denied that Marconi had been any part of the Unionist candidate, Wilshire's, campaign.

'Some of his speakers may have alluded to admitted facts, though of this I have no knowledge; but you cannot muzzle audiences, and curiously enough the Marconi cry has been heard more often at Radical open-air meetings than anywhere else, and if there have been any sinners on platforms they are Mr MacDonald's own friends of the local Labour Party.'²⁶

From these few selected accounts, albeit biased ones, it is obvious that the Scandal did play some political role in these election results. The feeling which comes over, however, is that it was never the most important issue, and that the more fundamental political arguments were more influential. The most incisive analysis appeared in Truth, which claimed to have no party allegiance, a few days before the Leicester election.

'It is probably true that all the party capital that can be got out of the affair has now been extracted. This kind of capital is what they call in the City a "wasting asset". Just for the moment - at Leicester, for example - the magic word Marconi will be worth a good deal to the Opposition, but by the time a general election comes it will be forgotten, and long before that attempts to trade upon it will become injudicious.'²⁷

Turning to the actual events of the Scandal, one of the first questions to be answered is whether an examination of more evidence, and the amassing of

previous research, produces new discoveries. Are there grounds for saying that everything about the Scandal is now known? For instance, A.J.P. Taylor, in conversation with Beaverbrook, heard the press baron claim that it was not American but Canadian Marconis which the Ministers had bought. Taylor said that whilst he was sure Beaverbrook was wrong, he never looked it up for fear he might be right.²⁸ Whilst this may well be simply wild speculation on the part of Beaverbrook, Taylor's reticence does perhaps suggest there are still undiscovered sources and explanations.

First, there is the question of 'undue influence'. Although it is clear that the Marconi Company took the initiative in proposing the Imperial wireless scheme, can the fact that the brother of the managing director was a leading politician and Attorney-General be overlooked? Although not being admitted to the Cabinet until June 1912, Rufus Isaacs had an important position as a Law Officer to the Crown and his advice would have been valuable to government officials in their negotiations. There were heated denials that this relationship had any influence in the awarding of the contract, but these must be balanced against one other piece of evidence. When Godfrey Isaacs wrote to Marconi in 1911, saying that he now felt he knew which conditions would be accepted by the government and which modified (note that this was written well before full Cabinet discussion of the question²⁹), he stated that this knowledge was 'from private information, the source of which you will assume, ...'.³⁰ The assumption must surely be that his informant was Rufus Isaacs. There are a whole range of possible explanations for Godfrey's statement - was he simply trying to impress Marconi, for example? However, if it is true that Rufus Isaacs was providing inside information in this case, the question of just what other details were conveyed via this source is thrown wide open.

An equally important matter for examination is whether or not the ministers invested/speculated in English Marconi shares, as well as their acknowledged involvement with American Marconis. The only valid line of defence which they

could use over these admitted dealings was that the government were not negotiating with the firm they were concerned with, American Marconi, but with a totally independent one, English Marconi. If it could be shown that they also had shares in the English company, then even their somewhat dubious distinction between the two companies would be worthless, and it would clearly show that they had violated any accepted code of conduct for ministers of His Majesty's Government.

A study of the English company's records suggests at first glance that they did not possess shares during the period in question, i.e. their names do not appear on the lists of shareholders.³¹ However, in the light of the obvious implications of such dealings, it is unlikely that, had they been carried out, the ministers' names would have been used. This point was made at the time by many critics.³² Indeed, the pages of the company's records are littered with purchases of this nature, on behalf of clients, by brokers and other intermediaries. Can one ever be certain that the transactions carried out by Nieuw Amsterdamsch Administratiekantoor, which dealt in five-figure blocks of shares throughout 1911 and 1912³³ were not on behalf of Isaacs, Lloyd George or Murray? Obviously, it would be ludicrous to suggest that every unaccountable investment might implicate these men, but the system was clearly in operation.

As well as the somewhat vague claims of witnesses like Lawson, who suggested that the biggest transactions in English Marconi shares were carried out by foreign banks and business houses,³⁴ and Leo Maxse, who claimed that 'large fortunes have been made under strange names across the water',³⁵ there is firm evidence that the company relied heavily on foreign finance. Godfrey Isaacs admitted that, in 1910, when shares were not being taken up to boost the capital of the company as required, they were offered to foreign bankers and financiers at 25% discount.³⁶ In addition, there is the example of nominee share holding for anonymous clients, which came to light during the



Select Committee hearings, because the nominee was related to Herbert Samuel.

The list of share dealings published in the Financial News showed that Gerald Montagu, a cousin of the Postmaster-General and a partner in the banking firm of Samuel Montagu and Company, had held 2000 shares and had transferred them sometime between August 1911 and July 1912. This had obviously meant a profit for the holder, as the share value was rising consistently during this period. The speculation which followed the publication of Montagu's name led Herbert Samuel to conduct his own investigation of the matter, since it was being publicly debated in many journals and seemed to implicate him. For instance, it was alleged that Gerald Montagu had purchased the shares on the advice of Samuel, and that Samuel was therefore offering, corruptly, advice to his relatives that they might profit from the Marconi contract. Consequently, Samuel wrote to Sir Albert Spicer, chairman of the Select Committee, with his explanation of events.

'Having observed in the Press some comments on the fact that transfers in the shares of the Company, standing in the name of my relative the Honourable Gerald S. Montagu, were affected about the time the Marconi Contract was in negotiation, I enquired of Mr Montagu, who is a partner in the banking firm of Samuel Montagu and Co., what were the circumstances of the case. I now enclose a copy of the reply which I received, for the information of the Select Committee, in case any of its members should be interested in the point.'³⁷

Spicer then read out Montagu's explanation.

'Dear Herbert - In reply to your letter of 2nd inst., I have to inform you that I have never held shares in the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company myself. My name was used pro forma, as a partner in the firm of Samuel Montagu and Co., in respect to shares held on behalf of our Amsterdam correspondent, Messrs Wertheim and Gompertz. With their permission, I hereby forward you a letter from them, stating the facts of the case, to be used in any way that may be deemed expedient.'³⁸

The letter from Wertheim and Gompertz, read out to the Select Committee, reinforced Montagu's claim that he had simply acted as a nominee for one of their own clients, and regretted that this had caused 'so much trouble'.³⁹

This one example of nominee holding is a somewhat tantalising piece of evidence. As the socialist Justice pointed out, Wertheim and Gompertz was a

wealthy, very respectable firm; 'The very last people in the world whom we should expect to find gambling in wireless telegraphy shares.'⁴⁰ Logically, its discovery is no justification for suggesting that other similar happenings occurred. There were, of course, many accusations at the time that prominent politicians could be implicated to a far greater extent if these nominee holdings were investigated in detail. In retrospect, most of these claims now seem rather rash, based on no definite evidence. Whilst many of the brokers' names in the shareholder lists do conceal the real identity of the holder, there is no concrete link with the ministers, and it now seems unlikely that any can be discovered.

One attempt did come close to proving that there were suspicious aspects in the Marconi share dealings and that one of the ministers, Rufus Isaacs, was involved. It occurred in 1916, and was carried out by Ellis Thomas Powell,⁴¹ editor of the Financial News, through the medium of the journal. Powell had been involved in publicity of the Scandal in his role as editor, and had given evidence to the Select Committee. He was, it is fair to say, a 'hostile' witness, pointing out some secret dealings in Marconi shares by a Hamburg firm. His attempts to investigate these transactions had failed because he was unable to discover the identity of the firm's clients.⁴² In addition, Powell mentioned that rumours in the City had implicated Winston Churchill in the ministers' dealings, although Powell denied that he personally gave these rumours any credence. This led to Churchill's fiery outburst before the Committee, defending his honour with great gusto.⁴³ Powell also made some suggestions about a syndicate which appeared to be attempting to conceal its dealings and provided the Committee with a list of brokers who dealt for nominees of the syndicate.⁴⁴

It was Powell's concern about this syndicate which led him to an investigation of Marconi share dealings. In the early stages of the Scandal, the Financial News seemed friendly towards the Marconi Company, and always willing to publish favourable material, usually Company press releases and interviews

with Godfrey Isaacs. Indeed, Lawson, the journalist, had accused the journal of being the Marconi 'City organ'.⁴⁵ On 22 August 1912, at the peak of the rumours, an article, headlined 'Marconi Shares as an Investment: Various Reasons Suggested Why Holders Should not be Frightened', appeared.

However, Powell was becoming concerned about the way that English Marconi shares had been bought and sold, and was suspicious that certain parties, with inside knowledge of the pending contract and its possible effect on the value of shares, had been buying stock cheaply, and selling at the height of the boom. This led to Powell's publication in the News of the list of leading dealers.

A few days after this, the journal's campaign was in full swing, in an attempt to discover who was behind the profit-taking. The existence of an organised group was taken for granted.

'The fact that there was a syndicate behind the Marconi dealings is, of course, public property. Around the identity and inspiration of this syndicate a good deal of the coming investigation is likely to centre. It is very positively asserted, however, that the organisation of the syndicate and the conduct of its business in the share dealings were carried out with such prudent and scrupulous care as to render it impossible for any inquirer, even if armed with the wide powers of a Parliamentary Committee, to penetrate behind the veil.'⁴⁶

Powell's references in his evidence to his attempt to discover the identity of the clients of the Hamburg firm were not the only effort in this field. A 'special correspondent' reported from Amsterdam that the biggest holdings in Holland were by an ' "administration" office', not a bank, and therefore it was virtually impossible to identify the real holders of the shares.⁴⁷

In spite of these difficulties, the journal continued to stress the need for the investigation of all share holdings and even suggested that any public figure mentioned in rumours should allow his pass-books to be inspected. In that way, the rumour could either be quashed or confirmed.

'If the statements be false, those persons who have put them in circulation ought, at the very least, to be the defendants in

legal proceedings to recover exemplary damages. If they be true, the public is entitled to know it, even if the information should precipitate an immediate General Election.⁴⁸

The journal was shocked by the revelations of the ministers' dealings in American Marconis, and began an extremely hostile campaign against them and against Godfrey Isaacs. In addition, it continued to attack the new contract, which was ratified in August 1913. Thus, it is clear that Powell became a firm opponent of those involved in the Scandal and developed an obsession about a syndicate being responsible for vast profits at the expense of the ordinary shareholders.

When the most controversial findings were published, they appeared several years after the Scandal had ceased to make headlines. The Financial News, as has already been shown, developed an extreme form of xenophobia during the war. It made continual references to the 'Unseen Hand' of German influence in British affairs. In the summer of 1916, it became increasingly insistent that the Marconi Scandal, and particularly the role of Rufus Isaacs, was the reason why the 'Unseen Hand' could operate. Germany had some hold over Isaacs because of share dealings during the affair, and the journal called for the internment of all Germans and those of German connections, a generalisation aimed specifically at Isaacs.⁴⁹ Accusations about some share transactions in Hamburg which were the root of the German control were also made.⁵⁰

Isaacs' German connections were continually emphasised throughout the summer. In October 1916, a series of articles on the holdings of Ernest Cameron appeared, and it was claimed that Cameron was Isaacs' nominee, to avoid publicity. In addition, the Marconi Company was criticised for having some links with Germany.⁵¹ In all, the journal produced a substantial body of hostile comments and accusations, directed at Isaacs and the Marconi Company. Playing on popular fears, it stressed the security threat posed by the German links. It was a campaign seized upon by the British Empire Union,

an anti-Communist, anti-alien and sometimes anti-semitic organisation which was an off-shoot of the Anti-German Union.⁵² Many of the News' articles on the 'Unseen Hand' and the Marconi Scandal were reproduced as Union pamphlets.⁵³ Rupert Gwynne, a Conservative M.P. who was associated with the Union,⁵⁴ asked questions in the House of Commons about the Marconi Company's German links.⁵⁵ However, by the end of 1916, the campaign appeared to have run its course. Isaacs made no attempt to defend himself against the charges, which seemed to produce the desired effect of allowing them to fade away.

However, the matter was raised again in 1918, when Powell wrote a lengthy letter to Bonar Law, calling for the withdrawal of Lord Reading (Rufus Isaacs) from public affairs.⁵⁶ It contained many of the 1916 allegations, and went into some detail. Its first claim was that Mrs Godfrey Isaacs had traded heavily in Marconi shares under the name 'Madame Perelli'. The second was that a singing master, Ernest Cameron, had operated as a 'front man' for speculative buying on behalf, it was claimed, of Rufus Isaacs. When the rumours about ministers gambling in the shares had developed in 1912, Godfrey Isaacs took over Cameron's account completely, putting up £60,000 for the purpose. £30,000 of this was borrowed from a man called Segar, and when Segar later sued Godfrey Isaacs for breach of contract,⁵⁷ there was a danger of this information leaking out. Sir Thomas Berridge, Segar's counsel, was Chairman of the National Liberal Club, and informed Percy Illingworth, Liberal Chief Whip, of the dangers. According to Powell, Illingworth felt that these revelations would 'dynamite the Liberal Party' and told Godfrey Isaacs that he must settle out of court with Segar to avoid this disaster. Isaacs refused and the case was heard, although Powell claimed that Isaacs had promised to settle if he could. It was also alleged that Berridge was offered the Reading seat, in the presence of Rufus Isaacs, for his part in the proceedings.

From these two main accusations, Powell concluded that the man behind

Cameron must have had inside knowledge of the negotiations, and must therefore be either a Cabinet Minister or a senior official of the Marconi Company. Since Godfrey Isaacs was unlikely to cover up for a company official, it must therefore be a Cabinet Minister. The fact that Rufus Isaacs 'was a party to the offer of his own seat as an expedient for keeping the facts out of court' suggested that it was him.

Powell then moved from vague possibility into the realms of fantasy (or what appears to have been fantasy). He suggested that the German government knew of all these 'facts', and that they were capable of putting pressure on Reading, particularly as he had relatives in Germany. Thus, the conclusion of the letter was that Lord Reading should either 'confess' or that His Majesty's Government should 'take such steps as will terminate the menace to the public interest which is involved in the perpetuation of Lord Reading's influence in public affairs.' There is no doubt that Powell held a deep-seated grievance against the Marconi Company, its managing director and Rufus Isaacs.

The conflict between the Financial News and the Isaacs family became apparent in another court case involving Godfrey Isaacs. Thomas Absalom Jackson was accused of attempting to obtain money by offering to prevent the printing of certain material. It transpired that Jackson had contacted Godfrey Isaacs in October 1916, and offered, Isaacs alleged, 35,000 shares in the Financial News, held by Harry Marks, a former editor. These shares would enable Isaacs to control the paper and so end its campaign on the Marconi issue. Jackson asked for a 5% commission on the sale.

Isaacs encouraged Jackson, in the belief that the bribe was being delivered by Powell himself. At one stage, Isaacs had a policeman hiding in a cupboard in his office to record the conversation with Jackson. During the trial, it was obvious that Isaacs disliked Powell, and he used the court to produce damaging evidence against the journal and its editor. He revealed

that the Financial News was in difficulty, having made a loss of over £7,000 in 1915. He also claimed that Powell had tried to extract money from him before, in 1911 or 1912, when a messenger, purporting to be sent by the editor, had asked for 500 guineas 'to renew the quotation of the shares of the Marconi Company in the Financial News.'⁵⁸

Powell was subpoenaed as a witness, but neither side wished him to appear, although he sent a note to the judge about his willingness, indeed anxiety, to give evidence.⁵⁹ Thus, he was unable to defend himself in court against Isaacs' accusations, nor to dissociate himself from Jackson's actions. Indeed, it appears that the defence did not call him because of the damage he would have done to their case. In spite of this, Jackson was sentenced to three years penal servitude, and it was revealed that he had a record of offences including bigamy, theft, obtaining money under false pretences, perjury, fraud and forgery.⁶⁰

Bearing in mind the obvious ill-feeling between Powell and both Rufus and Godfrey Isaacs⁶¹, this letter to Bonar Law should be treated with some caution. However, it cannot be ignored, for its claims may have some validity. Although Powell stated that all his facts could be checked within a few hours, sixty years on this has proved rather more difficult and time-consuming.

On the subject of 'Madame Perelli', the lists of shareholders do show extensive dealings by a person of that name.⁶² The address given appears to be that of Godfrey Isaacs. This would not be unusual, however, since Mrs Isaacs was known to hold shares in other companies associated with her husband.⁶³ Similarly, the dealings of Ernest Cameron are recorded, but there is nothing to link him with Rufus Isaacs, nor any evidence to suggest that he was a 'front man'. One of the obvious difficulties in assessing Powell's allegations is that one would not expect to find evidence of this nature, should such an arrangement have been made.

The more serious charges involving the takeover of Cameron's account by Godfrey Isaacs are equally mystifying. Unfortunately, the indenture which Powell refers to in the letter was not attached to the original in the Strachey collection, and so his claim lacks this obviously important piece of verification. As to the money which Isaacs is alleged to have borrowed from Segar to help pay for this act, the only reference in the Segar v. Isaacs case to a loan was for a much smaller sum. According to Segar, on 14 May 1912, Isaacs asked for money to enable him to buy 4000 shares. It was felt that if these shares had been allowed onto the market at that particular time, it would have depressed the price of the shares. Consequently, Segar lent Isaacs £14,000 at 5½%⁶⁴. This payment bears some resemblance to that alleged by Powell, but in the other aspects of the Segar case, Powell is either mistaken or is blatantly twisting evidence to fit his idea of 'the facts'.

Powell stressed the attempts to delay or prevent the Segar case which the Liberal Party made. He placed a very sinister interpretation on this, claiming that Berridge was offered the Reading seat as a reward for his services in delaying the case. From Berridge's evidence, it seems he only informed Illingworth, the Chief Whip, of the dangers after he had been offered the seat. In fact, Berridge claimed he turned down the offer because of his involvement in the tangled web of Marconi and the possible misinterpretation which might be placed upon the acceptance of the seat⁶⁵. Powell also quoted Illingworth incorrectly. He did not use the phrase 'dynamite the Liberal Party'. This appears to have originated with Segar⁶⁶.

Powell's other implication, of the German dossier on Rufus Isaacs' transactions, seems fanciful, although a possibility. There is no evidence as yet to confirm his statements. Taken together, the accusations do not appear to be as significant as they might be. There are half-truths, and elements of reasonable doubt, which suggest that there may be material

which could implicate politicians and Marconi officials. The door which seemed slammed shut by Donaldson's work may perhaps still be prised open.

There is other evidence which suggests these rumours might have some substance, or at least reactes the atmosphere within which dealings could be credible. An era of Stonehouse and Poulson, with its attendant publicity, gives an impression that previous generations have been more respectable in their financial affairs. (Similar sentiments were frequently expressed during the Marconi Scandal!). We ought to place the known speculation of Lloyd George, Rufus Isaacs and Lord Murray in context. In the Marconi era, and indeed throughout British history, members of parliament, even ministers, invested, speculated and dealt in securities on a fairly wide scale. There are ample illustrations of this kind of activity in Edwardian times.

'At a meeting of the Mid-Norfolk Unionist Association a letter was read from Mr W.L. Boyle, M.P., for the division, stating that largely owing to an unfortunate purchase of Cuban Port Shares, he has suffered such a heavy financial loss that he will have to resign his seat.'⁶⁷

Investment and even speculation was not illegal for an M.P.; the only regulations relating to such matters were 'that no Member who has a direct pecuniary interest in a question shall be allowed to vote upon it.'⁶⁸ but even this rule was interpreted so nicely as to be scarcely applied.⁶⁹ There were obvious ethical objections to particular instances, such as the one alleged in the Marconi Scandal, whereby ministers held shares as the result of a gift or favour from a government contractor, but, in general terms, dealing in stocks and shares was an acceptable part of an M.P.'s financial life. Bonar Law, leader of the Opposition, had begun a financial partnership with Max Aitken, later Lord Beaverbrook, in 1910, putting down £100,000 for a syndicate with Aitken and several others.

'Thereafter their dealings were incessant, even when Law became a cabinet minister. Nine-tenths of their considerable correspondence between 1910 and 1923 was on financial matters, much to Law's profit ... Probably he benefitted to the extent of some £10,000 a year, of course tax-free.'⁷⁰

Another Unionist who benefitted from share dealings by Aitken was F.E. Smith, who had no small part to play in the Marconi affair.⁷¹

More specifically, there were several M.P. s who bought English Marconi shares. Large numbers were purchased by John Wood, Conservative M.P. for Stalybridge, and his wife (2000 in 1911), Penry Williams, Liberal M.P. for Middlesborough (700 in 1912), Major Godfrey White, Conservative M.P. for Southport (500 in 1912) and Viscount Dalrymple, Conservative M.P. for Wigton (100 in 1913).⁷² One of the most interesting names in the returns is that of the Conservative M.P. for Dublin University, James Campbell, who was counsel for LeMatin in the libel action which allowed the ministers to reveal their dealings in American Marconis.

One of the politicians, John Wood, made some general comments about the affair which takes on an obvious significance in the light of his dealings. Whilst describing it as ' ... indiscreet on the part of Cabinet Ministers to speculate in stocks and shares when such Ministers received large salaries to place them in such a position that they would be above the need for such speculation'⁷³, he also declared that ' " ... if what these Ministers did had been done by a private member of either party so long as he did not object to gambling there was no harm in it." '⁷⁴ Since Wood had sold many of his English Marconi shares in the early months of 1912, at inflated prices and presumably for a sizeable profit, it was only consistent that he should take this stand, although he made no reference to his own transactions in the speech.

The ministers who purchased these American shares were themselves no strangers to the world of finance, however much Lloyd George might protest his innocence. At one point in his career, Rufus Isaacs had been a member of the Stock Exchange, although joining at nineteen and making a false declaration that he was 'of age'.⁷⁵ He progressed steadily until he was eventually trading on his own account in foreign bonds and securities. However, he

suffered badly during a slump in the foreign market in 1884 and, by August of that year, was unable to meet his obligations. He was 'hammered' and left with liabilities of £8,000. Although his membership of the Stock Exchange was terminated, he was not a bankrupt in the legal sense, since, as Hyde explains, the usual 'House' procedure was to treat such affairs as internal matters and put its own mechanism for repayment into operation.⁷⁶ There was no problem, therefore, of releasing himself from debt, a necessary operation before standing for parliament. Hyde points out that the creditors had been paid in full by the time of Isaacs' death; indeed by this time Isaacs was worth more than a quarter of a million pounds.⁷⁷ This episode, particularly the false declaration, naturally provided a target for his critics during the Scandal. Apart from his admission that he regularly purchased shares in his brother Godfrey's enterprises, little else is known about Rufus Isaacs' financial arrangements.

Lloyd George's attitude is better documented. Some recent studies have shown that the man who frequently condemned unearned increment was himself involved in the twilight zone of share deals. Robert Blake explains that Lloyd George had 'a certain lack of scruple over money. He was hard-up by the standards of the politicians with whom he mixed, and his behaviour can be explained less by greed than a desire to enjoy the sort of freedom they had.'⁷⁸ John Grigg has demonstrated how this desire influenced even his early parliamentary career.

'Money never interested him for its own sake: he was after power, not self. But he craved the freedom of action, the freedom from worry, and the freedom from a nagging sense of obligation to others, which money alone would confer. He wanted to be able to concentrate upon politics without being bothered about how his household bills were to be paid, and he wanted to enjoy a standard of living which was luxurious without being sybaritic.'⁷⁹

Whilst his financial situation improved with his appointment to office, it is now clear that Lloyd George continued to dabble in finance. His letters to his wife Margaret in 1912 show that Marconis were not his only concern.

'So you have only £50 to spare. Very wekk, I will invest that for you. Sorry you have no more available as I think it is quite a good thing I have got.'⁸⁰

'Well your spec. has come off and you have each of you made another £100. Llwydyn won't sell as she thinks that by holding out she will get more! I also made a few hundred out of it so we are a little better off than we were at the beginning of the week.'⁸¹

'I got a cheque from my last Argentinian Railway deal today. I have made £567. But the thing I have been talking to you about is a new thing.'⁸²

Certainly then, in this particular period, the purchase of shares by Ministers was not uncommon. The particular deal in American Marconis may be classed as mere speculation or as corruption, taking advantage of inside information and so on. In the final analysis it becomes a matter of personal analysis and of semantics. Whether or not the admitted facts are the sum total of the ministers' involvement is hard to establish. There are, I feel, various unexplained aspects of the manipulation of the share market and links with politicians, which allow the historian to suggest that all has not yet been discovered. Those inclined to do so may find, by exhaustive research, some incriminating evidence in this field.

However, the purpose of this study is not to pursue that end, which necessarily involves a certain amount of personal speculation and suggestion. It has frequently been claimed that the known facts, the involvement of Isaacs and Lloyd George in the affair, would have been sufficient to force their resignations.⁸³ It seems more historically important to study why the available evidence did not ensure this, and how the political struggles of the Scandal were acted out.

One of the factors not clearly outlined by Donaldson in her work is 'The opposition'.⁸⁴ For any really significant analysis, it is important to establish the various elements of this amorphous group. In this way, it is possible to appreciate why and how the Scandal developed in the way it did.

Donaldson does point briefly to certain groups, but there are omissions and errors which ought to be corrected.

Jolly, in his study of Marconi, sees three strands of 'reputable opposition' to the awarding of the contract to the Marconi Company.

'There was commercial opposition from rival firms whose supporters stated their case in the newspapers and in Parliament. There was ideological opposition from those who believed that such a vital public service should be run by a department of State rather than a private company. There was political opposition from the Unionist Party in Parliament to this Liberal proposal. Interwoven with these three principal strands were dozens of minor threads of dissent, malice and self-interest, springing from motives varying from the worthy to the despicable.'⁸⁵

The author is right to point to the confusion of motives and the naivety of any simplistic analysis. An investigation of the three strands he refers to shows this quite clearly. For example, it becomes apparent that commercial and political opposition combined early on in the campaign, in order to consolidate the anti-Marconi propaganda. Therefore, to understand subsequent events, it is vital to discover how 'the opposition' worked, the reasons for the hostility and the people and agencies who constituted its numbers.

On the question of commercial opposition, both Donaldson and, to some extent, Jolly, have overlooked the part played by the cable companies, as well as rival wireless firms. In the early years of the century, the cable companies had become aware of the threat posed by long-range wireless⁸⁶, and even by 1912 there were many experts who were still convinced of the superiority of cables. Even the government departments during the negotiations with the Marconi company were not totally committed to a wireless chain. The Admiralty felt that wireless would reduce costs partly because of its challenge to the cable monopoly and the ensuing competition between the two systems. The Cabinet discussions also included the suggestion that there should be a back-up cable system to minimise losses should the wireless chain prove unsatisfactory. It was reported that the Eastern Telegraph Company had indicated its willingness in this direction.⁸⁷

At this particular time in communications history, the relative merits of each system seem to have been argued almost totally in terms of superiority/inferiority rather than their complementary nature. Certain journals, for example the Investors' Review, argued along these lines during the time of the Scandal and referred to the detrimental effect of a wireless chain on the cable companies. After the signing of the preliminary agreement in March 1912, it noted the fall in price of cable stocks. However, the article claimed there was room for both systems, with wireless as an auxiliary service to cables which had the advantage in 'accuracy, speed, and will probably soon have it also in cheapness.'⁸⁸ The journal continued to press this point in various editions in April, May and July of that year.

Similarly, The Outlook, the journal in which Lawson's articles first appeared, favoured cable communication. 'The Empire and Cable Communication', published before the preliminary agreement, opposed Herbert Samuel's concept of an 'All-Red Wireless Route'. It argued that, at best, wireless had only a secondary role to play and suggested that 'competent authorities', including Sir Charles Bright,⁸⁹ agreed with this view.⁹⁰ A month later, Bright was quoted again, expressing his belief that the Empire needed cables, which were tested and proven, rather than the untried wireless system.⁹¹

Hostility, therefore, came not only from wireless companies but from the advocates of the cable system. Major Martin Archer-Shee, who played such a prominent part in criticising the contract, was a supporter of the cable companies. His opposition to the proposed scheme of Imperial wireless stations arose because of his preference for a state-owned Atlantic cable, 'the interests of which (he considered) to be directly antagonistic to any wireless scheme.'⁹² Whether there was a similar public relations campaign by cable companies as the one mounted by Marconi's wireless rivals is not clear. The Investors' Review told its readers not to sell cable shares, and may have done so on the prompting of the companies. There is no firm evidence on this.

The wireless campaign is very different, and can be traced with little difficulty.

Donaldson suggests that, whilst at the beginning of 1912, the words 'Marconi' and 'wireless' were synonymous, by the October debate, Poulsen and Telefunken, the two main rivals, had also become household names.

'When the M.P. s who opposed the contract reached the House of Commons on October 11, they were so well-informed on matters relating to wireless telegraphy that it was clear they had been well-briefed. This, however, is in the ordinary course of events and it is proper that, in a case where one company has signed a contract with the government, members of the Opposition should be approached by their rivals and should seek to present their case!'⁹³

It is interesting, however, to take this statement a step further, and examine how this opposition functioned, and who was behind it. Most of the prompting came from the Poulsen wireless syndicate and a fairly comprehensive account of its campaign can be produced by fitting together various testimonies before the Select Committee.

There was, in fact, no British Poulsen company at the time of the negotiations. The Poulsen system originated in Denmark, and in May 1910, a Poulsen Syndicate Limited had been formed in Britain, with a share issue of £1300, largely to test the system in practical operation.⁹⁴ The patents for certain apparatus expired in February 1911 and the syndicate went into liquidation in June of that year. The option was taken up by a Mr Barton of Basil Montgomery and Company and attempts were being made to form a company during the government's talks with Marconi.⁹⁵ A prospectus appears to have been published as early as April 1911.⁹⁶ News of a potential contract between the two, which appeared in the Evening Standard in October 1911, was a body blow to these attempts. Viggo Gandil, the English representative for Poulsen, wrote asking for an opportunity to tender for the contract. Hearing no definite news, he then submitted an offer in January 1912, but this was rejected. Gandil's main complaint was the lack of information on the requirements of

any contract. The government maintained that their own experts felt that the Poulsen system could not fulfil the test conditions, and wanted too long to arrange a trial.⁹⁷

The protests from the Poulsen representatives centred on their contention that the contract would virtually strangle all their British developments. Eggar, the solicitor, stated that the announcement of the probable agreement delayed the formation of a British company, since potential investors feared that the government would not allow the new system a licence. He appears to have been convinced that the monopoly created would make the Poulsen system worthless; without a licence, the Marconi company would simply step in and purchase their patents very cheaply, hence extending the monopoly.⁹⁸ Poulsen opposition to the contract was based around this monopolistic threat.

First awareness of the Poulsen intervention came when the Select Committee learned that Lawson had had contact with many of the leading opponents of the contract, amongst whom was named Eggar.⁹⁹ At a later date, Lawson admitted that he had made the initial approach to Eggar, and that he might have received papers and information from the Poulsen representative.¹⁰⁰

More detailed information became available when Godfrey Isaacs charged the Poulsen interest with the initiation of the various attacks on the contract. He alleged that there was an informal 'syndicate' acting against the Marconi company, using M.P. s, and even suggested that it was this group who manufactured the rumours of ministerial investment and the like.¹⁰¹ In denying these accusations, Harcourt Rose gave a fairly comprehensive account of the extent of the Poulsen campaign.

The initial move had been to contact Archer-Shee, the Conservative M.P. for Finsbury Central, in February or March 1912. It seems this was done initially because his secretary was a relative of the Poulsen solicitor.¹⁰² Archer-Shee was a champion of the cable system, and declined to take a financial interest in Poulsen, which was offered.¹⁰³ He was, however, impressed by

the information Poulsen conveyed to him, and it was agreed that he could use it to ask questions in the House about the contract.¹⁰⁴ About the same time, (19 April 1912), a handout was distributed to most daily and technical journals, presumably with the same information and criticisms which had made such an impact on Archer-Shee.¹⁰⁵ Rose freely admitted that the purpose of this was to prevent ratification of the contract in Parliament. If this had been achieved, it would have been disastrous for the Poulsen interests. They were, at this stage, optimistic, believing that there had only to be a full discussion and 'it would be seen that it was such an outrageous document that it could not possibly be confirmed without alteration.'¹⁰⁶ From Rose's evidence, it seems he had particular contact with the Daily News, a Liberal paper.¹⁰⁷

Shortly before the August recession, when it was still possible that the contract might be ratified, the Poulsen group sent McMaster and George Cave, two Conservative M.Ps who had shown themselves opposed to the contract, an account of the negotiations, details of the monopoly which would be created and so on. A similar handout was sent to all M.Ps before the October debate, whilst those who were going to speak in the debate received, in addition, a list of arguments against the contract. Amongst those men were Archer-Shee, Mitchell Thompson,¹⁰⁸ Lord Hugh Cecil,¹⁰⁹ Lord Robert Cecil,¹¹⁰ Lord Balcarres, the Tory Whip, Alfred Lyttleton and George Lansbury. In addition, a letter with information was sent to the Press Association on 2 August 1912. All these measures were designed to prevent ratification in August, and then to prime opponents for the October debate. A press release, on 7 October, furthered the publicity; the Manchester Guardian, Daily News and The Times receiving additional information during September and October.¹¹¹

In addition to the publicity aspect, the Poulsen group also played a more direct part in preventing ratification of the contract being pushed through in August 1912. According to Rose's account, he was informed on 6 August by

Steele of the Daily News that Samuel would try to have the contract ratified before the recess. Rose said that the Unionist Whips had been assured this would not happen, and so Gandil and Eggar had left the country for other business. Steele suggested that Rose should go down to the House of Commons to see George Lansbury. The tension lifted somewhat when Asquith spoke that afternoon and implied that a decision on the contract would be postponed. Archer-Shee telephoned Rose later in the day to say that the whips had agreed to a postponement. The next morning, the 7th, Archer-Shee's secretary told Rose that Herbert Samuel had approached the M.P. and said that the government still intended to push the contract through before the break. Rose immediately contacted Lansbury, who promised to try to prevent this. In addition, Archer-Shee was 'primed' with the details of the Poulsen discussions with the Post Office in its attempt to bid for the contract and also of the firm's criticisms in general terms of the Marconi agreement. This information Archer-Shee said he would pass on to Sir Hugh Cecil, who was due to speak on the subject that day.¹¹²

The Poulsen group, therefore, played an important role in the campaign against the Marconi contract, largely as propagandists. They denied that the purpose of this exercise was to have the contract for themselves, although some press statements by Baxendale, the managing director of the British company, Universal Radio Syndicate, which was eventually formed in September 1912, tend to contradict this. The main objection which the group stressed was the disastrous effect that such a monopolistic agreement would have on other potentially more impressive systems. This was why the campaign was pursued so energetically and, in fact, it seems that the Poulsen forecast was fulfilled, at least in the short term. A report of a speech by Sir Henry Norman,¹¹³ a Liberal M.P. opposed to the contract, in the Commons in June 1914 purported to show the effect of the 1913 agreement.

'The Goldschmidt company has been bought up, the Poulsen company has ceased to be a formidable competitor in this country, and an arrangement has been made with the Telefunken company whereby the Marconi system is to have a free field in the British Isles. Thus all effective rivalry has been eliminated and the Marconi position is made unassailable. As Sir Henry put it, "The monopoly was being obtained partly by really good work in wireless, but also by skilful commercial and financial arrangements, and it could not possibly fail ultimately to be disastrous to the public interest.'¹¹⁴

Donaldson refers to Poulsen and Telefunken as the chief rivals of Marconi. In fact, when a Technical Sub-Committee was set up to investigate the relative merits of the various systems, five were considered. These were Marconi, Telefunken, Poulsen, Goldschmidt and Galletti. Of the four, Telefunken were undoubtedly the strongest rivals to Marconi. Jolly described the varying tactics used by Godfrey Isaacs in the long battle against the German firm.

'He gave up any attempt to compete in Germany itself where the Imperial Government so strongly supported its own national company that opportunities in wireless for foreigners were negligible: he brought patent actions in courts outside Germany to restrict Telefunken's foreign activities; he negotiated a merger of Marconi and Telefunken interests in maritime wireless into the Debeg Company; but, above all, he fought Telefunken for new contracts to build and operate long distance stations in Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Greece and other countries.'¹¹⁵

In spite of this rivalry, there is no indication that Telefunken took any part in campaigning for this particular contract. Telefunken were apparently not considered for this work. As Sir Alexander King explained, it was not a British firm,¹¹⁶ and because the company infringed certain Marconi patents, thereby making it worthless in Britain. Shortly afterwards, the two rivals concluded the agreement referred to by Sir Henry Norman, and the question of competition within Britain was resolved.

Donaldson makes no mention of another competitor, the Goldschmidt system, which the Technical Sub-Committee felt had great potential. In fact, the Anglo-French Wireless Company, which used this system, sent a letter to all M.P.s before the October debate. This stated that the company had been offered

no chance to tender for the contract, and made a list of comparisons between the Goldschmidt system and Marconi. According to its claim, Goldschmidt was cheaper, more efficient, more reliable, able to send as far as Marconi, untappable and used the wave, as opposed to spark, system, which involved no risk of patent infringements. The company were prepared to put up any deposit required and simply wanted the chance to compete for the contract. It also called for an investigation into all systems before the contract was awarded.¹¹⁷ When the Technical Sub-Committee carried out this suggestion, it declared that, whilst Goldschmidt was valuable for short distance work, and the wave system had more potential than the spark (which meant Marconi, Telefunken et al.), it had not yet achieved the necessary 2000 mile test in commercial conditions.¹¹⁸

Even after this decision, the Goldschmidt company were anxious to maintain their challenge. Letters were written to Samuel and Sir Alexander King in July 1913, claiming that tests of 3500 miles had been achieved, and that they wished to tender for the contract.¹¹⁹ The company also contacted the Conservative leader with details of their request, through Charles Watney of the St Stephen's Intelligence Bureau. Watney told Bonar Law that the Goldschmidt people were 'strongly Conservative', and since the whole question of the contract had become so political, urged Law to meet Dr Goldschmidt or Sir Oliver Lodge, a British wireless expert, to discuss the merits of this system.¹²⁰ Watney also kept Law informed of further Goldschmidt attempts to influence the Post Office to change its attitude.¹²¹

Therefore, of the four Marconi rivals, at least two were actively campaigning against the contract. This, as Donaldson stated, was a legitimate process, and had some legitimate businessgrievances as its motive. However, this priming of opponents meant that frequently those who opposed the contract for other reasons - ideology and politics, for example, were identified with these commercial criticisms. (And indeed, as has been mentioned, the rival firms were quick to use political diversions, viz. Goldschmidt).

These other streams of recorded opposition were expressed chiefly in Parliament and the press. Its proponents were mainly of Unionist sympathy, although there were a few Liberal M.Ps and journals which raised technical and ethical objections. Tory opponents of the contract used this fact to suggest that all criticisms were therefore non-political and not due simply to party malice.¹²² However, by no stretch of the imagination can some of the Conservative attacks be attributed to rational criticism of the terms of the agreement.

The arguments of Liberal experts like Sir Henry Norman and Sir George Croydon-Marks, M.P. for Launceston can, for the purposes of this particular study, be disposed of without much debate. They represent what Jolly calls the ideological strand of the opposition. Norman opposed the creation of a monopoly and felt that wireless was still in the developmental stages. Therefore, it was wrong to commit so much to one company. In addition, he saw more potential in the wave system than the spark. Finally, there was a certain humiliation that the government should hand over so much work to a commercial company.

'What the Australian Post Office and the American Army can do, surely this country can do also, as indeed the Admiralty has shown. I regard any suggestion to the contrary as humiliating, and however little authority may attach to my views, I protest against it as an affront to British science and British enterprise.'¹²³

Norman was, however, anxious to dissociate himself from the charges of corruption made against the ministers. 'I believe that is not only without a shadow of foundation, but that it is preposterous.'¹²⁴

Similarly, Marks, who was something of an expert in patent law, pointed out that a monopoly in that early stage of wireless would discourage other developments, a point also made by the Poulsen group. He believed that, under the terms of the Patent Acts, the government were entitled to all the necessary information at a far lower price. However, this was not intended as a criti-

cism of the company. 'I was not criticising this as a Marconi contract, but as a contract prejudicial to the industry, no matter who the persons might be who were concerned in the contract.'¹²⁵ Again, his suggestions dismissed totally any allegations of corruption; he simply felt that the contract was a bad one for the government in its present form.

These two men, along with the Daily News and the Nation,¹²⁶ were representative of Liberal criticisms of the terms of the agreement and the technical merits of the question. There were Conservatives who put forward the same criticisms and, as in the case of Archer-Shee, had a genuine interest in the field of communications. However, in many cases, there was an additional factor, the third strand of opposition mentioned by Jolly, the political hostility of Conservatives to a Liberal government measure. In Jolly's opinion, it was this political hostility which made the Scandal such a prominent business.

'Parliament and its adjuncts provided the stage for most of the violent scenes, with the peculiarly bitter antagonism which existed at that time between the Liberal and Unionist parties over more important matters exacerbating a situation which, although unpleasant enough, hardly justified the almost hysterical national response.'¹²⁷

Clearly this last aspect of the opposition is historically the most important. Jolly's statement must be tested, for it is by no means certain that his assumptions are justified. In short, the generalisations about the state of parliamentary politics in this period still need to be refined.

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER 2

1. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 249
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 15. The same symbolism has been used by Robert Rhodes James, who claims that, at that time, party antagonism was greater than any one in public life could recall - 'Marconi was a symptom of a much deeper business'. Robert Rhodes James, The British Revolution : Volume 1 From Gladstone to Asquith, 1880-1914, (London, 1976), p. 273
4. The Outlook, 29 December 1913
5. Spectator, 9 August 1913
6. The Outlook, 7 February 1914
7. Ibid.
8. The Times, 12 June 1913
9. See David Butler and Jennie Freeman, British Political Facts, 1900-1960, (London, 1963), p. 126
10. John Bull, 3 May 1913
11. The Throne, 24 May 1913
12. Financial News, 19 May 1913
13. See The Times, 19 May 1913, Spectator, 24 May 1913
14. The Times, 28 May 1913. See also Nation, 31 May 1913 - 'Both parties agree that the election was fought almost entirely on the Insurance Act.'
15. Morning Post, 30 May 1913
16. Ibid., 31 May 1913, The Throne, 7 June 1913
17. Spectator, 31 May 1913
18. Strachey to Bonar Law, 3 June 1913, Strachey Papers, 5/9/8/9
19. Ross McKibbin, The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910-1924, (London, 1974), p. 63
20. C.L. Mowat, 'Ramsay MacDonald and the Labour Party', in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), Essays in Labour History, Volume 2, 1886-1923, (London, 1971), pp. 139-40. For accounts of this dispute over the election, see McKibbin, op. cit., pp. 62-8 and Roy Douglas, 'Labour in Decline, 1910-1914', in Kenneth Brown (ed.), Essays in Anti-Labour History : Responses to the Rise of Labour in Britain, (London, 1974), pp. 119-20
21. Daily Mail, 18 June 1913

22. Ibid.
23. 19 June 1913
24. Ibid.
25. Westminster Gazette, 21 June 1913
26. Morning Post, 24 June 1913
27. Truth, 25 June 1913
28. Taylor, op. cit., p. 631
29. See memo for Cabinet discussion, 26 May 1911, Cab. 37/107/63
30. Godfrey Isaacs to Marconi, 10 April, 1911, M.H.A. HIS 113
31. All admitted purchases of American Marconis were done in the ministers' own names.
32. An interesting parallel may be drawn with the plot of Joyce Cary's novel, Prisoner of Grace, (1952), set in the same period as the Marconi Scandal. The central episode of this work is the 'Contract Case', an affair which the author places three months after Marconi. It involves an M.P., Chester Nimmo, who was director of a company which received a government contract for wireless equipment. Nimmo had bought shares in the company when he knew of the possibility of the contract. When he realised that it could be used against him he sold his shares, as his wife says, 'of course through his agents'! (p. 214)
33. See list of share dealings in the Financial News, 14 October 1912. This was submitted in evidence by W.R. Lawson and included in the Select Committee Proceedings as Appendix No. XI
34. S.C., Vol. 1, p. 838
35. Ibid., p. 939
36. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 252
37. Samuel to Spicer, 17 December 1912, in ibid., Vol. 1, p. 504
38. Montague to Samuel, 5 December 1912, in ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 505
40. 15 February 1913
41. b. 1869, d. 1922, acting editor and editor, Financial News, 1909-1920, Unionist election agent, author - particularly on financial and business topics. (Who Was Who, 1916-1928, (London, 1929))
42. See S.C., Vol. 2, pp. 436-40
43. Ibid., pp. 460-2

44. Ibid., p. 472
45. Powell denied this in his Select Committee evidence - see S.C., Vol. 2, p. 446
46. Financial News, 25 October 1912
47. Ibid., 31 October 1912. This is a reference to the Nieuw Amsterdamsch Administratiekantoor mentioned in this chapter
48. Financial News, 22 January 1913
49. Ibid., 7 June 1916
50. Ibid., 9 June 1916
51. Ibid., 1,2 November 1916
52. For details, see Robert Benewick, The Fascist Movement in Britain, (London, 1972), pp. 39-40
53. Financial News, 25 October 1916
54. Ibid., 2 December 1916
55. See ibid., 10, 23, 29, 30 November 1916. For Gwynne's part in the Indian Silver Scandal, see Chapter 9.
56. Powell to Bonar Law, 5 November 1918, Strachey Papers, §/9/8/18. All quotations are from this letter.
57. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 244. See note A.
58. The Times, 6 December 1916
59. Ibid., 8 December 1916. Powell denied ever having talked to Jackson about Godfrey Isaacs or the Marconi Company (see Financial News, 3 November 1916)
60. Account based on reports in The Times, 3, 8, 12, 17 November, 5-8 December 1916
61. This dislike continued until Powell's death in 1922. There is evidence that Powell had some influence in the Morning Post's anti-semitic campaign against Rufus Isaacs' appointment as Viceroy of India in 1921 (see Chapter 1, note 102). Gwynne sought background information on Isaacs from Powell and, in reply, Powell laid stress on the fact that Isaacs had married a wife of German origin, the Cohens of Berlin.
- '... above and beyond the objection to the appointment of a Jew is the fact that this Jew is married into a family having its origin in the capital of the very country with which we have lately been engaged in deadly strife.'
- Powell to Gwynne, 10 January 1921, Gwynne Papers, Box 1.
- N.B. Letter dated 1920, but context and following letters show correct date to be 1921.

62. See returns filed in Companies House for Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company Limited, No. 53403.
For example, in volume 10 of the returns, a Madame Lea Perelli of 7 Hanover Terrace, Regents Park, is shown as holding over 2000 shares in 1912.
63. The New Witness, 9 January 1913, identified Mrs Isaacs as a shareholder in the General Motors Cab Company, one of Godfrey Isaacs' many ventures.
64. The Times, 3 November 1914
65. Ibid., 4 November 1914. Note that Berridge was one of the circle of friends and relatives who received American Marconi shares at advantageous prices from Godfrey Isaacs.
66. The Times, 4 November 1914
67. Ibid., 15 October 1913
68. See Barnett Cocks (ed.), Erskine May's Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament, 17th edition, (London, 1964), p. 435
69. Ibid., pp. 435-7
70. Taylor, op. cit., p. 45
71. Ibid., p. 54
72. See company returns at Companies House, op. cit.
73. Stalybridge Reporter, 21 June 1913
74. Ibid.
75. See Hyde, op. cit., pp. 14-15
76. Ibid., p. 17
77. Ibid., p. 1
78. In a review of John Grigg, The Young Lloyd George, (London, 1973), Sunday Times, 24 June 1973
79. Grigg, op. cit., p. 178
80. Lloyd George to wife, Margaret, 15 April 1912, quoted in Kenneth Morgan (ed.), Lloyd George : Family Letters 1885-1936, (London, 1973), p. 161. The editor states that this was not a reference to Marconi shares, which Rufus Isaacs offered to Lloyd George two days later.
81. Lloyd George to Margaret, 19 April 1912, quoted in Morgan (ed.), op. cit., p. 162
82. Ibid. This letter clashes with Lloyd George's evidence to the Select Committee, in which he pleaded relative poverty. He stated that he had

a few investments to cater for his retirement, and these brought in £400 a year. Presumably the deals referred to above were deemed as speculation and not included in his investments. It did, however, create a somewhat false public impression.

83. The retirement of Murray in August 1912 was due to ill-health and was on the advice of his doctor. It bore no relation to the pressures of the Scandal, according to his brother. See Arthur Murray, Master and Brother : Murrays of Elibank, (London, 1945), p. 95
84. See Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 18-29
85. Jolly, op. cit., p. 193
86. Ibid., p. 135. Previously, wireless had been envisaged as a useful auxiliary to cables.
 'An obvious application for wireless telegraphy lay in the bridging of narrow stretches of water, as an alternative to submarine cables, which were expensive and, in busy seaways, extremely vulnerable; at Plymouth one particular cable was severed four times in three months [1897]'
 Geddes, op. cit., p. 9
87. Cabinet memo, 26 May 1911, Cab. 37/107/63
88. Investors' Review, 16 March 1912
89. b. 1863, d. 1937. His father, Sir Charles Tillotson Bright, was knighted at 26 for laying the first Atlantic cable. His son continued in the same vein; in 1897, he was engaged in the Pacific Cable scheme and was a government adviser on cables and communication. He was among the first to suggest wireless for ship-to-shore communication (1899) and for use in aircraft (1914).
 Bright wrote confidentially to Bonar Law in March 1913, asking for equal opportunity for all wireless systems to tender for the contract. He doubted if Marconi would still be in favour if this course were pursued.
 (27 March 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/2/43)
 In June, he complained to the leader of the opposition about the over-eager belief given to the statements of 'Mr Marconi (a distinctly interested party)' during the Titanic Inquiry.
 (25 June 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/5/50)
 On the subject of Marconi, Bright was clearly not a disinterested party.
90. The Outlook, 2 March 1912
91. Ibid., 20 April 1912
92. S.C., Vol. 1, p. 682. See a report in the Morning Post, 28 February 1912, of Archer-Shee's recent trip to Canada in connection with this plan and his suggestion that an 'All-Red' cable route was shortly to be prepared.
93. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 31

94. See evidence of Charles Kerr, Stockbroker, S.C., Vol. 2, pp 339-41, 343-54
95. See evidence given by two representatives of the Poulsen solicitors, Norton, Rose, Barrington and Co. : Harcourt Rose, S.C., Vol. 2, p. 354
Robbert Eggar, ibid., Vol. 1, p. 611
96. Evidence of Rose, S.C., Vol. 2, p. 355
97. Evidence of Gandil, ibid., pp. 566-609
98. Evidence of Eggar, ibid., pp. 612, 620-1
99. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 842
100. Ibid., pp. 873-4
101. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 239-45
102. Ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 556
103. There were rumours that it was some financial interest which led Archer-Shee to challenge the Marconi contract (see, for example, John Bull, 12 October 1912). The M.P. was always quick to quash these allegations (see apology, 19 October 1912).
104. S.C., Vol. 2, p. 354
105. Ibid., p. 377
106. Ibid., p. 356
107. See Chapter 4 for details of the Daily News coverage of the Scandal.
108. Tory M.P. for North Down, who put forward motion for rejection of the contract in August 1912
109. Tory M.P. for Oxford University, who called for a Select Committee investigation in August 1912.
110. Tory M.P. for Hitchin, who put forward motion for rejection of the contract in August 1912
111. All details from Rose's evidence, S.C., Vol. 2, pp. 354-8, 377-407
112. Ibid., p. 356. This account corresponds to the facts given by Archer-Shee and Samuel (see Chapter 3)
113. b. 1858, d. 1939. Norman was very interested in wireless telegraphy, listing it as one of his recreations. He was chairman of the War Office Committee on Wireless Telegraphy in 1912 and of the Imperial Wireless Telegraphy Committee in 1920. His career as an M.P. lasted until 1923.
114. The Outlook, 13 June 1914

115. Jolly, op. cit., p. 191
116. In this context, see letter from Winston Churchill at the Home Office to Herbert Samuel, 22 March 1910, about the inadvisability of giving government patronage to foreigners (Samuel Papers, A/38/1)
117. Financial News, 9 October 1912. See also Daily Herald, 9 October 1912
118. Report of the Technical Sub-Committee, 30 April 1913, S.C., Vol. 2
119. For full details of this correspondence, see copy of agreement between Post Office and Marconi Company, 30 July 1913 (ratified in August 1913), Appendix 2, in Samuel Papers, A/38/48
120. Watney to Bonar Law, 5 July 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/6/8. The strong Liberal connections of the Marconi Company are fairly apparent. Godfrey Isaacs was seeking to follow in his brother's footsteps and become a Liberal M.P. (See Financial News, 1 March 1913, for report of his intention to be adopted as candidate for the Mid-Essex constituency.)
121. Watney to Bonar Law, 8 July 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/6/15
122. For example, it was pointed out that many shareholders in Poulsen were Liberals.
 'The presence of the Imperial Tobacco interest is extremely significant, because the Wills family are practically all Liberals' (Financial News, 12 April 1913)
123. S.C., Vol. 1, p. 525
124. Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, Vol. 42, col. 667
125. S.C., Vol. 1, p. 682
126. See Chapter 8
127. Jolly, op. cit., pp. 193-4

Note A.

Samuel Segar was a Russian Pole who came to England in the 1880s. He built up a business in the timber trade, describing himself as a 'mahogany merchant' (The Times, 31 October 1914). He also made a considerable living as a speculator on the Stock Exchange. He was a member of the same bridge club as Godfrey Isaacs and also met him at the National Liberal Club. It is apparent, from the evidence in the case, that Segar consistently asked Isaacs for advice on Marconi shares, which he began to buy in 1911. He accompanied Isaacs and Heybourn on their American trip, and Segar claimed that he was promised some American Marconi shares by Heybourn. In the event, he received 1000 but appears to have been dissatisfied. When Isaacs and Heybourn gave evidence to the Select Committee, he felt that they had misled him on certain details, and that they had made huge profits for themselves out of the launching of the American shares. In addition, there was a certain element of resentment that, whilst others had sold their Marconi shares while the price was high, Segar had held on too long and had made very little profit.

In April 1913, the two men met and both gave different versions of what happened. Segar claimed that he accused Isaacs of making vast profits for himself, and that he had misinformed the public. Segar himself was left with 9000 English Marconi shares, 5000 American and 1400 Pekin Syndicate, which Heybourn had suggested he buy. All these shares had now fallen below the price Segar had paid for them, and, according to Segar's story, Isaacs offered to take them off his hands, in order to placate him.

Isaacs stated that, at this meeting, Segar's hostility had been directed solely against Heybourn, and that no agreement about shares had been made. Segar then claimed that, at a later date, Isaacs had told him to sell the shares, and that he would pay the difference between the cost price and the selling price. Segar sold but then found Isaacs unwilling to pay the difference.

Isaacs withheld payment on the advice of his solicitor, Steadman. In

evidence, Steadman referred to the difficult situation at the time of the alleged agreement (April 1913). Isaacs was involved with his action against Cecil Chesterton and Steadman felt that any payment made to Segar would seem like a deal, a purchase of silence, which might well influence the outcome of the trial. There was also the additional factor of blackmail, which Segar appeared to be applying to Isaacs.

In deciding whether or not an agreement had been reached, the judge accepted Segar's version of the story. However, he rejected the claim for breach of contract on the grounds that Segar had forced Isaacs into the agreement by blackmail. It transpired that Segar had threatened to place himself before the Select Committee, to make allegations that Rufus Isaacs was giving inside information to his brother Godfrey, so that he could carry out profitable share transactions. Rufus Isaacs had been acting as arbitrator in the take-over of the National Telephone Company by the Post Office, and it appears there was some speculation in the company's shares, in the hope of higher prices after the settlement. Godfrey Isaacs had some of these shares, and had mentioned to Segar that they were a worthwhile investment. Segar had therefore purchased some.

Rufus Isaacs was, at this time, conscious of public opinion in relation to financial dealings, and anxious not to expose himself to further accusations. When his brother Harry mentioned that Godfrey held these telephone shares, Rufus expressed regret and advised that Godfrey dispose of them, to avoid any trouble. When the final settlement between company and Post Office was achieved, at a lower price than forecast, Segar was annoyed to find that he was caught once more with some shares, and even more upset to find that Godfrey Isaacs was not. He therefore threatened to reveal the 'corruption' to the Marconi Committee.

It is understandable that the Isaacs would not want a statement of this kind to be made, particularly in the atmosphere of the Marconi revelations.

Although the judge accepted that the allegations were based on malice rather than fact; 'it was a suggestion of a discreditable kind and one which on ordinary occasions would be laughed at' (The Times, 21 November 1914), he recognised that this was not an ordinary occasion. Consequently, he found that Godfrey Isaacs had made the agreement with Segar under extraordinary stress, and found for the defendant, although with no costs.

[Based on reports in The Times, 31 October, 3,4,5,11,12,20,21 November 1914]

CHAPTER 3

PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS AND MARCONI

'... there was, especially in the last years before the First World War, an atmosphere of uneasiness, of disorientation, of tension, which contradicts the journalistic impression of a stable *belle époque* of ostrich-plumed ladies, country houses and music-hall stars. These were not only the years of the sudden emergence of Labour as an electoral force, of radicalization on the socialist left, of flaring bushfires of labour 'unrest', but also years of political breakdown. Indeed, they were the only years when the stable and flexible mechanism of British political adjustment ceased to function, and when the naked bones of power emerged from the accumulations of tissue which normally concealed them.'

The writer then goes on to identify the various ways in which these elements were exposed.

'These were the years when the Lords defied the Commons, when an extreme right, not merely ultra-conservative but nationalistic, vitriolic, demagogic and anti-semitic, looked like emerging into the open, when scandals of financial corruption rocked governments, when - most serious of all - army officers with the backing of the Conservative Party mutinied against laws passed by Parliament.'

These 'symptoms of a crisis in economy and society' could not be disguised by the superficial gloss of the 'golden Edwardian era' and Hobsbawm suggests that the outbreak of war in 1914 was, therefore, not seen as the catastrophe which later writers would come to describe. 'It came as a respite from crisis, a diversion, perhaps even as some sort of solution. At all events, there is an element of hysteria in the welcome the poets gave to it.'¹

Hobsbawm's summary of the late Edwardian period is concise and conveys with admirable skill the atmosphere of tension in this era. It reflects the unease illustrated by a contemporary commentator, C.F.G. Masterman - 'We know little of the forces fermenting in that strange laboratory which is the birthplace of the coming time. We are uncertain whether civilisation is about to blossom into flower, or wither in tangle of dead leaves and faded gold'² and it is the theme of social 'breakdown' which runs through the still

influential work of George Dangerfield on the 'death' of Liberal England.³

A microcosm of these tensions was to be found in the parliaments of the day, as J.L. Hammond recorded.

'Passions have rarely run so high in politics as they ran in these years. The House of Lords, Ireland, Women's Suffrage, the German rivalry in ship-building, the Insurance Bill, the Marconi Scandal - these were all the issues raising ungovernable elements in the temper of politics : sex hatred, class hatred, race hatred, religious hatred, fear of domestic revolution, fear of foreign aggression, a general sense of disturbance and unrest.'⁴

The overall impression is that these passions were unable to find sufficient outlet through the normal constitutional channels.

'From 1909 onwards there was ... a growing lack of faith in the whole parliamentary system. This was expressed in outbursts of unconstitutional violence by militant suffragettes, by militant trade unionists and by the opponents of the Home Rule Bill for Ireland which the Government introduced in 1912.'⁵

Recent attempts to analyse this failure of the governmental system to accommodate the political demands have centred on the nature of the British parliamentary system. For example, Aikin has stressed the importance of 'inter-party consensus', which provided the means of compromising political and ideological differences, and suggests that these years show the Liberals failing to make the necessary concessions which would allow the system to function smoothly.⁶ One of the results of this was that Conservatives, disturbed by the attack upon the House of Lords, symbol of their power in or out of office, set out to disrupt parliamentary business. 'Abandoning the inter-party consensus, they were prepared to stop at nothing to defeat the Government.'⁷

It is one of the purposes of this chapter to suggest that the Marconi Scandal contradicts the claim made by Aikin and others. It may have some validity if applied to the situation of Conservative support for Ulster Unionists - ('They had been inhibited in their tactics only by the fear of

losing elections, and no such fear was present during the promotion of the Ulster civil war')⁸ - but as an unqualified generalisation, it must be questioned.

Certainly there are obvious manifestations of Conservative attempts to disrupt parliamentary proceedings. A chapter of Philip Snowden's biography is entitled 'Rowdyism in the Commons', and points particularly to two incidents, both involving Asquith, as the most disgraceful outbursts. The fact occurred during the final stages of the Parliament Bill, on 24 July 1911. Asquith was prevented from speaking by sustained opposition shouting, led, Snowden alleged, by Lord Hugh Cecil and F.E. Smith. Other evidence confirms their leadership.⁹ Eventually, Asquith was able to continue, although jeering greeted every word he uttered. He was followed by the opposition leader, Arthur Balfour, who '... made no apology, he expressed no regret, but excused their conduct on the ground that deep and passionate resentment was felt with the policy of the Government.'¹⁰

The second occurrence cited by Snowden was in November 1912, during a debate on the Home Rule Bill. The Conservatives had defeated the government on an amendment during the debate, but two days later, Asquith proposed a resolution which simply reversed the earlier decision. There were cries of 'Traitor' from the Tory benches, directed chiefly at Winston Churchill, a former Conservative, and one member, Sir William Bull, admitted using the word. He withdrew from the chamber, and the Conservatives then broke into a chant of 'Adjourn' when Rufus Isaacs was speaking. 'It was clearly evident that there was a determined conspiracy to prevent any discussion.'¹¹ The sitting was suspended, but, on resumption, produced the same result, and had to be adjourned. As members were dispersing, it was seen that Winston Churchill and Colonel Seely, both former Conservatives now members of the Liberal government, were leaving together. There were shouts of

'Rats!' and Ronald McNeill, an Ulster Unionist M.P., hurled a book at Churchill, striking him in the face.

More recent studies confirm Snowden's assessment of the situation. 'The "scene" (but not the fight) was planned in advance by the Unionist leaders, who were seriously considering the decision to make all business in the House impossible.'¹² As Snowden pointed out, Balfour himself was party to this policy, although with some reluctance. He realised that, in particular, the Irish Question had reached a position that was beyond debate.

'Balfour did not dissent, but said in a tone of extreme depression that he had never expected to have to admit that such a thing could be true in this country. The mere admission of its possibility, by him, brought into consciousness the unexampled passions which were rending our familiar world.'¹³

Balfour's successor, Bonar Law, took a similarly hostile attitude to the Liberal government, at least in public debate - "I am afraid I shall have to show myself very vicious, Mr Asquith, this session"¹⁴ - and this fitted into the general Conservative pattern of opposition. 'Law's unrestrained abuse of the Liberals certainly struck a responsive chord among the Unionist backbenchers and journalists.'¹⁵

How, then, are we to equate the outcome of the Scandal with the preceding account of bitter parliamentary hostility? Most standard historical works appear to agree that the Liberal government was in danger of being destroyed by the affair. The Oxford History of England suggested that, had Bonar Law's amendment been carried in the final debate, the ministers would have been forced to resign.¹⁶ Donaldson speculates that, for eighteen months, careers were in danger.¹⁷ Frequently, the essential survival factor is seen as the support given to the ministers by Asquith.¹⁸ But was the Conservative opposition as concerted and as ruthless as Aikin's theory would suggest? How are we to account for Winston Churchill's remarks on the Scandal? He claimed that the Liberal government could have been destroyed by the affair; that

the Conservatives failed to exploit the situation. 'Some of them were too stupid and, frankly, some of them were too nice.'¹⁹

Part of the answer must be implicit in what has already been said about the political hostility of the period. In physics, Newton's Law states that every action has an equal and opposite reaction, and in historical terms, the 'unity' temporarily created in the Conservative Party by the various crises also led to strong Liberal reaction. However undesirable the end result of the parliamentary aspect of the Scandal, the party vote in the censure debate, it was a fact that Liberal M.Ps, with three exceptions, voted solidly against any Conservative attempt to bring down either the government or the ministers. Similarly, when it was possible that ministers might have resigned over the Scandal, the fact that Asquith refused to accept this course of action reflects this partisanship.²⁰

The other part of the explanation, hinted at in Churchill's words, is that Conservatives did not ruthlessly seek to destroy the government over the Scandal. Here, it is necessary to identify which elements in the Conservative party were responsible for opposing the contract and to what extent they were prepared to carry this opposition. As many historians have pointed out, it is wrong to see the Conservatives as a united party in this period, and, on the question of the Marconi Scandal, as on many other issues, there were obvious divisions of opinion and of action.

What does become apparent is that at no time did all Conservatives detest all Liberals. There was the phenomenon of proposals for an all-party coalition, which occurred over the questions of the Lords and of Home Rule.²¹ Whilst these reflect the breakdown of the traditional constitutional machinery, and the need for an alternative method of government to overcome these difficulties, it also shows that there were members of both parties who exhibited a 'cross-bench frame of mind.'²² Politicians like Churchill,

Balfour and F.E. Smith (except possibly over Ulster) had a less divisive and more long-term view of politics, which was shown in the Marconi Scandal, as well as the constitutional conferences. Their views transcended at times the political bickering of the period and brought accusations of betrayal from their own party supporters.

Simultaneously there arose a wave of protest about the very nature of the parliamentary system, suggesting that this 'cross-bench' attitude was symptomatic of the decay of democracy, in that power now rested with an élite, who forsook party principles for the rewards of office. To those party stalwarts who were unaware of this new development, it must have appeared that politics had gone mad. As G.K. Chesterton explained:

'But what makes me laugh is the thought of those poor puzzled, honest and indignant Tories, who read the Morning Post and imagined that a Tory chivalry was storming the fortress of corrupt Radicalism, when they read the Parliamentary Debates on the subject; and especially the passage in which Arthur Balfour said that they must judge men like Lloyd George (whom they knew so well and loved so much) more leniently than they would judge a common outsider. The poor Primrose League must have been horribly mystified by the problem of this mildness on the Front Benches. They would have found the answer to the problem in a book called The Party System.'²³

This work, The Party System, was written after the December 1910 election by Cecil Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. It was an indictment of the representative system of government. Power, the authors maintained, no longer rested with 'the will of the people'; it belonged to the tiny minority who sat on both Front Benches. The 'party system' allowed these few to alternate the rewards of office, and thus genuine party issues became obsolete. 'No difference of economic interest or of political principle any longer exists among its members to form the basis of a rational line of party division.'²⁴ Whilst the sham of infighting was maintained to preserve a semblance of reality, policy decisions were made in '... those

thousand private conferences between opposing leaders behind the Speaker's chair and at dinner parties and social clubs which give their real direction to the politics and to the destinies of modern England,'²⁵

Without accepting the more paranoid suggestions of this work, which saw deliberate conspiracy and collusion at every turn, there is a strong element of perceptive analysis in their claims. It is an established fact that the social divisions between M.Ps of various parties were becoming blurred. Blewett, writing of the 1910 elections, states 'Only religion, the residuum of an earlier socio-economic and cultural division, provided any sharp contrast in the social background of the major parties' candidates.'²⁶ In an impressionistic way, this is confirmed by reading the brief bibliographies of M.Ps of this time as they are given in the footnotes to Ensor's England, 1870-1914.²⁷ The fact was that, during a time of apparently heated and violent public debate, there seemed to be a coming-together of leading politicians of both sides, which created the atmosphere of suspicion and disenchantment.

Edward Moyle, news editor of The People, wrote to Bonar Law, mentioning the story that Law, Rufus Isaacs and Lloyd George had met whilst in France, lunched together and played golf. He asked Law for a contradiction of this rumour, to satisfy himself and presumably his readers.²⁸ He would not have obtained a denial, for Law and Balfour had been 'fraternising' with leading Liberal ministers at Cannes only a week earlier.²⁹ A recent study of Balfour shows his friendship with leading Liberals like Grey, Asquith and Haldane.³⁰ W.S. Blunt's diary tells of the close relationship between Churchill and F.E. Smith, their holidays together, and of Smith's being godfather to Churchill's son, Randolph.³¹ Hyndman, former leader of the Social Democratic Federation recently merged into the British Socialist Party, criticised the approach of the Conservative party towards the Marconi issue in his corres-

pondence with R.D. Blumenfeld, editor of the Tory Daily Express - 'I cannot understand the attitude of some of your party organs.'³² Later, he savagely castigated Law for allowing the Liberals to escape and attributed this to his 'conniving' with Lloyd George on the Riviera.³³ Even Handel Booth, a Liberal M.P., felt that 'there was rather more personal friendship between the two Front Benches than he liked; and he was not as fond of compromises in the House as the Front Benches were. (hear, hear).'³⁴

It might be said that these attitudes and criticisms are an inevitable and perpetual part of the British parliamentary system. '... Revolutionaries regard Parliamentary conflicts as sham battles in a largely private war fought by political mercenaries who are far removed from contact with real forces of discontent.'³⁵ However, by no stretch of the imagination can all those who exhibited such feelings at this particular time be classified as revolutionaries. In a time of real political bitterness, this apparent friendship and supra-party attitude confused many who saw themselves as ordinary party supporters. This apparently contradictory political approach was particularly evident in the Marconi Scandal.

The previous chapter has suggested the role played by party feelings in the Scandal. We have seen that, whilst critics like Archer-Shee had commercial and ethical objections to the contract, they may also have been influenced by their political beliefs. The part played by the Conservative Party, or at least by some of its members, is important, in the light of the remarks made above. It is necessary to identify the elements of the Opposition that were actively hostile and those that were not. In addition, those ministers involved were indebted to the strength of the Liberal party and the support of the Prime Minister, Asquith, and we shall look briefly at the way this functioned.

The involvement of certain Conservatives went beyond the mere questioning

and debate in parliament. Two of the legal cases arising out of the Scandal illustrate this well. Oliver Locker-Lampson, Conservative M.P. for North Huntingdon was responsible for the organisation and financial assistance involved in Cecil Chesterton's defence in the action brought by Godfrey Isaacs. Public attention was drawn to this in the June 1913 debate by Sir Arthur Markham. Following Balfour's speech, in which he suggested that there was no hint of corruption in the ministers' actions, Markham then asked if Balfour was aware that 'a Member of his own party has gone down into the City collecting subscriptions on behalf of Mr Chesterton.'³⁶ Markham was also upset that Locker-Lampson was involved in the shareholders' action against the Marconi Company, which had arisen from the Isaacs-Chesterton case. He particularly attacked his purchase of one preference share in the company in order to initiate the action, a gesture which seemed to be in direct contradiction to Balfour's suggestion that there was no question of corruption against the ministers.

'When the hon. Member for North Huntingdon knows perfectly well that Mr Chesterton charged my right hon. friends with wrong doing, why has he been soliciting subscriptions to defend Mr Chesterton? After criminal proceedings have been started, is it not very strange that the hon. member opposite should then announce, through some of the people with whom he is associated, that he had purchased one share in the American Marconi Company, and that he was going to test the legality of this matter and find out whether Mr Godfrey Isaacs was an honest man or not. That was on the morning of the criminal trial; that was the time the hon. Gentleman intimated the fact through the usual Press channels to the general public. I say that is not playing the game. You have now got to stand up here and say there has been corruption, or else you have to remain silent.'³⁷

Markham's attack does suggest that there were divisions in the Opposition approach to the Scandal and that certain Conservatives were more keen to exploit the situation than others. Locker-Lampson was obviously anxious to bring attention to events. Later in the debate, he defended his role in both the Chesterton case and the action against the Marconi company. Explaining that he had assisted Chesterton, he justified this act.

'Mr Chesterton is not a Unionist and not a Liberal; he is a Socialist; (sic) he is supported by no party and by few people. He made certain statements which not only I regretted, but which I told him I thought were indefensible in the extreme. Mr Chesterton attacked Ministers in a way anybody must regret. He went beyond the legitimate limits of controversy. I was approached by friends of his in order to assist him. On the one side there was Mr Chesterton, a solitary journalist belonging to no party, to no action, to no faction. Pitted against him were the millions of the Marconi Company and the huge influence of the Liberal party. I was asked to give some assistance to Mr Chesterton. I did my best to get him to apologise. I said I felt he had no right to make the statements he did about Ministers of the Crown holding office at the present moment. I did my best to get him to apologise for statements which contravened what was right in regard to them. He absolutely refused. I then saw his father, and he explained that if he had to fight a case of this sort on behalf of his son it would mean the sale by him of the only property he had got. After that I did my best to help Mr Chesterton and enable him to put up a fight in the Courts, and not be compelled to stand up unaided against trained counsels at the Bar and be smashed to atoms.'³⁸

He concluded by expressing a desire for equal rights for all before the law, implying that his action in this case was motivated by this sentiment. The explanation seems rather self-righteous and there is no doubt that Locker-Lampson's involvement also served a more partisan cause; that of creating publicity for the Scandal. His involvement in the Chesterton defence led to the disclosure of the purchase of American Marconi shares with Liberal Party funds. Writing to Bonar Law with some details of the Chesterton case, Locker-Lampson mentioned how this occurred.

' Finally, but for the Chesterton case the Master of Elibank's purchase through Fenner would never have come out. We found this out, but were not allowed to bring it out in court for technical reasons. We therefore introduced it to the public through the press, and then sent the information on to the Marconi Committee. We hope to have some more later on.'³⁹

Locker-Lampson also mentioned in this letter that the judge, in his summing-up, had given him new hope for the action against the company. Most standard histories, including Donaldson,⁴⁰ suggest that it was at the judge's suggestion that the shareholders' action was initiated, but the evidence shows it was already well under way at this time. The New Witness informed its readers of

the possibility of an action against the company and mentioned that a committee of shareholders was being formed as early as April.⁴¹ Locker-Lampson purchased two shares in April⁴² and Lawson, the journalist, was advocating an action about the same time. 'An action for breach of trust would clearly lie against all the directors of the English Marconi Company who diverted more than half of the American issue from the rightful owners and made money out of them for themselves and their friends.'⁴³ Thus, the initiative for such an action owed little to the judge's suggestion in the Chesterton case; it can only, as Locker-Lampson said, have provided encouragement to proceed.

Locker-Lampson's partner in the action against the Marconi company was Peter Wright. Wright was already involved in the Scandal, through his friendship with Archer-Shee. It is known that Wright was advising Archer-Shee on aspects of the relationship between the American and British companies, and priming him with information for questions to be asked in the House.⁴⁴ Wright also took part, with Locker-Lampson, in a campaign against Godfrey Isaacs, of which the shareholders' action was simply one facet. Cecil Chesterton's publicity of 'Godfrey Isaacs' Ghastly Record'⁴⁵ was closely linked to this and its propaganda spread into the House of Commons. In the main, attention centred round the St David's companies, mining developments for gold, copper and other minerals in Wales, which had been some of Isaacs' many ventures. Results from these companies had not been too successful.

'One paid dividends from 1900 to 1904. Two were dissolved by the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, four went into voluntary liquidation, and one was reconstructed and absorbed into one of the others. At the time of Chesterton's articles two were still in existence, neither quoted on the Stock Exchange.'⁴⁶

It was the basis of Chesterton's articles that Isaacs had broken various aspects of company law with regard to these concerns and particularly that those who had invested in the companies had not received dividends due to them.

As Godfrey Isaacs' solicitors complained to Asquith, when Cecil Chesterton was silenced by legal proceedings, the challenge was taken up by M.Ps.

First, Fred Hall of Dulwich asked, whilst prosecution was pending, if the President of the Board of Trade was going to investigate the affair of the St Davids Mining Company Limited (1908) 'with a view to the prosecution of those responsible for what the facts show to have been a bogus flotation.'⁴⁷ Hall refused to withdraw his allegations in spite of what the solicitors called countermanding evidence. Following this, on 17 April, Locker-Lampson asked a further question in the House as to whether any action was to be taken against Isaacs over his companies' records. This happened again while the action against Cecil Chesterton was pending, as Isaacs' solicitors complained.

'Upon the appearance of the question on the order paper we attended the Speaker and pointed out the grave injury which would be done to our client Mr Godfrey Isaacs by the publication of the question and we begged him to expunge it. Parliamentary practice however left the Speaker no alternative but to decline to accede to our request.

This question was not only printed in the Journals of the House but was reprinted in a newspaper with scare headlines one of which coupled the insinuation in the libel with the name of Mr Godfrey Isaacs.

Since the publication of the question we have written several letters to Mr O. Locker-Lampson and his solicitors for a copy of the statement referred to in the question but we have been absolutely refused any information and any redress.

Mr O. Locker-Lampson is protected by the Privilege of Parliament and no proceedings are possible against him.'⁴⁸

After listing other incidents which had blackened the reputation of their client, the solicitors asked Asquith if he could prevent further occurrences.

'We trust that for the honour of Parliament and its members and in the interests of ordinary fairplay, justice shall not any longer be tampered with by cowardly and untruthful libels being circulated under the cover of the Privilege enjoyed by members of Parliament, who appear to be regardless of the rights of their fellow men.'⁴⁹

Wright's part in this campaign seems to have been complementary to Locker-Lampson's. Whilst Locker-Lampson worked in parliament and the law

courts, Wright circulated companies and individuals who had invested in the St Davids companies, telling them about the efforts to recover their funds. A copy of his circular appeared in The Times.

'An effort is on foot to obtain a full investigation into the various St Davids Companies, in one of which I notice you were a shareholder. It is felt that there is much in connexion with them that could be investigated with profit, and that some money might possibly be recovered for the shareholders. If the matter is of interest to you, I should be very glad if you would communicate with me. Let me make it quite clear that in no event will you be asked to contribute anything towards these efforts financially. I shall be glad if you could let me have any papers in respect of this matter.'⁵⁰

The campaign by Wright and Locker-Lampson against Godfrey Isaacs and the Marconi Company was obviously timed to create unease in the public mind. Notice of the shareholders' action appeared in The Times on the same day as the report of the first day's proceedings in the Isaacs v. Chesterton case. Although the basis of the action was to recover for the shareholders the surplus value of the shares placed by Isaacs and Heybourn, evidence suggests that the real motive was to discredit the company and Godfrey Isaacs in particular. From Locker-Lampson's speech in the June debate, it is clear that he saw a close relationship between the company and the Liberal party, and therefore an attack on one also involved the other. At this particular time, Locker-Lampson was deeply concerned about the political future of the Conservative Party. In August 1912, there was an appeal in Our Flag, a partisan Conservative monthly, by the M.P. for his 'Unionist Working Men Candidates Fund', which was designed to counteract the challenge of the Labour Party (and the Liberals) for the working-class vote. The address for this fund, 48 Dover Street, London W1, was the same one from which the American Marconi Shareholders Association, under the secretaryship of Archer-Shee, operated.⁵¹ Advertisements for this association appeared in The New Witness, although there is no evidence of any outcome from the campaign. However, this links together Archer-Shee, Locker-Lampson and

the Witness. Further details will show that Locker-Lampson was a supporter of the National League for Clean Government, which continued a publicity drive against the Liberal government and its 'corruption.'⁵²

In conclusion, these facts show the close relationship between these Conservatives, Wright, Archer-Shee and Locker-Lampson and The New Witness. The following chapters will deal with the anti-semitic attitudes of Cecil Chesterton and the journal with particular reference to the Marconi Scandal. It would be wrong to say that the Conservative Party per se can be associated with this campaign, but the elements of connection should not be ignored.

It is also the thesis of this work that the outcome of the Scandal was partly due to the strength of the Liberal party. The clear indication of solidarity, at least at Cabinet level, is the previously-mentioned support given by Asquith to his ministers. His refusal to accept the offers of resignation is the most obvious manifestation of this. Here again, Donaldson's study needs refining. From a secondary source, Harold Nicholson's biography of George V,⁵³ she recounts an interview between Asquith and the king in January 1913, in which the prime minister revealed that Lloyd George and Isaacs had offered to resign over the affair. Donaldson claims that this is the only published record that the Ministers ever considered resignation,⁵⁴ and suggests that it came too late in the affair to be acceptable. Such an action could only have led to the downfall of the Liberal government and thus Asquith was forced to support his colleagues. '... When he rejected their resignation it amounted to a tacit if enforced agreement that he would stand behind them.'⁵⁵ This, of course, presumes that Asquith was pressurised into support, whereas other historians have, as already shown, pointed to the more general inclination of Asquith in this direction of loyalty and indeed commented upon the rarity of this phenomenon amongst prime ministers.

Donaldson also misses another offer of resignation by one of the Marconi

ministers, again due to the somewhat limited scope of her sources.⁵⁶ In July 1913, after publicity about certain aspects of Rufus Isaacs' early career in the Stock Exchange, when he had falsely declared himself to be 'of age' in order to become a full member, Isaacs gave Asquith the opportunity to dispense with his services.

'Until quite recently I thought that the error of my early youth had been completely effaced and that I should be judged by my life at the Bar and in the public service ... If with knowledge of these facts (which I told you quite recently and now repeat) you think my position as a member of the Government has been or may be weakened or the value of my services impaired I shall submit at once to your judgement and shall forthwith place my office at your disposal retaining always the memory of your unfailing kindness to me during the years I have been so closely associated with you.'⁵⁷

Asquith turned down this rather tentative offer, saying that the publicity about Isaacs' early life was of no serious consequence.

'I am glad, but not surprised, to find that it has received no countenance in any quarter of the opposition which commands or deserves respect.

I need not assure you that I count on your continued and much valued cooperation in the services of the state.'⁵⁸

These two occasions illustrate the support given by Asquith to his colleagues. Both Isaacs and Lloyd George were aware of the position; Margot Asquith at one point spoke in great length of her husband's determination to defend Lloyd George. She reported that Henry was stirred up by the 'caddish behaviour of Bonar Law, Bob Cecil and others,' and that at dinner he had proclaimed his intentions. "'If Lloyd George and Rufus play their cards well show the proper spirit I will let the opposition have it!! They shall sweat under what I've got to say!'"⁵⁹ Although Asquith's speech in the same debate was not quite as dynamic as his promise, he did stand up for the ministers. Isaacs and Lloyd George recognised that their careers had been saved by his actions; indeed, it has been suggested that Lloyd George was upset by the obligation he owed to Asquith, seeing it as a limitation on his power and his political freedom.⁶⁰ As Roy Jenkins has written,

'Lloyd George and Isaacs were both lucky in the Prime Minister under whom they made their errors of judgement.'⁶¹

There also seems to have been support at Cabinet level for the two ministers. The procedure for the June debate was discussed at two Cabinet meetings and the outlines of the speeches to be made by Lloyd George and Isaacs were heard. On 17 June, Asquith was able to write to the king that their statements would 'while disclaiming anything in the nature of inpropriety ... admit errors of judgement.'⁶² Clearly, the meetings serve to reinforce Asquith's support and also to influence the actions of the two ministers.

One other indication of Liberal strength was the fact that, despite some misgivings, only three Liberal M.Ps voted against the motion put forward by the Liberals in the June debate. That all three should be unseated shortly after the occurrence could be seen as a pointer to the determination of the Liberal Party. Some journals had no doubt that their voting had brought swift retribution. For instance, The New Witness saw all three being removed because of their stand for clean government.⁶³ However, a more rational examination suggests that the Scandal was not the sole reason for the departure of these three M.Ps. Two, Joseph Martin (East St Pancras) and D.M. Mason (Coventry) were voted out by the local constituency party and the other, R.C. Munro-Ferguson (Leith) was offered the position of Governor-General of Australia, and so resigned his seat.

Both Martin and Mason were something of rebels in the party.⁶⁴ Martin was Canadian-born, an ex-Premier of Columbia, with 'extensive business interests in Vancouver'. In spite of this, his 'frequent criticism and recent support for the Labour candidate at Hanley have rendered him a thorn in the flesh to the Government.'⁶⁵ In August 1913, it was rumoured that both he and George Croydon Marks were being boycotted and that their seats were in danger.⁶⁶ Martin's dismissal came finally in April 1914 because of his history of voting against the government and for criticising ministers, according to the local party secretary.⁶⁷

Mason's demise came about because of a difference over the retrenchment of armaments, which became a complete split with the local party after he voted against the government on this issue.⁶⁸ Munro-Ferguson also voted against the government in this division and shortly afterwards the announcement of his Australian appointment was made.⁶⁹ He, too, had a reputation as a rebel. Churchill wrote to Elibank to warn him of the possible opposition by the Leith M.P. to the Home Rule Bill.⁷⁰ On the Marconi vote, Munro-Ferguson explained that he felt public servants ought to maintain a strict rigidity in their financial dealings. When Chamberlain had been attacked in the Kynoch affair, he had voted against the Unionist government, and therefore felt the present situation warranted the same standards of judgement and action.⁷¹

Whilst these three M.Ps did create trouble for the Liberals, they were by no means the only rebels. The Marconi vote seems to have been the common factor in their fall from office. Were they hounded from their seats because of their action over Marconi? There is some evidence that Lloyd George noted two of the three, since a copy of the division list for the vote in June 1913 in his papers shows the names of Mason and Munro-Ferguson underlined.⁷² There does not, however, appear to be any other direct link. Whatever the exact motivation for the removal of these three, the impression given is one of particular solidarity in the party on the Marconi issue.

Of course, when referring to the Liberal majority in the House of Commons, which saved the ministers in the censure debate, we should remember that, in fact, both Conservative and Liberal parties returned exactly the same number of M.Ps at the December 1910 election - 272. The Liberal government depended on its 'natural' majority of Irish Nationalist and Labour M.Ps. It would be of particular interest to see how the Labour Party tackled the various problems cast up by the Scandal. Its role is largely ignored by the standard works and apart from the facts that James Parker, a veteran Labour M.P., sat

on the Select Committee, and that five M.Ps, O'Grady, Thorne, Snowden, Jowett and Walsh, abstained from voting in the June debate, little is known.

It might be expected that certain Labour members would use the Scandal to criticise the government and the existing parliamentary system and point to the corruption of the ruling class. On isolated occasions this did occur but the reality of the Labour Party's parliamentary situation meant virtually total support of the Liberal ministers. The Scandal pointed to the indebtedness which Labour owed to the Liberals and illustrated the weakness of the party in the parliamentary situation. As Roy Douglas has pointed out, what seemed to be a strong paper position was used only once between 1910 and 1914, in the Trade Union Bill of 1911.⁷³ The old MacDonald-Gladstone pact, which had just helped Labour M.Ps to be elected, still existed in spirit. Of the 42 Labour members in December 1910, only two had been opposed in a straight fight with Liberals.⁷⁴ In parliamentary terms, Labour M.Ps were in a difficult situation. To vote against the Liberals, who were seen as taking the initiative in social reform, was a difficult and dangerous ploy. After January 1910, when the Liberals lost their overall majority, what little freedom Labour had was gone, since a Liberal downfall would mean a Conservative government. Yet another General Election, following so closely the two in 1910, would have been a financial disaster. Thus, for many reasons the leadership of the party tended to ally with that of the Liberals and so stifle the more rebellious of its members.⁷⁵

The problems of this situation were obvious and were recognised by the party. A special conference on policy was held in Glasgow in January 1914 to meet and discuss criticism of the party's voting record, its alliance with the Liberals and the lack of distinctive alternatives to the Asquith government's plans. One of the major issues raised at this conference was the party decision to supply a member of the Select Committee investigating the Marconi Scandal, thus giving the findings Labour Party approval.⁷⁶

Indeed, Parker's membership of the committee showed quite clearly the weakness of the official Labour position. He sided with the Liberal members on most occasions and was a party to the Majority report.⁷⁷ Explaining his attitude to the topic in the June debate (and since he was the only Labour speaker, it suggests he was the party spokesman on this occasion), he contended that, whilst the ministers' actions had been indiscreet, they were not deliberately corrupt. He went on to speak of the more serious corruption which existed in parliament; M,Es voting money into their own pockets by way of their interests in armaments, railways etc. When these men voted on issues to increase their own wealth, the Marconi Scandal sank into relative obscurity.⁷⁸ Earlier in his speech, Parker had suggested that Labour had given its members a free vote over the affair, which helps to explain the absence of any positive party line throughout.

This is apparent in the pages of the Daily Citizen, the official Labour Party journal launched in October 1912.⁷⁹ Its reports on the Scandal were mostly verbatim accounts of speeches and Select Committee proceedings, with very little comment. At times, a note of despair can be detected. 'The question of Ministers investing in wireless telegraphy shares, concerning which everybody is talking, poses a serious, if not grave, issue on which, at the right time, Labour leaders will doubtless have something to say.'⁸⁰ However, by the time of the June debate, the journal could report that Labour had taken its own line on Marconi. Whilst criticising the actions of ministers as

'... singularly unwise and ill-advised, ... dangerous if not to the traditions of public life at least to that standard of financial discretion and integrity which the Labour movement desires to set up ..., rash and foolish ..., (exhibiting) a lack of discretion and judgement that is really amazing,'

It was made quite clear that the party had no sympathy with the Conservatives' approach. This was seen blatantly one-sided, ignoring its own members'

transgressions in order to force the resignation of those involved.⁸¹ For this reason, Labour was to act independently, although in practical terms this meant support of the Liberals. The Citizen recorded its satisfaction with the middle course adopted by the Adkins resolution, which was finally passed by the House. 'It was couched in Parliamentary terms, but it puts a seal on the expressions of regret tendered to the House by the Ministers, and will be of value should any similar incident arise in future.'⁸²

The official attitude produced attacks from both the right and left. The Daily Herald, a more socialist-inclined journal, criticised lack of opposition from both Conservative and Labour parties, stating that fear of reprisals by Lloyd George was the reason.⁸³ When the Majority report was published, it called on the Labour Party to disown Parker and to attack the Liberals on the censure debate.⁸⁴ A debate began between the editor of the New Age, a syndicalist journal, Alfred Orage, and the voice of the new British Socialist Party, Justice. Orage maintained that the Scandal was unimportant for socialists, but Justice disagreed, saying that it would show the masses the depths of indecency to which government could sink, and urged that maximum publicity should be given to the affair, thus criticising the Labour Party's support of the government.⁸⁵

Right-wing papers criticised the Lib-Lab alliance. The Financial News was mockingly delighted by the outcome of the debate, which it greeted with the headlines 'Commons Register Their Approval of Secret Ministerial Share Gambling.'⁸⁶ Recording the turnabout of many 'Radicals, Labour, Nonconformists and Socialists' in now saying that the Stock Exchange was a fine institution, whereas before they had 'scathing criticism of all the methods of the market', it welcomed the fact that all M.Ps criticised by Radicals as Stock Exchange members now had the perfect riposte.⁸⁷ Similarly, the Parker approach enabled other attacks to be made.

'In the course of the Marconi debate Mr J. Parker (Socialist) said that if a code of conduct was to be laid down it should not apply to Ministers only. 'If Sir Frederick Banbury voted for a Bill to raise railway rates he would be voting for a Bill to put money into his own pocket." But Sir Frederick would hardly descend to the level of the politicians who vote themselves £400 a year from the public purse in return for services which would be over-valued at sixpence.'⁸⁸

The Pall Mall Gazette chose to exploit the differences of opinion among Labour members about the affair, which led to the abstentions.

'The most significant feature of the division was the fact that the Labour party, although they had twice consulted amongst themselves at the instigation of their chairman, were divided, the Socialist section leaving their colleagues and walking out of the House.'⁸⁹

The journal then provided a list of all the Labour members who had voted with the Government. Another Conservative paper, The Outlook, also pointed to the splits in the Labour movement which the Scandal had emphasised. It reported the proceedings of the Glasgow Labour Congress, something which it would not have done in usual circumstances, but politically useful on this occasion. Speakers at this congress had criticised Parker for signing the Majority report and Ramsay MacDonald for allying with the Liberals in the Commons vote.

"Think," cried Mr Brownlie, of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, "of the position of the Post Office official who was punished because he had a ten-pound note in Marconis, and contrast this with the reward of one of the mediums of the chief actor who induced the unsophisticated Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Master of Elibank to dabble in Marconis, and has now been placed in the high and dignified position of Lord Chief Justice of England.'⁹⁰

The journal took great delight in pointing out the discrepancies between the official Labour attitude and its grass-roots support.

Thus, for the Labour movement, the Marconi Scandal was an embarrassment. Because of the Parliamentary party's political dependance on the Liberals, it became entangled in the partisan disputes and was exposed to the same kind of stresses as the Liberal Party. It helped to expose the splits within the Labour movement and to reveal the weakness of its parliamentary position.

What were the advantages of Liberal solidarity and how was it used to control events of the Scandal? First of all since Liberals were in positions of power it meant that the scandal was nearly avoided. We know that the bulk of criticism in 1912 came from Conservative sources. Before the August recess, there were seven motions before the House, all from Conservative M.Ps, either calling for outright rejection of the agreement or for a Select Committee investigation.⁹¹ This appears to have increased the determination to push through ratification before the recess, at least in the mind of Herbert Samuel.

From the account of the Poulsen interest, we know that Samuel approached Archer-Shee on the night of 6 August, when it had seemed decided not to force a vote on the matter, and had told him that he still intended to try for ratification. Samuel admitted to the Select Committee that he asked Archer-Shee to withdraw his opposition because the Admiralty and the Committee of Imperial Defence wanted the stations built as soon as possible. He agreed that he may have said he was still looking for ratification up to the last minute.⁹² It seems Samuel had been deluding himself on the strength of the opposition. On the 4th, he was able to write that although he was having trouble over the Marconi contract, it would be resolved in time. 'I have refused to consent to its being postponed till the autumn.'⁹³ By the 6th, it seemed that he had conceded defeat. 'I am to make my statement on Marconi tomorrow, but cannot yet get the approval of the House this side of the recess.'⁹⁴ Yet he was still prepared to approach Archer-Shee that night with a promise of action which was sincere enough to scare the Poulsen group and its supporters. Samuel's conduct in this episode naturally provoked hostility, particularly when the facts of the ministerial share purchases were known, and it was suggested that the contract was being hustled through to avoid any embarrassing inquiry. For instance, The Outlook, claimed:

'It was brought up at the last moment (August 6) - not for discussion, but, as was said at the time, in order to try to rush

it through. This did not look very like burning anxiety on the part of any Minister to make a clean breast of it.⁹⁵

The appointment of a Select Committee did nothing to lessen the party divisions which the Scandal had emphasised. Its composition of six Liberals, two Irish Nationalists and one Labour was an in-built government majority against the six Conservatives, provided that unity could be preserved. With this proviso, the majority could dominate the workings of the Committee. The basic procedure was for Conservatives to cross-examine government officials and for Liberals to defend them. Liberal members quizzed Conservative journalists involved in the campaign against the contract, Conservative members regaled the Liberal minister with details of their investments in American Marconis.

The minutes of evidence show the votes taken in the Committee, and the majority of these were decided on strict 'party' lines. The most blatant example of manipulation was the way the Committee's Majority report was produced. An original draft by the Liberal chairman, Sir Albert Spicer, which was mildly censorious, was opposed by a Conservative version, largely drawn up by Sir Robert Cecil. This alternative report was rejected by the majority, but then a process of obliteration was carried out on the chairman's draft. One vote removed paragraphs 7 to 30 inclusive. The resultant report was the one widely decided as a 'whitewash' and owed much to one of the main Liberal spokesmen on the Committee, Falconer. It was presumably this attitude which led Cecil to publish his report in defiance of the official verdict.

There were other instances when party or partisan views influenced Committee decisions. For example, attempts were made, chiefly by Conservative members, to obtain fuller information from Percy Heybourn about the distribution of American Marconi shares before the official opening date. Plans were drawn up to re-examine his evidence, but were rejected by the Liberal-led section of the Committee. Similarly, the Conservatives were anxious that no

cover-up should be implemented when the pass-books of Isaacs and Lloyd George were examined. It was suggested that the chairman and an accountant be entrusted with this task, but Conservatives wanted two other members of the Committee to be involved, to prevent any collusion and perhaps to gain some politically useful information on the financial status of the two ministers. This move was also voted down by the Liberal majority. This section also rejected the possibility of hearing Cecil Chesterton's evidence, simply by allowing him only a short period of grace after the initial postponement of his appearance. This was at a time when the Godfrey Isaacs proceedings hung over Chesterton's head and he was troubled by ill-health. The Conservative attempts to extend the time limit for his evidence were of no avail.

The most noteworthy attempt to postpone the appearance of the facts lay with Rufus Isaacs' priming of two members of the Committee, Booth and Falconer.⁹⁶ It seems that he told Falconer of the purchase of American Marconis on 22 January 1913, just before the journalists were to appear before the Committee.⁹⁷ The expressed objective of this act was to prevent any leak of information before the ministers had had an opportunity to make their confession. The implication is that they were, at this stage, ready to reveal their transactions. Isaacs' son wrote of his father:

'His decision to postpone a declaration as to his holding in the American Company had miscarried owing to the unforeseen delays. He had informed Mr Falconer and Mr Handel Booth, privately of these transactions, in order that they might be forearmed when the journalists came to give evidence, but nothing had yet been publicly divulged. Meanwhile the atmosphere was becoming daily more heavily charged with electricity and the longer a full statement had to be postponed, the louder would be the explosion throughout the country when the moment finally arrived.'⁹⁸

The day prior to the questioning of Isaacs about his informing Falconer and Booth, Archer-Shee had asked Asquith a question in the House on the matter. The Prime Minister was asked if and when he knew of the American dealings and if he had informed any members of the Committee of the transactions.⁹⁸ When

Asquith denied informing anyone, it was clear that the source must have been Isaacs himself, as he admitted to the Committee the following day. Subsequently, in the House, Asquith denied any knowledge of this act of Isaacs and refused to comment on its ethics.¹⁰⁰ The Liberal majority, led by Falconer himself, prevented any public discussion by the Select Committee that might reveal the details of the matter.¹⁰¹ When Bonar Law, in the June debate, accused Isaacs of using Falconer and Booth to steer away from dangerous ground and suggested that the reason why the ministers were reluctant to reveal their transactions was because they felt they might not have to do so,¹⁰² it was difficult to refute his words.

From the start, the Liberals were committed to a policy of not telling unless forced to, which had unfortunate repercussions when the truth was painfully extracted. Their attitude was typified in the exchange between Butcher and Captain Arthur Murray, brother of Elibank and trustee of the Liberal Party's Marconi shares. 'Had it not been for the facts which came to light in this Committee I suppose we should never have heard of this purchase of American Marconis on behalf of the Liberal Party? - That is quite probable.'¹⁰³ When Leo Amery, a Conservative member of the Committee and persistent critic of the contract wrote 'never ... in the whole course of our political history, has there been a worse Select Committee than this one,'¹⁰⁴ he was referring to the party squabbles and the manipulation which allowed episodes like the Booth/Falconer one to exist.

The intransigence of both sides was also clearly visible in the June debate. On the one hand, Liberals were obviously not prepared to accept any pointed reference or criticism of the ministers' actions, maintaining that a Conservative motion, proposed by George Cave, would, in fact, force Isaacs and Lloyd George to resign if carried. Whilst both were prepared to admit that errors of judgement had been made; for example, Isaacs described the decision not to reveal their dealings during the 11 October 1912 debate as a 'mistaken

course,¹⁰⁵ neither he nor the Liberal party was prepared to accept criticism from a Conservative motion. Asquith rejected the Conservative motion on two grounds. First, it was ungenerous, since many of the rumours and wild accusations had been proved false and yet the ministers had undergone a great ordeal because of this abuse. Second, he felt that the motion was one of direct censure, which he maintained the ministers' actions had not called for.¹⁰⁶

The Conservative leaders felt that the ministers had been involved in speculation and a process of concealment, and that therefore some expression of regret by the House, not just those concerned, must be placed on record.¹⁰⁷

No compromise could be found, and so the Liberal amendment was finally put to the House, being carried with the support of the Nationalist and Labour members. Whilst there was a great deal of regret that the party bickering had not been overcome, the result appears to have been predictable.

'... though Mr Balfour and Mr Bonar Law gently accused them of impropriety and lack of moral courage, it was obvious that Parliament had washed its hands of the whole affair. The Tories realized that they had done Mr George's reputation a good deal of damage, and they saw no point in turning him into a martyr.'¹⁰⁸

The other revealing action of the ministers was their involvement in the Le Matin case, when they chose to make the long-awaited disclosure about American Marconis. Whilst most serious studies agree that the appearance of libellous material in the journal was a most fortunate occurrence, given the pressures which were on the ministers at that time, few have taken the matter further. There were allegations that the trial, and the libel, were deliberately designed to allow the disclosures. As the New Age put it, the whole affair was 'carelessly contrived.'¹⁰⁹ Donaldson dismisses these charges as a 'curious theory'¹¹⁰, yet notes that Sir Robert Cecil, nearly forty years after the Scandal, could write: 'During the recess it was arranged, presumably by Ministers, that the French newspaper the Matin should publish an extreme version of the charges.'¹¹¹ Is there now any evidence to reinforce Cecil's claim?

Certainly, there is no denying that the purpose of the exercise was to make known the various purchases of American Marconis, and not to punish the journal. In this respect, it was a political action, rather than a legal one.¹¹² Maxse's evidence, a garbled version of which was reproduced by Le Matin and allowed the action, had suggested that he suspected the American dealings and so an explanation by the ministers was vital before Maxse could reveal all. Another possible explanation was that Godfrey Isaacs' action against Cecil Chesterton also threatened to produce some untimely revelations. This suggestion was mooted at the time.

'Is it possible that the Godfrey Isaacs-Chesterton case is the cause of the sudden haste and newly found disregard of ministers for relevancy? Did they realise that this information, which they had so carefully concealed in the House of Commons, could look even more damaging dragged out of unwilling witnesses under hostile cross-examination?'¹¹³

Proof that the trial was artificially created is hard to find. The racialist arguments of the Witness that Le Matin was a Jewish paper (it was not specified in what way) helping out Jewish politicians need more than their continued statement to be considered as serious evidence.¹¹⁴ It would, of course, be very surprising if there was any surviving evidence to show that the case had been rigged. There is, however, a series of circumstances which at least cast doubt on Donaldson's rather naive assessment.

First, there is the fact that the Le Matin article came at a very convenient time. Ministers had considered suing The Eye-Witness in August 1912, but rejected the idea for various reasons.¹¹⁵ There was no intention at that time to reveal the shareholdings. By the following year, pressure was mounting on them to disclose the dealings. Lloyd George was prepared to take some action in February 1913, which suggests he was anxious to end the obviously trying time. He contacted the legal firm of Lewis and Lewis and asked them to retain F.E. Smith for an action which might develop, promising further details at a later date.¹¹⁶ Following letters revealed that the action was to be against

Leo Maxse, and that Edward Carson was also to be retained. These arrangements were completed by 11 February, the day before Maxse was to appear before the Select Committee.¹¹⁷ The letters suggest that the action would be as a result of Maxse's evidence to this body. Lloyd George presumably expected that Maxse would have something libellous to say, but could not be sure. It seems rather much of a coincidence that when Maxse disappointed the Chancellor, a garbled version of his evidence appeared in Le Matin, the same legal firm and the same lawyers being retained for the case.

A second reason for suspicion, albeit less convincing and possibly libellous in itself, is the use of the firm of Lewis and Lewis. It had something of a reputation for 'handling ticklish affairs and litigation concerning "high society" and governmental and public circles,'¹¹⁸ largely built around Sir George Lewis, the founder of the firm.¹¹⁹ Sir George was knighted for his part in exposing the forged letters presented to the Parnell Commission,¹²⁰ but his name had become famous for less publicised reasons.

'His real accomplishments were in privately helping people who found themselves in trouble. He acquired an immense knowledge of the seamy side of society and he combined with this a remarkable memory so he had to make very few notes. Among his clients were numbered members of the royal family, and he was a personal friend of King Edward VII ... Not everyone admired him, for he sometimes espoused the causes of people widely considered to be scoundrels. A friend told him once that he thought that in a certain case he had done the public no service. The reply Lewis gave was: "The public was not my client." Unfortunately for history Lewis destroyed all his papers before he died and eschewed writing any memoirs; such a document could have been a fascinating exposé of the under-side of society life in late Victorian and Edwardian times.'¹²¹

Unfortunately, too, for the story of the Marconi Scandal, Sir George died at the end of 1911, and so played no part in the Le Matin affair, but his son, who had been virtually running the firm since 1908, no doubt followed the traditional pattern of litigation. If there was any deliberate rigging of the Le Matin affair, then Lewis and Lewis were not unused to 'privately helping people of importance who found themselves in trouble.'¹²² In addition, if the

ministers wished specifically to use Carson and Smith, prominent Conservatives, in order to create the impression of blamelessness, then they employed the correct firm. Lewis and Lewis had a long history of connections with both, and frequently called on their services.¹²³

That the case was brought solely for the purpose of making the disclosures is beyond doubt. The correspondence between Isaacs and Samuel, mentioned in a letter from Lewis and Lewis,¹²⁴ cannot be found, but it is clear that the question of litigation had been discussed by the two before the action was officially confirmed with the solicitors. On 16 February, two days after the Le Matin article, and two days before Lewis and Lewis wrote asking if Samuel wished to pursue the matter, Samuel had written to his mother with details of the proposed action. He felt that it was unfortunate proceedings had to be against a French journal, but that the chance had to be taken. They would probably go ahead if the journal apologised. Damages would not be sought, only costs.¹²⁵ Samuel's information, even at this early date, was remarkable, for this is exactly what happened. On the 18th, the journal published an apology but the ministers continued their action. Asquith was informed of this decision and agreed, although expressing regret, like Samuel, that it should be a French and not an English journal.¹²⁶ On 9 March, Samuel knew that the case would be undefended, that there would be apologies by the defence counsel, that Le Matin would pay the costs and that the ministers would be able to make their disclosures - 'the box and the effect will be excellent.'¹²⁷ This is evidence that, to a lesser extent, the case was rigged i.e. that the outcome was clear before the start and continued only for a purpose beyond the original libel. On the wider implications, there is sufficient evidence to suggest the idea of deliberate libel and conspiracy in the affair is not as preposterous as has been suggested.

The other significant facet of the case was the employment of two Conservatives as counsel. This brings us back to the question of party collusion and the cross-bench attitude of leading politicians in the midst of obvious party

differences. The choice of Smith and Carson is extremely interesting. . Whatever the reason for their acceptance of the brief, it did provide material for suggestions of Front Bench cooperation¹²⁸ and created much disturbance within the Conservative party. Bonar Law was unaware of his colleagues' involvement until James Campbell, the Unionist M.P., who had been asked to act for Le Matin, asked whether he should take the case. Law agreed to this but was obviously upset by news of Smith and Carson's interest.¹²⁹ Soon after the case, indignation grew as it became known that Smith was to take a brief for Godfrey Isaacs in his action against Cecil Chesterton.¹³⁰ When this case was being heard, George Younger, the Tory chief whip, complained that the second reading of the Home Rule Bill had been postponed because the ministers were involved in court and criticised the part being played by Smith and Carson.¹³¹ It was felt, he recorded, 'amongst our men', that they had betrayed their party, by precluding themselves from any Conservative attack over the Marconi Scandal.¹³²

The delay of the Home Rule Bill also annoyed Law, who told Younger that Smith and Carson had been going to refuse the Isaacs' brief precisely because it would interfere with its passage. Law cursed the 'trickery of the present Government' in postponing the bill to ensure the Ulster leaders' cooperation.¹³³ He also wrote to Carson to ask if he should publicize the fact that Home Rule was being postponed 'entirely to suit the Ministers.'¹³⁴

Discontent was also voiced by Lord Charles Beresford, Conservative M.P. for Portsmouth and a strong supporter of Ulster Unionism. He warned Law of the dangers inherent in the appearance of Smith and Carson. 'The feeling against Carson appearing in this case is not only strong it is violent, I have had numerous letters about it, couched in very strong terms.' He claimed many of these called Carson a traitor, and that men were withdrawing money from the Ulster fund. Beresford maintained that three weeks previously, Carson had said he was returning the brief, but had changed his mind yet again. 'If he continues this case it will do him as leader ineferable harm and our cause suffer to an

extent that may be fatal. We all look to you to stop this action of Carson's.' The defence of Rufus Isaacs was serious enough but this new development was the last straw. In a postscript, Beresford added that the English vote was needed to stop Home Rule. He maintained that the English were becoming tired of the Irish question (sic) and that if Carson 'defends a corrupt individual on the other side', then support for the Unionist cause would dwindle and the vote would swing towards Home Rule.¹³⁵

Beresford's arguments have an air of convincing logic to them. Earlier references have shown the disgruntlement of Nationalist supporters who had allied themselves to a Liberal government in the hope of achieving Home Rule, only to find their goal threatened by the Scandal. Similarly, Unionists, who had declared that they would stop at nothing to destroy the Liberal government, finding themselves in a situation which, as Blake points out, could well have had that effect, then discovered that two of their leaders were helping Liberal ministers to survive, and precluding themselves from any parliamentary criticism of the affair.¹³⁶ No wonder that confusion reigned in the party. It was admirably expressed in one particular letter to Bonar Law from Claude Sisley.

'I write to you as a convinced Tory, and as one who is still, to some extent a Unionist. But when I ponder over the present position of the party I wonder why on earth I should render it any allegiance.

Heaven knows we had a jellyfish as a leader when Mr Balfour was at the head of the Party. He ran away to the Continent after he had sold the consistent members of the House of Lords to the Radicals.

What we have in you, Sir, I will not set down.

When the whole country was in arms against the Insurance Bill and you had the chance of putting the Unionist Party in an unassailable position by voting against it, you chose the cowardly course of scuttling out of the House and abstaining.

This, Sir, in spite of the fact that the proud boast of the Unionists has always been that they have opposed interference with personal liberty.

Newmarket election condemns the thing once more - and you say nothing.

The Unionist Party has declared that Mr Lloyd George is a danger to the country. The Marconi Revelations found you and a great part of the Unionist press endeavouring to screen the man and his Hebrew associate from any unpleasant consequences. Prominent Unionists rush to their assistance in that very odd affair - the case against

Le Matin. My non-Party friends are making the sneering comment: "Oh, the Unionists were in it too!"

You profess to hate Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment. The time is rapidly approaching when these measures will become law. It evidently does not alarm you, for you do nothing to prevent it.

Why on earth, Sir, should I be a Unionist?

As you must have a good deal of unoccupied time on your hands, perhaps you will spare a moment to write and tell me.¹³⁷

Sisley was obviously disillusioned with a great deal of Conservative policy and lack of action. In the particular case of the Marconi Scandal, can we validate his claim that inter-party consensus contributed to the survival of Isaacs, Lloyd George and possibly the Liberal government? A range of evidence suggests we can.

In the June debate, Asquith spoke of the vicious rumour with which ministers had to contend

'The wide range which was given to these scandalous statements was largely due to the action and the influence of a certain section of the Press. I gladly acknowledge that the great organs of the Press, those in particular that represent the party opposite, behaved from the beginning to the end of these transactions with dignity, with moderation, with restraint, and in a manner which calls for no adverse comment or criticism.'¹³⁸

Similarly, Herbert Samuel made several comments about the restraint of the bulk of the Tory press. In a letter to his mother shortly after the Le Matin trial, he wrote 'The opposition press, with few exceptions, has behaved decently about it.'¹³⁹ Two weeks later, he noted: 'The Unionist Press has said some very kind things about my evidence before the Committee.'¹⁴⁰ When the second Marconi contract was about to go before the House in August 1913, Samuel told his wife: 'The opposition press has dropped the Marconi contract and one hears nothing of it here.'¹⁴¹ Clearly the Scandal was not exploited by the Conservative press to its full potential.¹⁴²

What about the censure debate in June 1913? Did that not show the bitter party feeling on both sides, compromise impossible and a straight party vote to decide the matter? True, there were harsh words on both sides, but it had the appearance of ritual confrontation, rather than a full-blooded attempt to

destroy a government. Given reasonable support from Nationalists and Labour, the liberals had little to fear from the Conservative attacks. Dangerfield's analysis of the situation, noted above, seems to ring true. If one looks at the speeches of the Conservative leaders, Balfour and Bonar Law, their rebukes appear rather mild. Margot Asquith's appraisal of Balfour's words bear this out. 'Arthur Balfour's noble speech saved our men - no real human being wants to hound these young men more or less to their doom.'¹⁴³ Even Bonar Law has expressed the fear that he had been too censorious.

'The whole situation was very difficult, and I was afraid at the time that I might be too harsh, and I am not sure that I was not; but we had to justify our refusing to accept their proposal, and I do not think that could be done without making it clear that we did look upon the charges made against them as serious.'¹⁴⁴

Further evidence of the ritual nature of, particularly, Law's opposition is Blake's assessment of his involvement in the 'New Tactics' of the time. Blake suggests that these were employed in order that his own followers might forget their own feuds and unite in 'hatred of the common enemy'. There is some reason to suppose that Law regretted the rather petty attacks he made on the Liberals in this pre-war period.¹⁴⁵ If, as has been asserted, his only passionate cause was Tariff Reform and Ulster, then the significance of the Scandal for the Conservative leadership is clearly diminished. Given the already mentioned 'cross-bench' attitude of leaders of both parties, the less than ruthless approach to the Marconi Scandal seems to fit into context. Perhaps the Liberals recognised this, as Churchill's phrases suggest. Robert Cecil, one of the leading agitators, said of Rufus Isaacs, 'He has always been extraordinarily nice to me in spite of Marconi.'¹⁴⁶

Another contributory factor to the Conservative approach was the treatment of the Liberal ministers by certain right-wing journals, not necessarily directly involved with the party. The accusations levelled and rumours repeated have been shown, as far as is known, to be out of all proportion to the actual events. Therefore, it was difficult for any criticism to be made without it

seeming to be part of the more widespread and scurrilous attack. Thus, in the June debate, Conservatives who wished to express some degree of censure were forced first to divorce themselves totally from the wilder charges, pointing out that they, nor the Conservative Party as a whole, made no complaint about 'corruption'. This had the effect of detracting from any later criticism which they had to make. Law and Balfour may have felt that the admitted errors of judgement, although serious, were inconsequential compared to some of the journalistic gossip and so found it difficult to challenge Isaacs and Lloyd George in a ruthless manner. Margot Asquith made the remark that, had there not been so many wild accusations, the opposition's case would have been much stronger.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Asquith confided to Lloyd George that the Liberals were bound to win the June debate 'because of the low charges they (the Conservatives) made without a shadow of evidence and after all is said and done the Committee have proved nothing but ... indiscretion.'¹⁴⁸

Although certain back-bench Conservative M.Ps and many 'grass-roots' supporters felt differently, the leadership of the party certainly seems to have been deflected by the over-anxious and exaggerated push from behind.¹⁴⁹ It also had the effect of strengthening Liberal support. Using Margot Asquith as a selective example, it can be shown that there was a definite reaction to the hostile campaign. She maintained that although Lloyd George and Isaacs had not been correct in all their actions, the violence of the attacks which they had had to suffer made her support them all the more.¹⁵⁰

Finally, perhaps we ought to ask just how concerned was the British 'public', including politicians, with the affair and with financial scandals in general. In an era when investigative journalism seems to have been re-discovered, perhaps it is too early to formulate any general theory, but we might attempt some conclusion about Edwardian England. There is, at present, a school of historical thinking which seeks to analyse the generalisations about the Edwardian age and to differentiate between the different strata of

of thoughts and actions. In this vein, Paul Thompson has recently asked just how serious was the crisis referred to at the beginning of this chapter and has suggested that the tensions of the period can be seen as a reflection of the feelings of those in authority rather than as a general sense of foreboding.¹⁵¹ The élitist nature of much source material is something which must be continually stressed. Similarly, whilst this chapter has attempted to analyse the political significance of the Scandal, there is no real way of measuring the extent of its influence or importance for the total population. Writing about the lack of impact in the Kynoch affair of 1899-1900, when Lloyd George savagely attacked Joseph Chamberlain over his family's financial interests in armaments, Elie Halévy claimed:

'These attacks do not appear to have affected public opinion. A great mercantile nation like England has little fondness for the public exposure of pecuniary scandals in which politics are mixed up with business. It was as though the Press and the political parties had entered into a tacit agreement to hush them up.'¹⁵²

Now the Marconi Scandal has shown that this was not the case, that there was no press censorship, despite the claims of the less well-established journals. Yet Robert Tressell, writing nearer the time of the Scandal, described the reaction of the citizens of 'Mugsborough' to the corruption of their town councillors, in much the same way as Halévy described reaction to Kynoch.

'Now and then, when details of some unusually scandalous proceedings of the Council's leaked out, the townspeople - roused for a brief space from their customary indifference - would discuss the matter in a casual, half-indignant, half-amused, helpless sort of way; but always as if it were something that did not directly concern them. It was during some such nine days' wonder that the title of "The Forty Thieves" was bestowed on the members of the Council by their semi-imbecile constituents, who, not possessing sufficient intelligence to devise means of punishing the culprit, affected to regard the manoeuvres of the Brigands as a huge joke.'¹⁵³

On a slightly more patronising level, we find the same comments in the Witness by an anonymous correspondent who claimed that only the educated despised Isaacs and company for their activities; the working class chuckled at them.¹⁵⁴

Therefore, if we accept that the importance of financial scandals may not have been as long-lasting or mind-shattering as we might want to believe, and if parliamentary politics, at least at the governing élite level, did not seek to exploit the situation to its utmost, then we must ask why the Marconi Scandal aroused so much hysteria. This is not too strong a word to describe the pages of The Eye-Witness or the National Review during the affair, and it seems that the essential ingredient of the Scandal which provoked such a reaction was the fact that Jews were involved. Its significance was not that it was a financial/political scandal, but a financial/political scandal about Jews. Just how this factor was identified and treated is the purpose of the main body of this study.

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER 3

1. All quotations from Eric Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire, (London, 1969), p. 193
2. C.F.G. Masterman, The Condition of England, (London, 1909), p. 304
3. George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, (London, 1935)
4. J.L. Hammond, C.P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian, (London, 1934), pp. 101-2
5. L.C.B. Seaman, Post-Victorian Britain, 1902-1951, (London, 1966), p. 38
6. K.W.W. Aikin, The Last Years of Liberal England, 1900-1914, (London, 1972), p. 119. Similarly, Kenneth Morgan, The Age of Lloyd George : The Liberal Party and British Politics, 1890-1929, (London, 1971), p. 48, suggests that Lloyd George, with greater vision than many politicians of the era, was anxious to avoid what he felt were petty delays in the achievement of his political aims. However the things he dismissed as petty, Home Rule, the Lords, Free Trade, the disestablishment of the Welsh Church, were controversial, bound up in decades of traditional conflict, and could not be dismissed so easily.
7. Aikin, op. cit., p. 119
8. G.C. Heberle, 'The Predicament of the British Unionist Party, 1906-1914', Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1967, p. 267
9. See, for example, W.S. Blunt's diary, 25 July 1911 - 'Hugh Cecil and F.E. Smith are the leaders of the revolt with George (Wyndham)'. Wilfred Scawen Blunt, My Diaries : Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914, (London, 1919), p. 770.
Note that Richard Rempel, 'Lord Hugh Cecil's Parliamentary Career, 1900-1914 : Promise Unfulfilled', Journal of British Studies, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May 1972), pp. 104-130, stresses the lack of party discipline throughout Cecil's career (p. 105) and suggests that, in the years 1910-14, 'his intemperate and virulent attacks on the Liberals placed him so far on the side of reaction as to destroy permanently whatever chances he may still have had for high position.'
10. Philip Snowden, An Autobiography : Volume 1, 1864-1919, (London, 1934), p. 253
11. Ibid., p. 254
12. See Alfred Lyttleton to Balfour, 13 November 1912, Balfour Papers, B.M. Add. MSS. 49775, cited in Heberle, op. cit., p. 237
13. Blanche Dugdale, Arthur James Balfour ; First Earl of Balfour, Volume 2 (1906-1930), (London, 1936), pp. 103-4
14. Quoted in Stephen Koss, Asquith, (London, 1976), p. 134
15. Heberle, op. cit., pp. 222-3
16. Ensor, op. cit., p. 458
17. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 10

18. Donald Read, Edwardian England, (Longon, 1972), p. 108, Kenneth Morgan, The Age of Lloyd George, p. 51, Richard Shannon, The Crisis of Imperialism, 1865-1915, (London, 1974), p. 447. Koss, op. cit., p. 100, stresses that Asquith was 'unfailingly loyal' to all his ministers.
19. Quoted in Duff Cooper, Old Men Forget, (London, 1953), p. 46
20. Morgan, The Age of Lloyd George, p. 51
21. Ibid., p. 47. Cameron Hazelhurst, 'Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908-1916', English Historical Review, Volume 85, No. 336 (July 1970), pp. 512-3, Dangerfield, op. cit., (Paladin edition, 1970), pp. 46-7, Roy Douglas, The History of the Liberal Party, 1895-1970, (London, 1971), p. 48
22. Morgan, The Age of Lloyd George, p. 47
23. G.K. Chesterton, Autobiography, (London, 1936), p. 209
24. Hilaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton, The Party System : A Criticism, (London, 1911), p. 33
25. Ibid., p. 25
26. Neal Blewett, The Peers, The Parties and the People : The British General Elections of 1910, (London, 1972), p. 233
27. op. cit.
28. Moyle to Bonar Law, 5 April 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/3/6
29. See entry in diary of Arthur Murray, Liberal M.P. and brother of Lord Murray of Elibank, 28 February 1913, Arthur Murray papers, 8814. See also A.J.P. Taylor (ed.), My Darling Pussy : The Letters of Lloyd George and Frances Stevenson, 1913-1941, (London, 1975), p. 3
30. Sidney Zebel, Balfour : A Political Biography, (London, 1973), pp. 155-6
31. Blunt, op. cit., pp. 730, 782
32. H.M. Hyndman to R.D. Blumenfeld, 29 March 1913, Blumenfeld Papers
33. Ibid., 5 November 1913
34. Speech reported in Castleford and Pontefract Gazette, 20 September 1912
35. R.M. Punnett, Front Bench Opposition : The Role of the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Cabinet and Shadow Government in British Politics, (London, 1973), p. 30
36. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 54, col. 578
37. Ibid., cols. 578-9
38. Ibid., cols. 621-2. Locker-Lampson's claim that Chesterton was a socialist fitted into his idea of justice for all, since Chesterton could be seen as Locker-Lampson's political opposite, yet had been given help. Note that

after the war, the M.P. was active in the Anti-Socialist Union (see Kenneth Brown, 'The Anti-Socialist Union' in Brown (ed.), op. cit., pp. 234-61) and had help in the form of publicity work, stewarding etc. from the British Fascists in his 'Keep out the Reds' campaign. (Benewick, op. cit., p. 34). Indeed it was claimed that when he was Austen Chamberlain's private secretary, he kept a mascot of a 'Bolshie' hanging from a miniature gibbet, which he exhibited whilst touring the Birmingham constituency! (Michael Kinnear, The Fall of Lloyd George, (London, 1973), p. 27).

39. Locker-Lampson to Bonar Law, 9 June 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/5/12
40. op. cit., p. 235
41. The New Witness, 10 April 1913
42. The Times, 31 May 1913
43. The Outlook, 19 April 1913
44. See Wright to Bonar Law, 22 March 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/2/35, in which he pointed out to Law the possibility that the ministers' shares came from the allotment to Marconi directors and friends, the basis of the shareholders' action against the company.
45. See Chapter 5. Note also that a similar series of articles appeared in the Financial News, beginning 12 April 1913
46. Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 137-8
47. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 47, col. 1186. Hall had already been active in the parliamentary campaign against the Marconi contract.
48. Steadman, Van Praagh and Taylor (Godfrey Isaacs' solicitors) to Asquith, 30 July 1913, Asquith Papers, MS 24, 257-60
49. Ibid.
50. The Times, 31 May 1913. A letter from Wright about the possible profits that the ministers could have made from their Marconi shares appeared in The New Witness on 25 September 1913, showing the continued publicity being made of the affair.
51. See The New Witness, 20 November 1913, 2 April 1914, 7 May 1914
52. See Chapter 7
53. Harold Nicholson, King George V, (London, 1952), p. 210, cited in Donaldson op. cit., pp. 102-3
54. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 102
55. Ibid., pp. 102-3
56. It has been noted by other historians, for example, Hyde, op. cit., p. 160 and Roy Jenkins, Asquith, (London, 1964), p. 254. Note that Roy Jenkins

eloquent arguments to show that Asquith had no knowledge of the ministers' investments in American Marconis before January 1913 (pp. 253-4) are destroyed by Asquith's reply to a parliamentary question by Archer-Shee in March 1913

'I was informed by the Master of Elibank at the end of July or the beginning of August (1912) that he and the Attorney-General and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had purchased shares in an American Marconi Company. At a later date in August the Attorney-General repeated the statement to me, and I believe added that they had sold some of the shares, but retained the bulk of them.'

Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 50, cols. 1629-30

Robert Rhodes James, op. cit., p. 271n follows Jenkins, line by questioning whether Asquith knew the full details before January 1913, implying that if this were the case, the Prime Minister was less 'guilty' of a cover-up. The Parliamentary reply quoted above answers James' question.

57. Isaacs to Asquith, 30 July 1913, Asquith Papers, MS 13, 125-6
58. Asquith to Isaacs, 2 August 1913, Asquith Papers, MS 13, 127-8
In addition, there may have been another resignation offer by Lloyd George. C.F.G. Masterman claimed that, following Rufus Isaacs' speech from the box in the Le Matin case, Lloyd George gave Asquith the opportunity of dispensing with his services. It is claimed that Asquith had to refuse such an offer, since acceptance would mean the loss of Isaacs as well and this he was determined to avoid.
(Don M. Cregier; Bounder from Wales : Lloyd George's Career Before The First World War, (London, 1976), p. 207)
59. Margot Asquith to Lloyd George, 13 June 1913, Lloyd George Papers, C/6/12/2
60. E.T. Raymond, Mr Lloyd George, (London, 1922), p. 161, cited in Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 238-9
61. Jenkins, op. cit., p. 255. Equally, Lord Murray recognised the help given to his image by Asquith's stand. See letter of thanks, 20 August 1913, Asquith Papers, MS 13, 153-4
62. Asquith to George V, 17 June 1913, Cab 41/34/21. Since Cabinet minutes were not kept until December 1916, this is the only official record of proceedings at this meeting.
63. 30 April 1914
64. See H.V. Emy, Liberal Radicals and Social Politics, 1892-1914, (London, 1973), p. 279. For the period 1910-1914, Emy lists 15 divisions which raised points of principle and notes those Liberals who voted 5 or more times against the government. Amongst the 30 listed appear the names of Mason (5 votes) and Martin (7 votes).
65. Daily Herald, 6 August 1912
66. Justice, 16 August 1913
67. The New Witness, 30 April 1914
68. Ibid., 22 January 1914

69. Ibid., 19 February 1914
70. Undated note, Elibank Papers, 8803, 65 (probably June 1912)
71. Letter in The Times, 30 June 1913
72. See Marconi File, Lloyd George Papers, C/24/2
73. Roy Douglas, 'Labour in Decline, 1910-1914', op. cit., p. 110
74. Ibid., p. 108. Similarly in January 1910, none of the 40 Labour M.Ps had Liberal opposition (pp. 106-7)
75. Largely based on the arguments in Henry Pelling, A Short History of the Labour Party, (London, 1961), pp. 19-20
76. J.H. Stewart Reid, The Origins of the British Labour Party, (Minneapolis, 1955), pp. 202-3
77. Parker had been elected in 1906 for the two-member constituency of Halifax in an electoral pact with the Liberals. For details of his less than radical career, see Joyce Bellamy and John Saville (eds), Dictionary of Labour Biography, Volume 2, (London, 1974), pp. 289-91
78. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 50, cols. 478-9
79. Douglas, 'Labour in Decline', op. cit., p. 124. For a more detailed account of the emergence of a 'left-wing' journal, see R.J. Holton, 'Daily Herald v. Daily Citizen, 1912-1915 : The Struggle for a Labour Daily in Relation to "The Labour Unrest"', International Review of Social History, Vol. 19 (1974), pp. 347-376
80. Daily Citizen, 2 April 1913
81. Ibid., 18 June 1913
82. Ibid., 20 June 1913
83. Daily Herald, 12 May 1913
84. Ibid., 17 June 1913
85. Justice, 3 May 1913
86. Financial News, 20 June 1913
87. Ibid., 21 June 1913
88. Ibid., 19 June 1913
89. Pall Mall Gazette, 20 June 1913
90. The Outlook, 31 January 1914
91. Those for rejection came from Martin Archer-Shee, J.A. Grant (Egremont), W. Mitchell-Thompson (South Down), Lord Robert Cecil (Hitchin) and A. Fell (Yarmouth). Those asking for a Select Committee were from George Terrell (Chippenham) and Lord Hugh Cecil (Oxford University). (Morning Post, 5 August 1913)

92. S.C., Vol. 2, pp. 146-7
93. Samuel to his mother, 4 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/156, 409
94. Ibid., 6 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/157, 622
95. The Outlook, 5 April 1913
96. Falconer was Liberal M.P. for Forfarshire (see reference to the 'Caledonian Super-Jew' in the Witness, p. 220) Booth was Liberal M.P. for Pontefract. He became involved in a court case in 1917, being tried for obtaining control by deception of a firm involved in munitions. The firm was owned by a man of German origin called Gruban, and Booth joined the company as a director in 1915. Gruban feared internment and was persuaded by Booth to hand over control, in return for which Booth promised he would see that internment did not happen. In fact, a few days after this, Gruban was interned, largely because Booth informed the Minister of Munitions of the position in order to retain control of the firm. After an appeal, Booth was sued by Gruban and damages awarded against him. 'Mr Handel Booth's period of usefulness as a Member of Parliament was over' (Patrick Hastings, Cases in Court, (London, 1949), p. 128). He was replaced as candidate in the 1918 election by Sir Compton Ricketts, the Paymaster General, standing as a Coalition Liberal. Booth's career in business appears to have been somewhat chequered. The Witness alleged on 10 April 1913 that he had been a director of several liquidated companies and at the moment was chairman of three which had paid no dividend and whose profits seemed suspicious.
97. See S.C., Vol. 2, p. 58
98. Marquess of Reading, op. cit., pp. 255-6
99. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 50, col. 1629
100. See ibid., Vol. 53, col. 1246 and Vol. 54, col. 555
101. See S.C., Vol. 2, p. 68
102. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 54, col. 654
103. S.C., Vol. 2, p. 576
104. L.S. Amery, My Political Life : Volume 1, England Before the Storm, 1896-1914, (London, 1953), p. 422
105. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 54, col. 421
106. Ibid., cols. 548-9
107. See speeches of Balfour and Bonar Law, ibid., cols. 571, 655-6
108. Dangerfield, op. cit., p. 275
109. New Age, 10 April 1913. See also The Throne, 12 April 1913 - 'fortunate coincidence', Daily Herald, 18 March 1913, The Outlook, 29 March 1913

110. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 132
111. Robert Cecil, All the Way, (London, 1949), p. 121
112. Jolly, op. cit., p. 200
113. The Outlook, 29 March 1913. See also Leo Amery to Bonar Law, 20 March 1913 Bonar Law Papers, 29/2/28, in which Amery concluded that the Le Matin action was brought because Cecil Chesterton 'had got the information'.
114. See p.218 . Note also that other journals pursued this line. For example, The Outlook, 29 March 1913, described Le Matin as a 'cosmopolitan organ', inferring the same kind of thinking as the Witness. The Throne, another right-wing Conservative journal, wrote 'Le Matin is not a French nationalist organ; in other words, it has, if anything, a strong pro-semitic tendency.' (26 March 1913). This raises the issue of Jewish control of the press, a favourite allegation of those with anti-semitic tendencies. This theme will be discussed in chapters 9 and 10.
115. See chapter 1
116. Lloyd George to Lewis and Lewis, 7 February 1913, Lloyd George Papers, C/9/4/3
117. See exchange of letters, 8, 10, 11 February 1913, Lloyd George Papers, C/9/4/4, 5, 8 and 9
118. Ewen Montagu, The Archer-Shee Case, (Newton Abbott, 1974), p. 25
119. See Cecil Roth, 'The Court Jews of Edwardian England', Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 5, (1943), reprinted in Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History, (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 290
120. Rodney M. Bennett, The Archer-Shees Against the Admiralty : The Story Behind the Winslow Boy, (London, 1973), p. 54
121. Ibid. See also A Foreign Resident, Society in the New Reign, (London, 1904), which contains several references to Sir George Lewis and his activities in this sphere. On p. 198, he is described as 'that professional vindicator of affluent innocence and unveiler of impecurios guilt'. It may be of some significance that Sir George Lewis's name featured in the list submitted to the king for the creation of peers during the House of Lords crisis. (See Jenkins, op. cit., p. 540)
122. Bennett, op. cit., p. 53
123. The most notable case was the use of Carson by Lewis and Lewis as defence counsel (with Isaacs acting for the Crown) in the Archer-Shee case (see, for example, Edward Marjoribanks, Life of Lord Carson, Volume 1. (London, 1932), p. 424)
124. Lewis and Lewis to Samuel, 18 February 1913, Samuel Papers, A/38/25
125. Samuel to his mother, 16 February 1913, Samuel Papers, 4/156/430.
N.B. There is a postscript attached to a letter dated 26 January 1913 (A/156/427) which refers to the Le Matin article of the 13th or 14th. 'This is the first opportunity we have had of taking action as it is the

first time anything definite has been said.' It then states that an apology would be sought, 'failing which proceedings will be taken.' If this were written in January, it would be clear evidence of a 'put-up job', but it is clearly out of context with the letter, and suggests an error of cataloguing rather than a historical revelation

126. Asquith to Samuel, 24 February 1913, Samuel Papers, A/38/29
127. Samuel to his mother, 9 March 1913, Samuel Papers, A/156/433
128. Samuel appears to have been aware of this, for he wrote to the solicitors that he would have preferred 'non-political counsel'. Samuel to Lewis and Lewis, 25 February 1913, Samuel Papers, A/38/27
129. Robert Blake, The Unknown Prime Minister : The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law, 1858-1923, (London, 1955), p. 143
130. See, for example, the sentiments expressed by John Baird, Conservative M.P. for Rugby, Baird to Bonar Law, 4 April 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/3/4
131. Younger to Law, 22 May 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/4/16
132. Ibid., 25 May 1913, 29/4/21. James, op. cit., p. 272 records that the involvement in Le Matin marked the 'decisive turning-point in Smith's fortunes with his party'.
133. Law to Younger, 23 May 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 33/5/31
134. Law to Carson, 24 May 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 33/5/34
135. Beresford to Law, 25 May 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/4/22
136. Blake, op. cit., p. 143
137. Claude Sisley to Law, 26 May 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/4/25
138. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 54, col. 549
139. Samuel to his mother, 23 March 1913, Samuel Papers, A/156, 436
140. Ibid., 6 April, 1913, Samuel Papers, A/156, 438
141. Samuel to his wife, 6 August 1913, Samuel Papers, A/156, 668
142. For a more detailed survey of press reactions, see Chapter 4
143. Margot Asquith to St Loe Strachey, 18 August 1913, Strachey Papers. Asquith himself expressed similar feelings about Balfour's speech - see the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Memoirs and Reflections, 1852-1927, Volume 1 (London, 1938), p. 211
144. Bonar Law to Carson, 21 June 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 33/5/37
145. Blake, op. cit., p. 96
146. Robert Cecil to Edward Cecil, 19 October 1914, Papers of Lord and Lady Cecil (Hatfield), 55/148, quoted in Kenneth Rose, The Later Cecils, (London, 1975), p. 146

147. Margot Asquith to Strachey, 18 August 1913, Strachey Papers.
148. Asquith to Lloyd George, 13 June 1913, Lloyd George Papers, C/6/12/2
149. Indeed, it was frequently claimed by these journals that Liberals, Lloyd George and Rufus Isaacs included, stressed the more exaggerated claims, particularly those of Cecil Chesterton, and the suffering which these had caused them in order to detract from the gravity of actual events. See, for example, the Morning Post, 20 June 1913 : 'That is why there has been so much made of these preposterous charges of corruption : without them the Ministerial case would have been limp indeed.'
150. Margot Asquith to Strachey, September 1913, Strachey Papers
151. Paul Thompson, The Edwardians : The Remaking of British Society, (London, 1975), esp. pp. 252-3
152. Elie Halévy, Imperialism and the Rise of Labour, (London, 1951-1965 edition), p. 97
153. Robert Tressell, Ragged Trousered Philanthropist, (London, 1914-1968 edition), p. 212
154. 25 December 1913

CHAPTER 4 : THE PRESS AND THE SCANDAL

If it is to be maintained that the outcome of the Scandal was partly due to Liberal strength and unity on the issue, then the Liberal press must be included in that proposal. During the period under consideration, the available platforms in journalism for Liberals were declining, proportionally, in number, as Alan Lee has recently shown.¹ Although the number of Liberal journals in the provinces still outnumbered those identifiable as 'Conservative',² it has been claimed that, by 1910, the circulation figures of the London dailies showed a two to one advantage in favour of the Unionists.³ This statistic, however, does not take account of the divisions and differences which were apparent amongst the Opposition journals, which was obviously a weakening factor.⁴ In 1910, it is suggested that there was a far greater degree of unity in the Liberal press.

'The three London morning dailies, the evening Star, the Liberal Sunday newspapers and the weekly Nation were yoked to the Radical wing of the party. The Westminster Gazette spoke for the moderate elements in the party, but disagreed little with the Radical press in the emphasis placed on electoral issues.⁵

At the time of the Scandal, there were only two national dailies with Liberal leaning, the Morning Leader having merged with the Daily News in 1912, the first joint edition appearing in May of that year.⁶ This left the News and the Daily Chronicle as the only national morning journals (this excludes, of course, the Manchester Guardian, which was felt at the time to be a provincial paper.⁷). The other most important or influential journals were the Westminster Gazette and the Nation.

The Gazette was owned by a syndicate of Liberal sympathisers, under the chairmanship of Sir Alfred Mond, a Liberal M.P., and edited by J.A. Spender.⁸ According to H.W. Massingham, editor of the Nation, the Gazette was the organ

of Liberal 'Ministerialism'.⁹ On the other hand, the Nation, whilst being recognised as a Liberal weekly, did not represent official party dogma.

'Indeed there is little indication that Massingham ever aspired to speak with authority for the Liberal Party, no evidence whatsoever that he ever found himself doing so. Those at this time who knew Massingham best emphasised as his chief virtue and the nature of his contribution, his independence from any faction, from any party'.¹⁰

Thus, if any attempt is to be made to assess the differing Liberal attitudes on Marconi, then a comparison of these two journals' approaches is a reasonable starting point.

Both welcomed the news that a Select Committee might be appointed to investigate the contract after it had failed to be ratified in August 1912. The Nation was simply glad that the matter was to be fully discussed, and at this stage considered only the question of the merits of the contract.¹¹ The Gazette was more concerned to explain the reasons why pressure for an investigation had been so great, and why it had included certain Liberals.

'They have not been for or against any particular thing, but they have insisted that an understanding of this kind, which commits the country to very heavy payments towards work done by a private company, should receive full consideration apart from the department immediately concerned. They have stood, that is to say, for the full control of the House of Commons.'¹²

Following the October debate, and the ministers' denials of involvement in English Marconi shares, the Gazette turned in triumph on the critics.

'So far as the personal question is concerned, we have this wide campaign, the deliberate purpose of which has been to picture certain Ministers as making fortunes out of their knowledge of the Marconi agreement, and we have the declarations - so definite and categorical as any statement could be - that not a single Minister used his knowledge to enrich himself by as much as a penny piece. These denials will, we think, carry conviction to any decent or honest mind. But the matter cannot end there. We have got to have at least an attempt to justify the original statements in evidence before the Committee, or we shall have to brand those who made these statements as more despicable than the paid bravo who stabs under cover of the dark.'¹³

Essentially, Massingham agreed with this line. He described Lawson's article in the National Review as a mixture of fact and innuendo, with certain criticisms that should be openly discussed.¹⁴ The Nation made a clear distinction between rumours of corruption and the terms of the contract. Since no evidence has been produced to support the various allegations, he accepted the ministers' denials, but was unhappy about the details of the contract itself.¹⁵ An article on 'Some Aspects of the Marconi Agreement' begged readers to look at the scientific evidence, rather than the more spicy allegations. 'The danger is that if the contract is ratified in its present form, a virtual monopoly will be created.'¹⁶

However, as the Scandal developed and witnesses like Lawson and Maxse came before the Select Committee, even the Nation accepted that their accusations against ministers ought to be answered first. 'These are questions of honour, and they ought to have precedence even of the important point as to whether the Marconi contract should stand or whether the state should set up and manage wireless stations for itself.'¹⁷ Massingham claimed that journals like the National Review and The Outlook had one objective, 'to associate Cabinet Ministers, and especially Mr Lloyd George, with secret and therefore corrupt dealings in Marconi shares at the time of their inflation.'¹⁸ Special mention was made of Leo Maxse for withholding evidence which was claimed could substantiate the rumours. Journalists, proclaimed Massingham, could not afford to take this stance. 'We write with no personal feeling, but we are convinced that if journalism creeps behind this kind of earthwork, its power is gone.'¹⁹

In similar vein, the Westminster Gazette declared that Maxse's plea of protecting his sources was not good enough. If what he hinted at was true, then ministers were guilty of gambling and corruption.

'But we begin to think that some of these allegations and suspicions arise from a habit of using violent words which, from long use or abuse, have, in the minds of those who employ them, lost the plain meaning which other people attach to them. That is usually the nemesis of invective.'²⁰

So far, there had been little divergence of opinion, except perhaps that the Nation expressed more forcefully doubts about the merits of the contract. However, this situation was to change with the Le Matin revelations. The Gazette, which has been described as a party organ, reported the trial proceedings calmly and stated that there was nothing to worry about in the American transactions, which were perfectly legitimate. Apart from the name, 'the transactions would call for no comment on public ground.'²¹ The next day, having noted the reactions to the disclosures, there was a grudging admission that the ministers ought to have realised misconceptions would occur, and that it would have been better to disclose the dealings earlier. In spite of this, it still maintained that the new evidence was no grounds for the scandalous charges which had been levelled at the ministers.

The Nation was far more critical. Whilst agreeing that Rufus Isaacs bought his shares after the contract had been signed, and that therefore the matter could not be classed as corruption, the journal came out strongly against the ministers' actions. '... we are bound to record our view that a grievous error of judgement was committed when Sir Rufus Isaacs touched a share in a Marconi venture - in itself a legitimate and useful enterprise - and commended the transaction to his colleagues.'²² Isaacs' actions were declared to be a bad example; the purchases were seen as partially speculative and as indiscreet. It was claimed that he had taken an advantage over the ordinary investor and that the distinctions between the English and American Marconi companies were very blurred. The dealings should have been revealed earlier and critics had some justification for saying there had been a 'whitewash'.²³ A couple of months later, the journal wondered publicly whether

Sir Rufus should not have resigned the previous autumn over the affair, suggesting that Lloyd George deserved some sympathy for the trouble which Isaacs had inflicted on him.²⁴ Massingham had long been an admirer of Lloyd George²⁵ and it appears that he was upset by the setback to his career. Thus, the bulk of the journal's criticism was directed against Isaacs as instigator. Likewise, 'ALD', writing after the details of Liberal Party funds in Marconis had been disclosed, described popular feelings as "'Murray should be repudiated, Isaacs should resign, George should express regret",²⁶ He claimed that most Liberals were against Lloyd George's resignation and blamed Isaacs for originating the Scandal. Rather disappointingly, Isaacs was said to be a good lawyer but not a good politician.

The Gazette continued its solid support for the Party in what must have been difficult circumstances. Its only real defence was to show Conservatives making great play of the affair, transforming a minor incident into a great indiscretion. The Chesterton case proved a useful diversion. The journal used the Tory displeasure at Smith and Carson's involvement to show how the opposition viewed the matter in partisan terms and praised the two lawyers for transcending this.²⁷ When Chesterton was found guilty, there was great rejoicing. It was claimed that people were surprised to find Chesterton had no evidence for his allegations and felt this would now be an end to the smear campaign.²⁸

On the three reports produced by the Select Committee, there were more grounds for agreement between the two journals. Even the Gazette admitted that, apart from the obvious facts, the opinions and conclusions of all three were based on party lines.²⁹ The Nation favoured Spicer's version and felt sorry that it had been mutilated into the official report³⁰, whilst the Gazette accepted his verdict that it would have been wiser for ministers not to have invested in Marconis, but that, having done so, they should have

revealed their dealings earlier.³¹ On the Minority Report, there was also agreement. The Nation felt it was too biased; although the Conservative front bench had been fair, 'elsewhere the spirit is much more open to criticism, both as to motive and accuracy of judgement.'³² The Gazette said much the same thing. 'The six members appear to have taken the facts and considered what remote and fanatical suspicions might attach to them in the minds of morbidly partisan people.'³³

In more general terms, however, there was still a wide gap in the journals' assessment of the Scandal. Whilst the Gazette continued to stress that the affair developed out of party animosity, claiming that the real scandal was 'the slander campaign that was so vigorously fomented by the Opposition'³⁴ and that the country had nothing to fear from a complete display of the facts, its radical peer was less complacent. According to Havighurst, the editorial comments, which were rather condemnatory, were probably not those of Massingham, 'for its tone is at variance with statements for which he was more directly responsible.'³⁵ But although this particular editorial criticised many aspects of the Scandal, the cover-up process, the party investment in American Marconis, the relationship between the two companies and so on,³⁶ all of these items had been singled out previously in the journal. Whilst Havighurst claims that Massingham's attitude to Maxse's innuendoes would probably eliminate him from the authorship of this particular leader, the two roles of critic and defender were not, in the pages of the Nation, incompatible. This brief survey has shown a defence of the ministers against wild accusations and also severe criticism of the actual involvement. The article under consideration shows the trademark of the journal's approach, a surfeit of blame for Rufus Isaacs and sympathy for Lloyd George.³⁷ In short, Havighurst's suggestion that Massingham did not write the piece seems rather at odds with the evidence available.

The final point of comparison comes with the outcome of the June debate. As might be expected, the Gazette greeted the verdict with the blanket headline, 'Ministers Vindicated'. It blamed the party divisions and the vote on 'the young bloods of the Tory Party', who saw 'further opportunities of exploiting this business, and were in no mind to accept a resolution which would have wound it up.' Its conclusion was that the public were tired of the affair and happy to see its end, particularly since 'all stain of dishonesty has been removed.'³⁸ The Nation also regretted the partisanship of the Tories, but its verdict was more severe. The various points were reiterated but the journal's leader did praise the frankness of both ministers, particularly Lloyd George. It noted that all hint of corruption had been removed from the charges and asked that the Liberal Party should learn from the mistakes of the Scandal.³⁹ A week later, the journal was calling on its readers to forget the Marconi affair.

Thus, in these two journals, we can see evidence of Liberal unity, particularly against the more extreme attacks of Conservative-aligned journals like the National Review. There is also a fair degree of discrepancy in approach. The Gazette was principally part of the 'whitewash' campaign, although it admitted, as did the ministers, that errors of judgement had been made. The Nation was an independent journal and its editor, Massingham, 'while generally moderate in his criticism, stood aside from the Liberal chorus which exculpated the members of the Cabinet associated with the scandal.'⁴⁰ Although the journal confronted the chief rumour-pedlars and challenged Conservative exploitation of the affair, it also suggested that Rufus Isaacs should resign. No doubt this led to Lloyd George's view of its stance as 'treachery',⁴¹ although he himself always received generous support and an expressed wish that he should survive. Radicalism should not be overthrown by Conservative manipulation of the situation; both agreed on that,

but there were obvious divergences as to how far genuine criticism should be shifted to achieve that end.

The other Liberal journals exhibit similar tendencies, although less markedly so. Most followed the same pattern as the Westminster Gazette. The Daily News, owned by the Cadburys, staunch Liberals, and edited by A.G. Gardiner, acted as defence counsel for the ministers, although it was not averse in the early stages to suggesting that the terms of the contract might be bettered. Yet there were problems in such an approach, as Gardiner found.

'As editor of a prominent Liberal daily, it was no less incumbent on him to promote the party programme, even if there were ingredients to which he took exception and ministers with whom he regularly disagreed. With the revival of Tory opposition and the erosion of Liberal support in the country, there was the risk that criticism of official policy, however constructive or tempered, might be construed as an attack on the Government, whose existence was sometimes as precarious as that of the newspapers on which it relied ... Inevitably, he was caught in the crossfire between contributors and directors, or between journalists and ministers, among whom he attempted to negotiate compromises that would allow the Daily News to function and the Liberal Government to retain credit.'⁴²

In the case of the Marconi Scandal, the journal and its editor were almost wholeheartedly behind the ministers. It was particularly vehement in its approach to the Witness. Chesterton's paper was continually criticising the increasingly capitalistic inclination of the press, particularly the concentration of ownership which was a feature of the period.⁴³ The acquisition of the News by the Cadburys fell into this category.⁴⁴ The Witness was scathing in its attacks on the 'Cocoa Press', a phrase used to describe not just the ownership of the paper but also the distortion of news which resulted. The claim was that wealthy proprietors were able to dictate what was to appear in the pages of these papers and it was an allegation levelled not just at the Cadburys but at other owners like the Harmsworths.⁴⁵ By December 1912, a running battle had developed between the News and the Witness.

The News called for the prosecution of Chesterton and his colleagues for libel⁴⁶; indeed, one issue reported that prosecutions were soon to follow.⁴⁷ This led to accusations in the Witness that information was being leaked to the paper about the order and date of witnesses who were to appear before the Select Committee.⁴⁸ It transpired that, after some investigation, the details had been given quite freely to journalists and that 'leak' was the wrong description for this process.⁴⁹

The ministers involved in the Scandal had reason to be grateful to Gardiner. Lloyd George in particular appreciated his support. Following his evidence to the Select Committee, he wrote to Gardiner that he was now off to play golf,

'... but I could not enjoy it without writing you to tell you how deeply I appreciate the warm and loyal friendship you have proved during the last few days. The more thoroughly this business is probed the cleaner and more straightforward the transaction will appear. At the same time, it has worried me a good deal. What compensated for all however is the fact that it has demonstrated to me that I have true friends whom I can always rely upon. P.S. The article you wrote was tip top. It was a triumph of tact and judgement.'⁵⁰

Although the News published a piece by Harold Spender which raised some doubts about Lloyd George's part in the affair, this was an oversight on Gardiner's part and he reassured Lloyd George of his support.⁵¹ He offered advice on the way the Chancellor should deal with the topic in his first major appearance after the June debate, telling him to stress

'... the real motives of the attack, glancing lightly at the difficulties of investment for a Minister and at the vulnerability of the enemy on the subject ... the chief object, it seems to me, is to establish in the mind of the country that the attack is not promoted by a concern for the standards of public conduct but by a desire to break you and through you the party and its policy.'⁵²

Lloyd George also sought advice and support from other prominent Liberal journalists. He asked C.P. Scott of the Guardian about the line he should

take in the June debate speech and the editor offered some sound guidelines.

'... About the Marconi business I write with even greater diffidence. There will, I imagine, be two Reports, a majority and a minority Report. Both must, one imagines, wholeheartedly acquit Ministers of all the grosser charges brought against them. But what reservations will the Minority make? A good deal depends on that. My own feeling would be for complete frankness and an unreserved expression of regret for whatever you feel you have to regret. That you have regrets I know, because you have told me so, and these I think were not based solely on the fact that trouble had resulted to your colleagues and to the party. If you had thought more about it you wouldn't have done it, though every honest and impartial person would, I believe, acquit you of any sort of improper motive, and those who know you best will also know how little the desire of money-making enters into your composition. There has been an attempt to set up altogether new standards of conduct for Ministers in regard of their private investments, but probably most of us would admit that very speculative investments - that is, investments which are liable to very great and sudden changes of value - are not desirable for them, and the Marconis were of this kind. I believe that a simple and candid statement of this kind would meet with an immediate and cordial response both from the House and from the country. No man ever suffers from taking to himself even a little more blame than he deserves, and I believe that all soreness and all reproach would be swiftly wiped out. Perhaps I ought to apologise for saying all this, but I hope I may claim the privilege of friendship and I will take it for just what it is worth ...'⁵³

The Guardian was another Liberal paper which expressed its full support for the ministers, whilst leaving itself free to debate the merits of the contract. Indeed, a series of articles by an engineering correspondent at the beginning of October 1912 was highly critical, as the opposition was quick to point out.⁵⁴ But its Liberal attachment was too strong to prevent any serious lapse of support, and Conservative attacks served only to strengthen this. Scott was, as mentioned above, a firm friend to Lloyd George throughout his career, even when he had moved away from his radical stance of the pre-war era.⁵⁵ Massingham, whose support of Lloyd George did not survive this change, is reputed to have remarked "'To me there are few spectacles more melancholy than that of dear old C.P. Scott drearily dredging in a foul pond for the soul of Ll. G.'"⁵⁶

Whilst Liberals criticised Conservative journals for being partisan, its own press was guilty of the same fault. One Radical Sunday journal, Reynold's Newspaper, is ample illustration of this point. On Le Matin, it was said of the ministers' transactions: 'No suspicion attached to them, of course, as the deal was not in the Marconi Company which had the contract, but in an American Company, and even that deal only took place long after the contract was signed.'⁵⁷ The headlines for the report on the ministers' appearance before the Select Committee were 'Charges Refuted : Ministers Defend their impugned Honour : Marconi Allegations : Sir Rufus Isaacs and Lloyd George Sweep Away Slanders', whilst T.P. O'Connor, the Nationalist M.P. for the Scotland Constituency in Liverpool and long-time champion of Radicalism,⁵⁸ described the questioning of the pair as '... one of the most degrading and disgusting exhibitions of the malignity, cruelty and recklessness of party passion the world has ever seen.'⁵⁹ There were continual references to the squalid carping of the Conservatives, who were seen to be hunting for the scalp of Lloyd George. The Welsh Chancellor found himself being defended to an unrealistic and almost sickening extent. Referring to his divulgence of a small unearned income of about £400 a year, purely for retirement purposes, the journal gushed 'This intimate revelation will increase the love and respect of the people for a man who has never forgotten the people from whom he has sprung.'⁶⁰

After the June debate, O'Connor reflected on the outcome. '... the Marconi bombshell has gone off into a damp squib; and though some gutter journalists and baser types of Tory speakers still splutter about the scandal, it is dead and can't be resurrected.'⁶¹ On the actual debate, he felt that the whole thing could have been concluded on the first day, had it not been for the party feeling and the 'ever-growing sense of indignation amongst the young bloods of the Tory party at their long exclusion from office.'⁶² Thus,

the blame for the whole controversy was lifted from the ministers and the party and placed squarely on the shoulders of the opposition.

This brief discussion has shown that, whilst there was a basic solidarity in the Liberal press, there were genuine doubts about the Marconi contract and various expressions of regret at the actions of the ministers in purchasing American Marconi shares. Since the nature of their involvement was clearly a threat to the continuation of the Liberal government, most journals were anxious to paper over the cracks in the Liberal facade for survival purposes. But the Scandal did create differences of opinion and uneasiness in the party, and this was reflected to some extent in the press coverage. We must now ask ourselves whether the Conservative journals were in a position, or had the desire, to exploit these differences.

The first point which must be made is that the term 'Unionist press' is a very loose category which includes journals of considerably varied outlooks. Whilst we may say that the Liberal press showed differing stances on the Scandal and these were reflections of divisions within the party, this seems an exaggeration when compared with its opposite numbers.⁶³ Perhaps the numerical superiority, in readership and of journals, helps to explain the numerous differences of the 'Unionist press', a term whose significance is only for guidance. To establish any pattern, a more analytical approach is needed.

For this purpose, it would be impractical to consider all the journals. It is hoped that a representative sample will indicate the patterns of thought on Marconi. The most influential morning daily, in the narrow, parliamentary sense of the word, was The Times. There were more right-wing dailies, like the Morning Post, which, at this time, had taken on the task of restoring Conservatism to the Conservatives, as did weeklies like the Spectator and The Outlook. Of the evening papers, the Pall Mall Gazette had the least circulation but was particularly involved in the Scandal, whilst of the

financial journals, the Financial News took a definite interest in events.⁶⁴ Amongst the Sundays, the Referee gives a 'popular' view of the affair. This selection is not, of course, a balanced one, since it ignores the more highly circulated journals like the Daily Mail and the Daily Express.⁶⁵ What it does represent is a cross-section of Conservative attitudes to the Scandal.

There were, of course, many expressions of hostility to the contract in the Conservative press. The National Review will be studied in detail in a later chapter; its companion, The Outlook, deserves some attention. Both journals had a common bond in that they used material produced by W.R. Lawson and, it might be added, both were susceptible to the use of anti-semitism in their pages. The Outlook was undoubtedly a Conservative paper. The proprietor was Walter Guinness, Conservative M.P. for Bury St Edmonds and the editor was Edwin Oliver. Lawson was employed by the journal principally to write on the political aspects of the Stock Exchange and finance.⁶⁶ To many of those involved in and following events of the Scandal, it was The Outlook and Lawson who first drew attention to the affair. The journal had, in the early months of 1912, published articles by Sir Charles Bright on the advantages of cable communication,⁶⁷ and Lawson had noted the speculative nature of Marconi shares.⁶⁸ Although its discussion of the contract did not begin until July, a letter from 'M. INST. C.E., Athenaeum Club, Pall Mall', which appeared in the 27 April edition, gives some idea of the rumours which had begun to develop and also indicates how a conspiracy theory, based on the Jewish identity of certain characters in the negotiations, could develop.

'In connection with what you very pertinently describe as "the sudden zeal of the Ministers for an Imperial wireless service", it has to be remembered that the managing director of the Marconi Company is brother to the Attorney-General, while both the gentlemen, as well as the Postmaster-General, are members of a race who have ever been pre-eminent in that

description of finance of which the present boom in Marconi shares is a specimen. The contract that the Government have entered into with the Marconi Company in connection with this scheme requires explanation, having regard to the extraordinary extent to which it is favourable to the company. It is surprising that the matter has not already been probed in Parliament. It certainly ought to be.'

According to the editor, Oliver, he encouraged Lawson to begin an investigation into the contract in May 1912, mainly because there had been no discussion of the deal in the press or in parliament.⁶⁹ This led to a series of articles by Lawson, beginning on 20 July. Whilst there was a great deal of valid criticism in these pieces, Lawson also attempted to create an atmosphere of mystery and intrigue, with various suggestions which no doubt emanated from the rumours in circulation at that time. Indeed, his first article was called 'The Mystery of the Marconi Contract' and included some of the anti-semitic ideas noted in the above letter. 'The Marconi Company has from its birth been a child of darkness. Its finance has been of the most chequered and erratic sort. Its relations with certain Ministers have not always been purely official or political.' Lawson also noted the Jewish connection. 'Here we have two financiers of the same nationality pitted against each other, with a third in the background acting perhaps as mutual friend. If expedition and equity could be looked for anywhere, it was surely in such a combination of business and political talent.'⁷⁰ As Oliver was forced ruefully to concede, there was a definite air of racialism in these early articles.⁷¹ Oliver himself stated that a journalist was entitled to make use of the fact that both Samuel and Godfrey Isaacs were Jews, if it influenced their political dealings, which by implication he felt it did.⁷² So, in spite of the journal's legitimate role of critic, based on substantial points of contention voiced by M.Ps and other journals,⁷³ and Lawson's statement that the 'personal aspects' of the affair could be left till last, since the contract could be condemned without

this additional dimension,⁷⁴ the straightforward criticisms were littered with insinuations that favourable terms had been given because of the Jewish and family links.

Following the October debate, the journal kept up a barrage of comment on the contract and on the proceedings of the Select Committee, which kept the issue in the limelight. Because of its persistence, and no doubt its opposition to the Liberal party and the ministers, Lawson was the first journalist to appear before the Committee and he found himself harassed at great length by the Liberal members. His examination was spaced over seven days and his writings analysed in great detail. At one stage, Falconer declared that he was going to test every statement Lawson had made - 'he is the gentleman who has stirred all this up.'⁷⁵

The outcome of this marathon was that Lawson was made to withdraw many of his insinuations about ministers' involvement in profiteering and the use of undue influence. His points about the terms and the nature of the contract were debated fiercely and at great length. The result was a stalemate since these details were still being disputed by many other experts. To many Liberal journals and certainly the Liberals on the Committee, Lawson was felt to have 'collapsed'. As a result, the proprietor and editor of the journal were called on to explain why Lawson had been allowed to publish these unsubstantiated pieces. Both Guinness and Oliver stood up for Lawson, defending his general thesis, although admitting that his choice of phrase was sometimes injudicious.

A rather different complexion was put on the matter when the ministers confessed to the American Marconi deal during the Le Matin trial. An editorial in The Outlook claimed that the new evidence showed previous statements to have been true 'in substance and in fact'⁷⁶ and that all the accusations 'of mud-slinging; of prostituting the standard of English journalism; of venting

our malice without exposing ourselves to the risk of a suit for libel' should now be withdrawn.

The Outlook's attitude to the ministers was varied. It reflected the great hostility held by many Conservatives for Lloyd George, in that it deemed him more guilty than Rufus Isaacs. This was in spite of its inclination towards anti-semitism, or perhaps because of it. Isaacs was less culpable because he had always been open about his affinity (sic) for business, law, affairs of the world - 'He comes of a race and of a family which have made finance their principal interest in life.'⁷⁷ However, the fact that he committed 'a blazing indiscretion' by taking information from his brother could not be ignored.

'As an indiscretion it might have been dismissed but for three circumstances: (1) that he did not frankly admit the fact; (2) that he inflicted a gross injustice upon witnesses before the Committee by this concealment; (3) that he is being judged by a standard of conduct his party and colleagues established for others.'⁷⁸

In spite of this, his lapse was less important than that of Lloyd George. The Chancellor was an obvious target, in view of his previous attitude to unearned increment, the rich and the Stock Exchange, and the journal saved its most biting sarcasm for an open letter addressed to him.

'In your 1909 Budget speeches you dwelt pathetically on the humanity and poverty of the poor - which you fancied you were the first to discover - as a companion picture to the iniquities of the rich. Little did the simple working-men of England imagine how intensely human you, great soul, could be; how fascinated you might become with a little flutter, just like an ordinary, common, or garden, punter.'⁷⁹

Lloyd George was certainly stung by such comments and, in the censure debate, made sure that the role of The Outlook in the Scandal was known.

'And this is the paper, this is the editor, this is the policy which stated the whole of this examination [HON. MEMBERS:"NO"] Yes. It was the very first paper that ever published a line upon it, and if anybody doubts that he had better see what the

confederates of the hon. Gentleman say about it - Mr Maxse, Mr Chesterton, Mr Loe Strachey, the three gentlemen who have been working this together.⁸⁰

In more general terms, The Outlook's critique of the Select Committee reports and of the June debate were typical of many Conservative journals. The Falconer version was attacked for the whitewash effect.

'But if Mess. Falconer, Booth and Company think that any weight will be attached to their finding at this stage, they must be singularly out of touch with public sentiment. Their unjustified absolution will do more to prejudice their patrons than any guarded criticism could have done.'⁸¹

The Minority Report, naturally enough, came in for praise, although it was felt that its tone 'errs on the side of generosity when the benefit of the doubt can be given.' For the coming debate, the majority verdict could not be accepted. Some degree of censure must be applied. 'This is a question of importance far transcending the reputation of any Cabinet Ministers, and we rely on the deep-seated instincts of the British people to reassert the urgent necessity of the strictest standards in public life.'⁸²

Speaking for the general public, Lawson expressed distaste at the result of the debate and yet again referred to the part he and The Outlook had played in bringing the Scandal to light. Had it not been for this campaign, Isaacs and Lloyd George might still have escaped detection. 'Now the country and the world know them as they really are and as they were in one of the most agonising moments of our national history.'⁸³

Long after the debate, The Outlook continued using the Scandal to make political points. It was the combination of Jews and financial scandal, allied to Liberal indiscretion, which caught the eye of The Outlook. We shall deal with the journal's approach to the Jewish question later in this chapter; for the moment it is sufficient to note that contributors to the paper included O'Donnell⁸⁴, Arnold White⁸⁵ and Joseph Banister⁸⁶, as three renowned anti-semites. Their association with a Conservative journal is indicative of its attitude on the topic. Was it representative of the Conservative press?

Lloyd George referred, in the June debate, to the three conspirators, Maxse, Chesterton and Strachey. Chesterton and Maxse will be studied in later chapters. The third, St Loe Strachey, editor of the Spectator, is also deserving of some attention. The journal was a solid Tory weekly, the most successful of the period.⁸⁷ It had, however, a particular Conservative line to follow. Indeed, during the 1906 election campaign, Strachey had been so committed to the idea of Free Trade that he advised electors to vote Liberal for the cause.⁸⁸

This appeared to have been forgotten by the time of the Scandal, for the Spectator heartily opposed Liberal philosophy. Following the October debate, it suggested that ministers had brought trouble on themselves by delaying their denials. It recognised its own partisanship and called for censure from a Liberal paper like the Westminster Gazette or the Guardian, which had so far been silent.⁸⁹ On the contract itself, Strachey was opposed to the creation of a monopoly, but happy to allow an agreement with the Marconi Company provided the way was left open for other wireless groups.⁹⁰ Its main point about the rumours of corruption was that they had been allowed to develop for so long. Strachey made great play of his journal's role in the Kynoch affair in 1900, when it reproached Chamberlain for a lack of delicacy in his business affairs. 'It is not enough for Ministers to be free from corruption. They must not through carelessness give opportunity for scandal.'⁹¹ The journal continually contrasted its own involvement in Kynoch with the Liberal press's lack of criticism. Strachey admitted that, in 1900, Conservatives (himself excepted) had used a 'whitewash' approach, just as Liberals were now doing, but felt his own stand now gave him the freedom to attack any ministerial corruption in the Scandal.

When Lawson's evidence had been heard by the Select Committee, the journal was upset by his breakdown and by the fact that it had given him publicity.⁹²

Attempts were made to absolve itself from Lawson's wilder charges, but it still maintained that a thorough investigation was needed. Strachey was not involved in a 'no holds barred' contest with the Liberals. The Spectator dissociated itself from the libels of The Eye-Witness, which it called 'disgusting' and 'untrue', and, since it was an important journal read by important people, begged the ministers to sue.⁹³ It greeted the news of the Isaacs-Chesterton action with delight⁹⁴ and felt that Chesterton had escaped lightly. 'There is no surer way of disgusting Englishmen than to make criticism ten times stronger than the facts warrant.'⁹⁵ Strachey refused to publish a letter from W.N. Moyers in the journal because it attacked Lloyd George so fiercely as to be vindictive.⁹⁶

Therefore, in discussing the Spectator's position as Conservative critic, we must bear in mind its own moderation, as well as its freedom. This was apparent after the Le Matin trial. It maintained, as it had done consistently, that there was no corruption, but a distinct lack of delicacy. Once more, the Kynoch debate was brought up and Lloyd George faced with his own words of criticism against Chamberlain. Rufus Isaacs was censured for not being candid in October 1912.⁹⁷ The following week, yet again using Kynoch, Strachey called on the Cabinet to admit that the actions of the ministers had been wrong. He particularly mentioned Haldane, McKenna and Burns, who had all been to the fore in the attacks on Chamberlain. Their speeches on that occasion were quoted, including one by Burns, who said that the British parliament was special because it was not under certain influences, such as that of 'the chosen people'. In a footnote, Strachey said his journal was opposed to anti-semitism and felt Burns should not have said this, but that it could not be edited out in case there were accusations of publishing selective quotations.⁹⁸ Thus, whilst making its point, the journal could also score marks against the Liberals.

That Strachey saw himself to the fore of the Conservative attack was clear from his correspondence with Bonar Law. Shortly after the Le Matin trial, he was arranging a meeting with his leader to discuss the affair. He promised to send the draft of a resolution for a censure debate, which would challenge both the ministers and those who had alleged corruption. 'I suppose party feeling will sweep away every other consideration, but the better type of Liberal ought, if it was proposed, to vote for it. At any rate he could not call it vindictive.'⁹⁹ The resolution which he proposed was -

'That this House while condemning as false the charges and suggestions of corruption brought against the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Attorney-General and other Ministers, regrets that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Attorney-General should have engaged in Stock Exchange transactions inconsistent with the delicacy and discretion which should be observed by Ministers in their private financial business, and should thus have given cause for the growth of suspicions injurious to the public interest.'¹⁰⁰

Thus, Strachey was attempting to influence events both through the medium of the Spectator and by personal contact.

Up to the date of the censure debate in June, the journal kept up a constant flow of information and comment. It was an opportunity to attack the Liberal government and Lloyd George in particular. Great play was made of the fact that he did not have the money to pay for his shares, since this could be truly called speculation.¹⁰¹ Many of the letters received and published by the journal were critical of the Chancellor and his fellow ministers. Strachey took delight in pointing to the strains imposed on the Liberal party by the affair, showing how any suggestions of regret about the actions had to be clamped down on, for, if it was to survive the Scandal, unity in defence was vital. Any discord would force the ministers to resign, a course of action that Strachey felt was the only honourable one. But, as early as May, he was predicting a party vote which would absolve the guilty men and create the evil precedent of pretending that nothing was wrong.¹⁰²

Strachey's prediction was fulfilled in the sense that the Liberal and Nationalist majority held together over the matter and defeated opposition censure attempts. The Majority Report was seen to have taken the wildest accusations and answered them, thus making the real offences seem trivial, which the Spectator concluded was an admission of guilt in itself. The Minority Report was 'moderate and judicial', a far better basis for ministerial regret. The censure debate was a regrettable performance. Strachey had attempted again to influence the Conservative Party's approach to the debate by writing to The Times with a suggested line of attack on any attempt to protect the ministers.

'Whatever may be the terms of the motion or of the amendments, the real question which the House of Commons will have to answer is this - "May Ministers in the future, without fear of censure, do what was done by the Attorney-General, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Murray?"'

It is said that the Liberal leaders, with Mr Asquith and Sir Edward Grey as their spokesmen, mean to use arguments and to adopt a tone in defence of the three Ministers which will in effect supply the answer "Yes" to this question. But will such argument be sincere? Will they be founded on a candid personal belief, or will they be founded on kindness, expediency, and opportunism? There is a sure way to test the sincerity of the defence. It is to ask those Liberal leaders who defend the action of the three Ministers this question - "Will you say that in similar circumstances (assuming you desired to make an investment) you would have acted as the three Ministers acted?"¹⁰³

He also wrote to Bonar Law, drawing attention to this letter and asking that the debate should bring denials of any further ministerial investment in Marconis (and of any investments by Select Committee members) or else it should be adjourned.¹⁰⁴

In spite of these activities, the Liberal motion was passed. Strachey regretted the low standard of conduct established by this action and lamented that Bonar Law's amendment was not accepted. 'As things are, it has become a public duty to work for a reversal of the precedent as to Ministerial conduct established by the unhappy, nay disastrous, vote on Thursday.'¹⁰⁵ He was as good as his word and the journal continued to campaign against the ministers and against the new Marconi contract, calling it 'unbusinesslike and unsound'.¹⁰⁶ It

demanded a Royal Commission to inquire into and set up rules to govern ministers' private financial affairs.¹⁰⁷ It pursued Rufus Isaacs in his appointment as Lord Chief Justice and continually challenged Lloyd George for his hypocrisy.

Nor was the journal content to let the Scandal disappear with the coming of war in 1914. We have already seen how Powell and the Financial News continued a campaign well after this date. It is obvious from Strachey's papers that he too was recognised as an influential figure in these attacks. Much of the information on these later campaigns comes from this source.¹⁰⁸ The letter from Powell to Bonar Law with the various charges against Rufus Isaacs referred to above came from the Strachey Papers, in a file of letters from Lord Cecil Manners.¹⁰⁹ A protest meeting which Manners had called was abandoned for lack of public support¹¹⁰ but Strachey was obviously seen as a sympathiser, hence his receipt of the material. Indeed, Strachey condemned the lack of support, hoped that Powell would publish all his evidence and promised that the Spectator and the Morning Post would call on Isaacs to deny the accusations. He was, however, less enthusiastic about Manners' later charges that Isaacs had acted with enemy aliens as a lawyer during the war and carried this influence into parliament.¹¹¹

Strachey also received information from the 'Society for Upholding Political Honour', organised by F.D.Fowler.¹¹² Whilst Strachey sympathised with the general attack on Isaacs, which mentioned that Marconis were still remembered,¹¹³ he was less happy when Fowler wrote to the Attorney-General about the possible prosecution of Godfrey Isaacs for perjury in the Hobhouse case, and replied in very general terms, asking for his involvement to be kept secret.¹¹⁴ Another correspondent at this time was J.W. Hamilton, the ex-employee of the Marconi company who carried out a long campaign against the firm.¹¹⁵ When it became clear that Hamilton was, by now, more concerned with the details of the American Marconi share 'swindle', Strachey replied that his particular interest was with the role of Rufus Isaacs.¹¹⁶ Isaacs seems to have been his selected

victim and, from the evidence, it is obvious that Strachey and the Spectator were focal points for much of the hostility which followed Isaacs' career.

The Morning Post also held strong views on the Scandal. It can be best described as a right-wing Conservative journal, reflecting back-bench opinion rather than acting as a Shadow Cabinet spokesman. There is a particular reason for studying this journal's approach to the Scandal, because of the involvement of Jewish politicians, and it is known that the Post was especially hostile to Jews in the period during and after the First World War. Its publicity for the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion in 1920¹¹⁷ suggests that its belief in the Jewish conspiracy theory might extend back into the pre-war period. Cohn has pointed out that certain events of the war, and particularly the Russian Revolution, were turning points, not just for the Post, but for general opinion. 'The Morning Post recognizes quite clearly that tales which before the war would have been dismissed with a shrug find believers now.'¹¹⁸ Quoting from the journal, he emphasizes this point.

' "The war had produced a complete change of mentality, because we have had concrete proof of close connections between rebellion in Ireland, trouble in Egypt, disaffection in India, revolution in Russia, to mention only a few of the disorders brought about by Germany ... Behind the scenes was a 'formidable sect' using the Germans for their own ends instead of being used by them, and when Germany fell and German money disappeared, the conspiracy still went on unimpeded." '119

Certainly, the Post's treatment of the Scandal shows little of this racial theory, which would seem to confirm Cohn's thesis. However, its stance is important because of its political approach. It acted as a vehicle for Archer-Shee's criticisms¹²⁰ and gave publicity to the Marconi rivals, Poulsen.¹²¹ Yet, in the early stages, the Post was by no means convinced of any scandal. The October debate was reassuring enough for the journal to conclude that all suspicion of corruption had been removed by the ministers' statements and it hoped to hear no more of this aspect of the question. Samuel was deemed to have made out 'a very able case' for the existing contract, although there was still the fear that a monopoly might be created.¹²²

Its interest was rekindled by the Le Matin evidence. That Isaacs had bought shares was 'a grievous error of judgement', although not corruption.¹²³ When Isaacs explained his dealings more fully before the Select Committee, his error was seen to have been compounded. It was clear that he had been given an advantage by his brother and was therefore under obligation to him. Furthermore, these deals had been done before a contract had been agreed, only a tender accepted. There was little difference, according to the Post, between the English and American companies. Since Isaacs sold some of his shares a short time after their purchase, his dealings must be seen as speculation. Of these errors, the most serious one was the obligation he had placed himself under.

'And we think this cannot be defended upon any reasonable ground. We do not suggest there was any motive of corruption either upon one side or the other. What we do say is that if this transaction is accepted by the Government and Parliament as right and proper, then there is no longer any safeguard against corruption in the future.'¹²⁴

Resignation was originally suggested as the only honest action for the ministers, but this was not pressed to its ultimate. By the time of the June debate, the Post was troubled by the bad publicity the Scandal was creating and was prepared to accept an expression of regret by the ministers, '... for no one can look forward with anything but dislike to the prospect of a long party fight upon a question which is even now lowering the tone of Parliament and party life.'¹²⁵ The journal made great play of the judgement that the Scandal was a departure from former high standards of behaviour. 'And let us put to ourselves this simple test : Would Mr BALFOUR, would Sir EDWARD GREY, would Mr GLADSTONE, would Sir ROBERT PEEL have engaged in these transactions? We know that they would have had nothing to do with them.'¹²⁶ This 'Golden Age' theme is one we shall return to in later chapters.

The outcome of the censure debate did not please the journal. 'It seems to us that by their vote last night the majority of the House of Commons affirmed the principle that Ministers may, if they are not found out, accept

a financial favour from a would-be Government contractor.'¹²⁷ This decision, it claimed, meant that the topic could not be dropped and so, like the Spectator, it had a duty to pursue those involved, which it duly did up to the war. It reminded the ministers, and perhaps its own supporters, that the Conservative party had been generous in its approach. When Rufus Isaacs was speaking to his Reading constituents about the malicious campaign directed against him, the Morning Post suggested he remember the kindness shown by the Opposition. If it had called the dealings corrupt, he would have had no defence. If the journal had had its way, the ministers would have been out of office. 'We have said that in our opinion the Ministers concerned ought to have resigned, and thereby relieved their colleagues from an almost intolerable position.'¹²⁸ It was obviously disenchanted with the official Opposition approach. Earlier, the journal had urged strong condemnation of the dealings, otherwise there would be a suspicion of Front Bench collusion. 'We live in an age when the value and very foundations of popular government are being questioned, when critics say that Parliament is an organised sham, and that the two parties are close corporations inspired by common and selfish interests.'¹²⁹

The Post obviously favoured the line taken by A.J. Salvidge, Chairman of the National Unionist Council, in a speech at Liverpool. 'In his opinion, the whole Marconi affair was one of the most disgraceful episodes that had ever occurred in the political life of the country, and any weakness in the Opposition attack would be criminal.'¹³⁰ Yet two months earlier, one of its correspondents had written - 'In view of the many disclosures which the Marconi Inquiry elicits from day to day, one may perhaps be permitted to offer a word of congratulation on the restraint and moderation which have been exercised by the Unionist Party.'¹³¹ Once again, this illustrated the dilemma of the Conservatives and the role of a challenging Conservative journal, anxious to pursue a vigorous Opposition campaign in the face of apparent indifference from the party leadership.

These three journals, The Outlook, the Spectator and the Morning Post, were by no means the only ones to pursue such a partisan line. Less well known papers, like Our Flag, published by the National Unionist Association, which exploited the Scandal for all it was worth, and The Throne, which castigated Unionist Central Office for its 'lack of virility' in dealing with the affair. 'If it had not been for one or two private members and independent publicists, the quibblings and evasions of Ministers would have been forgotten by now, if indeed, they had ever come to light.'¹³² Mention should also be made of the Financial News, edited by Powell, which also called for the resignation of the ministers.¹³³ But the more 'reputable' Conservative press was conspicuously less partisan. It made political capital out of the Scandal but to a lesser extent than its more detached colleagues.

For example, the Pall Mall Gazette, although prominent in the later stages of the affair, refused to be drawn into the gossip and rumour-spreading in 1912 and early 1913. Following Maxse's evidence to the Select Committee, its leader said that the journal had refused to touch the

'... campaign of suspicion against Ministers. There was a cloud of conjecture and imputation. There was not a tittle of definite evidence suggesting the possibility of proof. We therefore ignored the charges. In any similar situation involving the personal honour of public men we shall always taken the same line.'¹³⁴

Even after Le Matin, it wrote 'There is no foundation in the facts disclosed in yeaterday's libel action for an attack upon the integrity of any of the three Ministers concerned', although it expressed 'very grave regret' at the error of judgement in purchasing the shares.

'We reserve our fuller comments upon the Marconi investigation and all the issues connected with it until the Committee has concluded its labours : but though Mr LLOYD GEORGE and Sir RUFUS ISAACS are political opponents, we rejoice that they have cleared the moral air by their action of yesterday.'¹³⁵

Although the journal became more critical as time went on, its initial reaction to the affair tended to cushion the impact of its words.

Perhaps the most significant leniency was that of The Times, arguably the

most influential journal of all. Whilst it had strong Conservative links, it was a newspaper of importance to politicians of Liberal and Conservative leanings. A.G. Gardiner expressed a widely-held opinion that the correspondence columns of the journal were 'in the nature of a public trust which should be administered not in order to fortify the views expressed in the leader columns, but as a general clearing house of public opinion.'¹³⁶ The need to receive favourable coverage, however, frequently extended beyond the correspondence columns. The actions of Liberal politicians in wooing the journal make this apparent.¹³⁷

Although The Times was generally regarded as a Conservative journal, its policy still depended very much on the whim of its owner, Lord Northcliffe (Alfred Harmsworth). From a variety of sources, it is obvious that his personal intervention was directly responsible for the journal's attitude to the Scandal. For instance, it has been suggested that Lloyd George's 'cultivation' of Northcliffe, showing him budget proposals and the like, helped to ease matters. 'This flattery paid off during the Marconi affair of 1912-13, when Northcliffe held back from the general Conservative attack on Lloyd George.'¹³⁸ Certainly the journal had no part in the gossip of 1912. Archer-Shee had some letters published, one putting forward 'The Case for an Inquiry'¹³⁹, but there was very little editorial comment or discussion until the Le Matin case.

There were other influences at work on Northcliffe. His brother, Harold, was a prominent Liberal having bought his way to prominence and been rewarded with a baronetcy.¹⁴⁰ 'Alfred's willingness to help Harold's career is the most likely explanation of the part he played, or failed to play, in ... the Marconi affair.'¹⁴¹ Harold certainly seems to have persuaded Northcliffe to pander to certain Liberals. For instance, he had stressed the importance of the friendship of Rufus Isaacs, who had acted for Northcliffe in certain law cases.

'In a letter to Northcliffe dated 8 November 1910, he asked his brother to let Isaac's sister, Madame Keyzer, to contribute notes on art and the theatre to the Mail. Isaacs, he pointed out, was tipped as Lord Chancellor; it was politic to cultivate

such a man by doing him a favour for the sister - he was a Jew, and a favour for one Jew in a family was a favour for all.¹⁴²

Harold repeated these sentiments when the Le Matin case was about to be heard.

'I know that you have always thought it judicious and prudent to help Rufus Isaacs, if the occasion arose. The occasion is now here. Isaacs has never asked us to do anything for him. In your interests I consider you should help him now. The Times and the Daily Mail can kill at its birth any effort that may be made by misrepresentation and calumny to raise an agitation which may compel him to resign office. I know the thing will seem ridiculous trumpery to you, and it is, except for the fact that Isaacs is destined for high judicial office. All that is wanted is a soft pedal in The Times and Daily Mail.'¹⁴³

This letter certainly suggests that Harold Harmsworth was aware of the ministers' share dealings, and must have been informed by one of them, possibly in the hope that he would exercise just such influence as he did.

Similar persuasion was used by Winston Churchill, who, immediately it was known that the ministers were to use the trial to make disclosures, contacted Northcliffe and asked him to play down the matter, assuring him that nothing reprehensible had been done.¹⁴⁴ His explanation seems to have been accepted by Northcliffe. The Times leader following the case declared that the ministers had been cleared. 'We are of opinion that more delicacy might have been shown by the Ministers involved in the selection of their investments. But mere lack of judgement is a very different thing from the monstrous offences that have been imputed to them.'¹⁴⁵ The leader was written by Northcliffe himself, who disapproved of the original, deeming it libellous, and 'patched one together'.¹⁴⁶ Dawson, the editor, with whom Northcliffe had already quarrelled over the affair, was on holiday and the proprietor was able to force the acting editor to accept the new version.¹⁴⁷ It may be that the libel referred to by Northcliffe was a statement that the Le Matin trial had been arranged by the ministers, for Donaldson says Northcliffe wrote to the acting editor reproving him for this suggestion.¹⁴⁸ A Conservative M.P., John Baird, complained that a piece written by Harold Nicholson about the uneasiness of Liberal members over the Marconi revelations was not printed¹⁴⁹, which seems to indicate Northcliffe's influence again.

He did not particularly relish the attitude he took at this stage.

'An undated letter to Dawson says that attacks on Isaacs and his colleagues would "involve me in directly critical relations with highly placed personal friends for which I know neither you nor I care a twopenny dam (sic)." The meaning is confused; is Northcliffe half apologising for his restraint? In another letter to Dawson, dated 7 May 1913, Northcliffe said he had no intention of "being associated with an ascription of grave impudence as roguery." A reference to Lloyd George and Isaacs as "a Welsh solicitor and Jew barrister" may be taken, as a sign of the irritation he felt with them below the surface.'¹⁵⁰

He made his position quite clear to Churchill. Complaining that 'Your Marconi friends stage manage their affairs most damnably', he went on to say that the painfully slow process of disclosures made people think there was something in the Scandal, 'although I personally, as I had your word for it that there is not, know there is not.'¹⁵¹

Both Isaacs and Lloyd George were grateful for Northcliffe's restraint; Isaacs was particularly satisfied with the 20 March leader.¹⁵² They wrote letters of thanks to the proprietor, praising his generosity.¹⁵³ Northcliffe replied to both. To Lloyd George, he wrote

'I adopted my line about this Marconi business because five minutes lucid explanation showed me that it was the fairest one. Moreover, I am neither a rabid party man nor an anti-Semite. I was particularly glad to do so, in as much as I feel that you will now know that I am not personally hostile to you, as was twice suggested last year, by mutual friends.'¹⁵⁴

In his reply to Isaacs, Northcliffe was more personal. 'No one who knows your record in the City or at the Bar and your care of your innumerable kinsmen could feel that you had shown anything more than a lack of foresight in this business.'¹⁵⁵

In spite of his sympathetic approach, as we have seen, Northcliffe was distressed by the somewhat deceitful nature of the transactions and the cover-up. The further revelations of Elibank's investments and his business trip to South America disconcerted the press baron. He became less enthusiastic about playing down the affair.

'His (Murray's) absence gives the impression, probably quite erroneous, that there is what newspapers call "a big story" behind the whole of this matter, and I have no intention of letting my journals remain silent on his abstention.

I have made some bad bungles myself, but the stage management of this business beats any record of mine.'¹⁵⁶

Comment in The Times became more hostile, although never reaching the heights (depths?) of some of its colleagues. By June, in direct contrast to its earlier leader on Le Matin, it was stated that the American purchases were the basis of the rumours.¹⁵⁷ The journal condemned the reticence of Elibank and the party 'whitewash' of Booth and Falconer.¹⁵⁸ It was critical of the majority report; if it had included some expression of regret as had certain Liberal journals, it would have been more acceptable.¹⁵⁹ After the censure debate, a leader summed up The Times' thoughts on the Scandal. It was unfortunate that the matter should have been decided by a party vote but it did not totally condemn the ministers' actions. There was no wish to see Isaacs or Lloyd George forced into resignation. 'After the present severe lesson there is reason to hope that they will be far more useful public servants than before.'¹⁶⁰

Whilst these criticisms were certainly harsher than before and relations between Northcliffe and the Liberal politicians, particularly Lloyd George,¹⁶¹ deteriorated somewhat, The Times' comments were reasonably subdued. Northcliffe's intervention still had some effect. To what extent he was influenced in this by his brother's desire for a peerage is debatable. Ferris claims it was the over-riding reason. The diligence appears to have been rewarded, for Harold became Lord Rothermere in January 1914.¹⁶² A suggestion was made in Justice, the British Socialist Party journal, that Northcliffe let the ministers off lightly because if he had not done so, 'The whole history of how Mr Harmsworth obtained his peerage will be disclosed to the world.'¹⁶³ Whatever the circumstances, it meant that a very influential journal, which could have been used against the Liberals, was, for a long time, friendly, and then later only mildly censorious.

Turning from the Conservative press to the journals of the political left, we find less concern with the careful balance of the parliamentary system. There was one exception, the official Labour journal, the Daily Citizen, which followed the rather uncomfortable line of the parliamentary party in the affair. Others

were less reticent. The Daily Herald, which described itself as 'The Labour Daily Newspaper', was an independent journal, whose chairman, George Lansbury M.P., had been verbally attacked by Lloyd George in the October debate for referring to the rumours of ministerial speculation and suggesting that an investigation was vital.¹⁶⁴ According to his biographer, Lansbury had, at the time, anonymous letters giving 'a pretty accurate account of what had occurred', but, as Lansbury wrote twenty years later, "'I hadn't the courage and I haven't even now, to use anonymous letters'",¹⁶⁵ Lansbury had praised the part played by the Herald in delaying the ratification of the agreement in August¹⁶⁶ and we have already seen how the Poulsen group were in touch with him at this stage.¹⁶⁷

The journal tried to influence Labour M.P.s to break away from the capitalist parties and initiate an investigation. It made accusations of corruption against the Liberal politicians, stating quite clearly that they were the most likely to benefit from the 'inside information on the contract',¹⁶⁸ and, like Lansbury, was dubious about the ministers' denials. It reported the debate with the headline 'The House of Pretence'.¹⁶⁹ Criticism of the contract continued, as did a belief that corruption had been proved. When the Le Matin trial provided some evidence, the journal seized on it; 'what we say is that if these particular Ministers are allowed to retain office, then the dear British people deserve them.'¹⁷⁰ G.K. Chesterton, who had just resigned from the Daily News, brought his journalistic skills into play.¹⁷¹ Lloyd George was one of the first to suffer. In an 'Open Letter', Chesterton referred to his idea of the Chancellor's popular image.

'You have become a horrible transformation scene, at which the gallery hisses and even the pit is perplexed: a Puritan turned gambler; a revolutionist turned strike-breaker; the satirist of Rothschild become the sychophant of Isaacs; the denouncer of Beit become the decorator of Albu; the exposé of Kynochs become the husher-up of Marconis.

It is indeed unlucky for you that your earlier strokes and later surrenders were often connected with the same topics. You did good service when you pointed out to an angry public that South African Jews were stealing the sword of England. Would you not have done even better service if you had pointed out that a Liberal Cabinet ought not to make one of those Jews a nobleman for stealing it?'¹⁷²

On the Isaacs v. Chesterton case, the Herald felt that it was the government, rather than Cecil Chesterton, that was to be tried. 'Incidentally the official Labour Group, through its subservience to the Government and its unbroken silence over the Marconi gamble, is also on its trial.'¹⁷³ The outcome of the case was greeted as a defeat for the government and victory for Chesterton. There was no doubt that he had libelled Godfrey Isaacs but they dared not send him to prison. 'The Marconi Scandal will undoubtedly kill the Government, and Cecil Chesterton has the enviable honour of being one of the chief executioners.'¹⁷⁴

This was not to be and the Herald was upset by the events that followed the libel case. Its leader on the majority report was full of incomprehension; how could such a blatant 'whitewash' be put forward.'¹⁷⁵ The first day of the censure debate confirmed its worst fears and the final verdict on 'The Farce at St Stephen's' was a gloomy one.

'Collusion between the "great" parties is manifest in the whole affair. Officialism on one side is much the same as officialism on the other side. All the leaders and protagonists are playing the same game. British party politics all round is shown to be fraud and humbug ...

It was evident at an early stage that the "great" debate would be a great farce. The mild-mannered official Tory motion knocked the stuffing out of it straight away. The roaring lions subsided, and showed that blood was the last thing in the world they desired. The cheerful gamblers had an easy task.'¹⁷⁶

Thus, the journal, showing disenchantment with the Labour Party in parliament, was a leading protagonist in the Scandal, using it to attack ruling class corruption and also to confirm the theory of capitalist collusion in party politics, which included those Labour members tied to the Lib/Lab alliance.¹⁷⁷

Two other papers, the New Age and the New Statesman, spoke for the less parliamentary-conscious socialists of Fabian inclinations. The New Age, edited by Alfred Orage, was initially a Fabian journal when bought in 1907, but it turned to guild socialism in the years immediately before the war.¹⁷⁸ It was essentially because of this change that Shaw and Webb founded the New Statesman in 1913, with Clifford Sharp, a director and contributor for the New Age, as its editor.¹⁷⁹

It has already been shown that Orage saw the Scandal as of no consequence to 'real' politics.¹⁸⁰ In October 1912, following the Marconi debate, the New Age claimed that there was 'little public value' in investigating corruption - people had a 'self-preservative instinct' that members of parliament were exempt from that kind of skullduggery.

'... it is therefore our business less to criticise, expose and punish individual politicians than to abolish a system the maintenance of which will shortly only be possible by the public employment of narrow-minded and corrupt scoundrels. To the maintenance of the wage system, in fact, long after it has become immoral to the best minds of the community, we may certainly attribute the corruption now taking place in political life.'¹⁸¹

In spite of this professed unconcern with the Scandal and most things parliamentary, a point continually made in its pages, the New Age did give some space to discussion of the affair. On hearing the details of Rufus Isaacs' investments in American Marconi, an article stated that 'the evidence so far disclosed by the Marconi Committee acquits Sir Rufus Isaacs, in our opinion, of corruption, only, however, to convict him of being and having been a cunning fool.'¹⁸² The journal was very critical of the abuse of power that the ministers had displayed.

'They have treated the public as if we had no concern even in a public matter; as if their dealings in shares, which for all we knew were British Marconis, were as private to them as their motors. Well, they are not; and now, let us hope, they know it. But the least punishment that can be allowed for the insolent blunder the three Ministers have made is to relieve them of offices manifestly beyond their appreciation of public manners.'¹⁸³

In June, there was a good deal of speculation on the outcome of the Isaacs-Chesterton case, the Select Committee reports and the parliamentary debate. If resignations were to occur, then not only Isaacs and Lloyd George, but also Asquith and, indeed, the whole Cabinet, must go. Yet the New Age did state that, in its opinion, the Unionists were not ready for office. 'It is a pity Lord Robert Cecil should be without a party of courage enough to follow him or the Unionist party without a leader with courage enough to agree with him.'¹⁸⁴

The point about total Liberal commitment either to survival or to resignation was made again the following week. It was felt that the Liberal party would not

destroy itself for what was, after all, simply another occurrence of corrupt practice in a doomed system of government. Therefore, any vote in debate would be a vote of confidence in the government as a whole, not of individuals. 'That also should prove a further humiliation of the two Ministers thus shielded by a reputation greater than they have lost.'¹⁸⁵ 'Notes of the Week' following the debate expressed satisfaction with the outcome, in that any other course would have forced the resignation of Isaacs and Lloyd George. In spite of this, the journal was still aware of the general decline in parliamentary governments. 'We acquit them, it is true, of corruption, but we convict them nevertheless of being corrupt.'¹⁸⁶

The New Statesman appeared in April 1913 and its first edition contained an article on the Marconi affair written by Shaw.¹⁸⁷ Its general tone was fairly light-hearted but it ended on a serious note.

'For ourselves, if you ask us should a Cabinet Minister hold shares in commercial concerns, we reply: of course not. And if you ask us further how a Cabinet Minister is to provide for his family and his old age except by commercial investments, we reply that we do not know, and neither does he. That is one of Commercialism's little ironies, and one of the reasons why we are out to get rid of Commercialism.'¹⁸⁸

The article set the tone of the journal's Marconi coverage. Very little material on the topic appeared, but it is possible to see the pattern of its attitude. Whilst blaming the ministers for the creation of a scandal, it felt that there had been no corruption: '... never in any country at any time has there been so great and so damaging a scandal affecting the credit of a Government, which has depended on so slight a basis of anything that can be called "corruption".'¹⁸⁹ The ministers' actions were called indiscreet and indelicate and 'utterly wanting in frankness (and even in common sense)'¹⁹⁰, but since they were not corrupt, there ought to be an end to the affair.

'What the nation has now to do is, first, to recall Ministers and members somewhat sternly to their duty. The most important thing that is happening this week - the most pregnant with weal or woe to tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens - is not the silly gossip of Westminster, but the great strike and lockout

in the Midlands, where some five-and-twenty thousand families are starving under their employers' eyes in order to get - ye Gods! - a minimum wage of twelve shillings a week for women and twenty-three for men.'¹⁹¹

The journal of the British Socialist Party, Justice, took the Scandal more seriously and used it ruthlessly for political attacks on both major parties.

Of the October 1912 debate, it wrote:-

'The indignant protests of the members of the Government implicated would have been amusing had the matter in hand not been of so serious a character. Of course the Tories, while condemning the transaction from a business point of view, were quite willing to exonerate those responsible from any imputations upon their personal honour or integrity. Probably they thought it would be too much of a case of the pot calling the kettle black to do otherwise.'¹⁹²

Justice deemed the ministers guilty of dealing in shares, even before the facts were fully known. Consequently, whilst it condemned the revelations of Le Matin, it was not so shocked or surprised as other journals. It was more surprised at the reactions, which it found to be remarkably similar. 'Tory and Liberal journals both mean the same thing. That is obvious. The Marconi Scandal is knocking a hole in a good many cherished beliefs.'¹⁹³ On the parliamentary outcome of the Scandal, there was little new to say, except that the process of whitewash had been carried out without any opposition. 'Topical Tattle' saw the affair as the inevitable result of capitalism,¹⁹⁴ which summed up the journal's approach.

Before moving on to a consideration of the racial assumptions and bias which contributed to the press coverage of the affair, a few words on the most prominent 'independent' journals is needed. That section of the press devoted to financial affairs and the Stock Exchange was, by and large, muted in its approach to the Scandal. With the exception of the Financial News, which was described as 'a technical journal sacrificing its reputation in its own line to its zeal for party politics',¹⁹⁵ these journals limited themselves to the price of Marconi shares and a few comments on the merits of the contract and the ministers' involvement. Most of the comments were matter-of-fact. For example, the Investors' Monthly Manual summarised the dealings as

' ... generally regarded as indiscreet, but, unfortunately - both before and after the actual facts were publicly stated - they were made the subject of the most virulent and unfounded charges of corruption against the ministers in question. Fortunately, some of the chief authors of these accusations were brought to book or completely recanted, but the affair remains as a discreditable chapter in the history of British political controversy.'¹⁹⁶

This was virtually the full extent of the journal's comments on the Scandal aspect of the affair.

The Investors' Review, a more politically inclined journal, at one stage referring to itself as 'an old so-called philosophical "Radical"',¹⁹⁷ showed the same bias towards these values rather than rumours. Despite alarm over the wild speculation in Marconi shares, the journal held no brief for the various allegations of corruption. 'Abundant insinuations have been flying about, and abundant grounds for suspicion may exist, but the Parliamentary heads of departments were never in the gamble, and the attacks made upon the Attorney-General were ruffianly in their ferocity and unscrupulousness.'¹⁹⁸ Indeed, it felt that its faith in government officials was confirmed by Lawson's collapse in the Select Committee; ' ... slowly, but methodically and with the deadliness of fate, the humbug of the entire outburst and the nature of the partisan or pocket inspiration behind it was evident.'¹⁹⁹ This belief was maintained until the Le Matin trial.

Even then, there was an attempt to justify their stand, claiming that too much had been made of the affair, purely from political motives, and that the persecution ought to cease.²⁰⁰ By the time of the debate, however, it had come to accept some of the points made against the ministers' transactions, which were called 'eminently improper and devoid of principle.' The journal supported Lord Robert Cecil's report as the one most suitable to the occasion. 'It puts in their right place the ravings of the anti-semitic and more or less demented Press, and at the same time passes a just and measured censure upon what the Ministers implicated actually did that was wrong.'²⁰¹

Two other journals associated with finance, albeit in a less formal sense of the word, were Horatio Bottomley's John Bull and the Radically-inclined Truth, once edited by Henry Labouchere, the man who had advised Lloyd George to 'Go for Joe' in the Kynoch affair.²⁰² Both journals had a deserved reputation for the exposure of financial scandals²⁰³, and yet, from their coverage of the Scandal, it is clear they had no part in the 'exposure' of ministers. This may be explained by their sympathy for a Liberal government, but it would be wrong to say they were Liberal journals.²⁰⁴

Bottomley's journal was first interested in Marconi because of the rising share prices early in 1912 but had no truck with the rumours. Following the October debate, it was delighted to record that the only scandal 'consisted of the poisoned slander of lying tongues.'²⁰⁵ In an open letter to Lawson, Bottomley was scornful of his approach to journalism.

'... The truth is, you flung so much dirt about without caring where or how it stuck, and your eyes got so filled up with the splashes, that you weren't able to see even the nose on your face. The whole muck-heap is now tumbled over, my dear chap, and the general opinion is that you are buried under it. If you should emerge alive, for goodness' sake be rather more careful of other people's reputations if you have any regard for your own.'²⁰⁶

On the investment by Rufus Isaacs, the journal was surprisingly lenient.

'No doubt Sir Rufus Isaacs will be taunted with not having disclosed to the House of Commons a purely private, personal transaction, in no way connected with the issue in question; but we hope he will tell the House to mind its own business - a piece of advice it surely needs. But as regards Mr Lloyd George - well, it is a bit awkward for the People's Tribune to explain a little deal in the sordid stock of a monopolist company. But he will manage it all right.'²⁰⁷

Bottomley made no secret of his association with the Isaacs family. Rufus's uncle, Sir Henry Isaacs, then Lord Mayor of London, had become chairman of Bottomley's Hansard Union in 1886, largely due to a £2000 payment to Rufus's father, Joseph, who persuaded Sir Henry to give the company this standing.²⁰⁸ Bottomley based his faith in Rufus Isaacs' innocence on personal knowledge.

'I knew him when he was a struggling Junior at the bar. I dined with him, at his father's table, the day he got his "red bag" - from the late Sir John Lawson Walton. He sat at my side during the dark days of the Hansard Union trouble - and he acted as my counsel in many a case. And, knowing him as I do, I say that a more scrupulously, punctiliously honourable man never sat in Parliament.'²⁰⁹

This statement gives more idea of why the journal took such a low-key view of the affair than any assessment of its political or racial bias. Although the Scandal was described as 'one of the final nails in the coffin of the Party System',²¹⁰ and Bottomley used the matter to promote his own idea of a Business Government, it was hardly at the expense of the individuals concerned in the Liberal government.

Similarly, Truth had a sympathetic approach to the Scandal, which again seemed strange for a journal so concerned with financial investigations. The additional factor of Jewishness was one which, again, ought to have heightened Truth's interest, as we shall see below, but in the Marconi Scandal it played no part. Here, political bias may have been the all-important factor. Both Rufus Isaacs and Herbert Samuel had come in for praise in the months immediately prior to the development of the rumours²¹¹ and coverage was limited to the share prices until the appearance of Lawson's National Review article in October 1912. After consideration, the journal stated that Lawson's case was based on the relationship between Godfrey and Rufus Isaacs. 'That is the one solid fact on which Mr Lawson builds up a huge superstructure of malignant suggestions.'²¹² Whilst there may have been some merit in his arguments about the terms of the contract, his political motives were clearly suspect.

Truth had no time for the other Conservative journalists like Maxse and Oliver of the Outlook.²¹³ Its support for the ministers continued even after the Le Matin case and it continued to criticise the Conservative approach. There was even agreement with the Booth/Falconer cover-up procedure; each member of the Select Committee was entitled to 'collect his own scandal without disclosing to his neighbour where the bones were buried.'²¹⁴ Although there

had been extensive treatment of the affair, the journal did try to place it in perspective.

'The purity of public administration is of pressing importance to all of us. As, however, it does not appear that there is any charge of corrupt intentions in the whole of the reports of the Marconi Committee, the public interest in this affair seems to be merely that of spectators looking at a game ... The fault of Mr Lloyd George and his two erring colleagues seems to have been that they did a very foolish thing - foolish simply because it gave a handle to their enemies if it came out, and it was bound to come out sooner or later. The people who have most cause to complain of them for that are their innocent colleagues and their followers in Parliament and the country.'²¹⁵

Thus, in a journal obsessed at the time with Jewish money-lending, there was virtually unqualified support for Jewish politicians involved in doubtful share dealings. The most sensible explanation is that Truth can only be classified as an 'independent' journal in the sense that it had no direct links with the Liberal party. Its vilification of the Conservatives made its Radical stance quite obvious. This does pose, however, some interesting points about the political use of anti-semitism, which will be examined later.

To summarise this section, two quotations from Punch, perhaps a truly independent journal, show the extremes expressed by Conservatives and Liberals in their true perspective. A mock advertisement defused the frothings of the contract's critics. 'READY SHORTLY - "The Marconi Affair in a Nutshell", by Messrs GARVIN and MAXSE, 968 pages, fol.'²¹⁶ On the intransigence of the Liberals, there was a short but pithy verse.

The Marconi Report

"More whitewash!" said the FALCONER,
Doing the Party trick;
"Throw it about in bucketfuls;
Some of it's bound to stick."
"Very poor art!" the public cried;
"You're laid it on too thick!"

,217

These two items satirise the extreme political stances adopted by the journals of both sides. They do not, however, refer to the particular aspect of the coverage of the Scandal which is crucial to this study. The fact that Jewish

politicians were involved gave ample scope for the use and expression of certain anti-semitic attitudes and it is in the press coverage of the affair that we can most easily discern these views.

The importance of anti-semitism in the propagation of the Scandal has been noted earlier. The part played by the press in this aspect of the affair was a very significant one. As the first edition of the New Statesman pointed out, prejudice had been systematically used.

'First it was supposed that Cabinet Ministers are speculating in Marconis; that they have relatives who are speculating in Marconis; that they are Jews; that their relatives are Jews; that the Jewish race exists only to speculate in Marconis; and, by implication, that no Englishman could, without a dastardly betrayal of his country, soil his hands with a Marconi share certificate. A frantic campaign of horror and vituperation followed. The National Review and The New Witness promptly set about the task of cleaning the Augean stable. The intolerable notion that a member of the Government could have a financial interest in anything was repudiated. Mr Herbert Samuel, being a Jew, was despoiled of his "Mister", and became simply Samuel, like the Old Testament hero, but in a less complimentary sense. England represented as bound hand and foot in the power of a gang of unscrupulous and corrupt financial adventurers.'²¹⁸

It has been claimed that editors and journalists of the time had certain common features and shared attitudes. Koss has described these in some detail and includes anti-semitism as one of the features, although it is an impressionistic survey and lacks any definition of what constitutes anti-semitism -

'This sentiment was as always prevalent among those who aspired to social station; it was usually purposeless and sometimes sportive, as when his colleagues referred to Edwin Montagu as "the Assyrian" '. Amongst those deemed to exhibit such a tendency was Geoffrey Robinson and Lord Northcliffe of The Times, together with two better known and recorded deprecators of Jews, Leo Maxse and Arnold White. Maxse, Koss suggests, 'saw the Radical Party disseminating "Hewbrew influences" through Parliament, the press, financial and social circles', whilst White 'cited two "classes" of Jews: "Those who are as loyal to this country as were the Huguenots after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and those who remain cosmopolitan, indifferent or hostile, secretly, towards England." '²¹⁹

Ada Chesterton revealed a more personal and intimate view of the minds of those working in and around Fleet Street. Referring to the social life amongst journalists, she noted that those from the Daily Telegraph, a journal owned and edited by Jews, did not mingle as freely as the others. 'We had a legend that they kept away from Gentile companionship for fear they should be the selected victims of the ritual murder which the Anti-Semites insisted was annually perpetrated in the darker recesses of the foundry.'²²⁰

Since anti-semitism in the context of the Marconi Scandal could be used only by opponents of the Liberal government, or of capitalist government in general, it is to be found in extremist conservative journals and in the left wing press. The National Review certainly belongs to the first category; the Witness is a harder paper to classify, showing tinges of both conservatism and radicalism. Both will be dealt with in separate chapters. Of the other journals which exhibited hostility to Jews, the first general observation to be made is that they all did so in a similar manner, using the conventional stereotypes and usual range of accusations.

The Outlook, and Lawson in particular, made use of these stereotypes to show the Jew as financier and conspirator against the 'British way of life.' Godfrey Isaacs was described as 'a bold financier of the chosen race'²²¹ and on the more general conspiratorial issue, Lawson attempted to suggest that the Marconi Company was a Jewish-dominated organisation, both at management and shareholder level. Noting that a majority of shares were held by foreigners, he added - 'Another striking peculiarity is that when an English holding does occur it is generally in a Jewish name. There are hundreds of these, including Kaffir magnates, Jewish bankers, financiers and members of the Stock Exchange.'²²²

Without producing any firm evidence, Lawson built up a conspiracy based on the Jewish relationship of some of the leading figures. His criticisms of the technical merits were hidden by these suggestions. As a letter in the Financial News put it,

'In the debate on the third reading of the Home Rule Bill Mr F.E. Smith very rightly deprecated any disparaging insinuation in regard to gentlemen who happened to be of Jewish parentage; and in reading the article written by Mr Lawson in your Friday's issue I could not but regret to find this same animosity prevailing to such an extent as to make one almost wonder if that was the sole object of his writing at all;'²²³

Lawson's contributions in The Outlook were not the only evidence of its anti-Jewish feeling. The journal frequently published letters from Joseph Banister, a renowned anti-semite, and had no qualms about warning of the dangers of Jewish power in Britain. An article entitled 'The Triumph of Jewish Racialism' spoke of the ever-increasing Jewish population. 'Today in England alone, the Israelites lead the Bar, the India Office, the Post Office, monopolise finance, influence the Press, rule the stage.'²²⁴ Thus, Lawson's racial inclinations, whether intrinsic or simply assumed for effect, certainly fitted the pattern of the Outlook's thinking.

Other writers of anti-semitic reputation also contributed to the right-wing journals. Arnold White wrote in The Throne on the Scandal and related incidents. His dislike of the Liberal government, both on political and racial grounds, was made apparent in an article on 'The Cosmopolitan Financier'. Noting the links between the Liberal Party, the party of the rich, and several foreign-born millionaires of Jewish descent, White pointed to the political consequences.

'Even in domestic affairs there is an unpleasant impression abroad that finance is not always clean. The British taxpayer has been "had" in the telephone deal by the brilliant Semitic statesmen who draw pay as Postmaster-General and Attorney-General. The public is not allowed to know the truth about the transactions that are carried on in its name.'²²⁵

Given this approach, it is hardly surprising to find that, in the journal's discussion of a National Review article on the Scandal, a Jewish connection was stressed. 'The General Manager of the Marconi Company is a brother of Sir Rufus Isaacs. Mr Herbert Samuel, another Hebrew, is the Postmaster-General.'²²⁶ Much of its later coverage was based on this simple fact. One of its most consistent themes was the domination of the government and the Liberal party by wealthy

Jews, and their manipulation of events to suit themselves rather than the British people. The journal's support for 'The Committee of Inquiry into the Radical Plutocracy',²²⁷ the backbench Conservatives' answer to the Land Campaign investigations of the Liberals, shows this. '... it is gratifying to find the rank and file of the Unionist Party determined to get to the bottom of the cant, hypocrisy and corruption by which this alien element has debauched one of the great historic parties of the State.'²²⁸ The Scandal was simply one facet of this Jewish attempt to dominate politics for selfish reasons and as such it was treated in this stereotyped way²²⁹ - Jewish financiers exploiting British Liberalism.

White also wrote under the pen-name 'Vanoc' in the Referee.²³⁰ He was able to comment much more fully on the Marconi affair in this journal. At first, he appeared to reject the conspiracy theory; in July 1912, he protested that his opposition to the contract was based not on the relationship between Godfrey and Rufus Isaacs, but on the fact that 'public interests do not seem to have been adequately safeguarded.'²³¹ Less than two months later, his attitude towards the contract had hardened.

'Nobody can imagine a healthy House of Commons permitting the fixing up of the Marconi deal which is to hand over to a multitude of polyglot cosmopolitans and foreigners the financial control of the means of communication by which the fate of the Empire will stand or fall in times of war.'²³²

White's writing on this particular topic fitted into his general view of Jewish power in Britain. For example, he saw a protest petition to the Russian government about the blood ritual accusation against Jews (Beiliss in particular)²³³ as a symbol of Jewish domination.

'It is absolutely certain that an overwhelming majority of the signatories to this protest know nothing whatever at first hand about blood ritual. The desire to stand well with the powerful, wealthy, and highly organised Jewish community was enough to secure the eager adhesion of the majority of people who were asked to sign the protest.'²³⁴

It must be assumed that the Referee found his remarks agreeable, since it took no steps to sever his connections with the paper.

These journals and personalities represent part of a general Conservative attack on a Liberal measure and so anti-semitism could be used against Jewish politicians involved in the Scandal. These political figures also had opponents on the left. A comparison of arguments reveals some interesting and significant features. The Daily Herald used reasonably similar imagery as its right wing opponents. Whilst there were few outright references to the Scandal as a Jewish ramp, the basis of its criticisms was made clear in an article on another aspect of the Jews - 'foreignness'.²³⁵

'We do not care two straws what a man's nationality may be when we are discussing public, or even private affairs. But, nevertheless, it is a fact that wealthy Jews dominate this and practically every other European country which has any claim to commercial eminence. And it is also a fact that these same Jews frequently use their wealth in ways which are not conducive to the happiness and well-being of the working classes.'²³⁶

The reader was frequently given clues as to how Jews assumed their dominant positions and the Marconi contract was one blatant example. The most vivid explanations were in the cartoons of Will Dyson. Rufus and Godfrey Isaacs, along with Herbert Samuel, were pictured as caricatures of a Jewish stereotype, winking and tapping their noses as a signal of some secret arrangement.²³⁷ In another, the two figures, escaping with the concessions, and hidden from the public's view by the 'mountain' of the Select Committee inquiry, have distinct Jewish caricature features. The caption stated 'The Gentlemen of a somewhat vaguely Semitic cast of countenance in the foreground to the left are evidently merely symbolic representations and not particular individuals.'²³⁸

In spite of its obvious animus against Jews, the journal rejected charges of anti-Semitism in the same way that the Witness did.

'If Sir Rufus Isaacs is criticised it is now the trick of the more foolish Liberal papers to call the criticism anti-Semitism. We should never have remembered that Rufus Isaacs (or Herbert Samuel for that matter) was a Jew had we searched our memories for any protest made by him against alliance with Russia, the country which places special restrictions on the lives and livelihoods of its Jewish citizens, or had we in connection with any question where Jews are concerned looked for his representation of Jewish interests in Parliament. That it is anti-Semitic to

to criticise a Jew who is also Postmaster-General or Attorney-General is an absurd doctrine. The Welsh do not call criticism of Lloyd George anti-Welshism; and it is a fact that George has been called a Welsh attorney far more often than Samuel and Isaacs have been called Jews. At the present day the rich of all nations are denationalised, and with no nation is this more true than with the Jews. ... we say once and for all that if Sir Rufus Isaacs and Mr Herbert Samuel and other Jews do not want to be criticised they should at least avoid any public position.²³⁹

This concept of the Jews and the British as separate nationalities and the refusal to accept that it was not the attacks in themselves, but their nature, which constituted anti-Semitism, were typical of the Chesterton/Belloc school of thought.²⁴⁰

Justice also provided more examples of left-wing attitudes to Jews. The SDF, under H.M. Hyndman's leadership, had an inclination towards 'rich-Jew' anti-semitism, and Justice tended to reflect this attitude.²⁴¹ Perhaps the most celebrated (notorious ?) outbursts were during the Boer War, when 'Hyndman editorialized at length about "the Jews' War on the Transvaal" '242 'Even at a time when anti-semitism was not uncommon in left-wing political circles, Hyndman gave much offence.'²⁴³ Anti-Jewish sentiments were still to be found in the pages of the journal during the period of the Scandal and so, whilst it might comment on the debilitating effect of the Witness's anti-semitism on the merits of its legitimate criticism of the contract,²⁴⁴ Justice was guilty of the same error of judgement. There were speculations about the relationship between Wertheim and Gompertz, the Dutch firm, Messrs Samuel Montagu and Co. and Herbert Samuel, the implication being they were all Jews and therefore suspected of some kind of conspiracy.²⁴⁵ Its defence against accusations of anti-semitism, couched in similar terms as that of the Daily Herald, did, however, seem less hypocritical.²⁴⁶ It may be that the amalgamation of the SDF into the British Socialist Party moderated the approach of Justice to the topic. We might also look at personalities involved, for whilst Hyndman continued his anti-Jewish inclinations,²⁴⁷ he was no longer the leading party figure. Similarly, the editor of Justice, Harry Quelch, whom Kendall notes as fairly hostile to certain Jews as late as

1911,²⁴⁸ was ill during the period of the Scandal and died shortly afterwards. This suggests that the vague expressions of a Jewish conspiracy theory owe less to the general policy and approach of the journal and the party than to the particular hostility of individuals like Hyndman and Quelch.

Clearly, then, there was a framework of varying degrees of anti-semitism in British journalism at this time, which meant that the Scandal would be given publicity. Because it fitted into a certain popular conception of how Jews were behaving, this was inevitable. The few examples given above illustrate this. However, there were two journals whose anti-semitism stood out, The Eye-Witness and the National Review, and these deserve more detailed study. In this way, a picture of the language of pre-war anti-semitism can be built up, one that can be compared and contrasted with that of later years.

CHAPTER 4 : FOOTNOTES

1. See Alan J. Lee, The Origins of the Popular Press, 1885-1914, (London, 1976)
2. Ibid., p. 287
3. Blewett, op. cit., p. 301. Lee's figures, p. 179, confirm this. Details of newspaper circulation for the period before 1914 are notoriously difficult to obtain and confirm, as both writers point out. The standard piece of research, which they draw upon, is A.P. Wadsworth, 'Newspaper Circulations, 1800-1945', Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society, 1954-5. See Holton, International Review of Social History, op. cit., p. 374 for comparative statistics.
4. Blewett, op. cit., pp. 304-5. Confirmation of this can be found in Lee, op. cit., p. 208.
5. Blewett, op. cit., p. 304
6. Stephen Koss, Fleet Street Radical: A.G. Gardiner and the Daily News, (London, 1973), pp 134-5.
7. Ibid., p. 107
8. See ibid., pp. 135-6, J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, Volume 2, (London, 1927), pp 138-9.
9. A.F. Havighurst, Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham (1860-1924), (London, 1974), p. 175.
10. Ibid.
11. Nation, 10 August 1912
12. Westminster Gazette, 8 August 1912
13. Ibid., 12 October 1912
14. Nation, 12 October 1912
15. Ibid., 19 October 1912
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 25 January 1913
18. Ibid., 15 February 1913
19. Ibid. See also Havighurst, op. cit., p. 210
20. Westminster Gazette, 13 February 1913
21. Ibid., 19 March 1913

22. Nation, 22 March 1913
23. Ibid., 29 March 1913
24. Ibid., 10 May 1913
25. See Havighurst, op. cit., pp. 123-6
26. Nation, 14 June 1913
27. Westminster Gazette, 28 May 1913
28. Ibid., 9 June 1913
29. Ibid., 14 June 1913
30. Nation, 14 June 1913
31. Westminster Gazette, 14 June 1913
32. Nation, 14 June 1913
33. Westminster Gazette, 14 June 1913
34. Ibid., 17 June 1913
35. Havighurst, op. cit., p. 210
36. See Nation, 14 June 1913
37. It is easy to see why the Nation was described as the semi-official journal for the Lloyd George wing of the Liberal cabinet (Bently Gilbert, The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain : The Origins of the Welfare State, (London, 1966), p. 69). Massingham's admiration for Lloyd George came to an end after the Great War, with his involvement in the Coalition Government (Havighurst, op. cit., pp 287-8, Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., p. 55)
38. Westminster Gazette, 20 June 1913
39. Nation, 21 June 1913
40. Havighurst, op. cit., p. 211
41. Ibid.
42. Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., p. 117
43. Lee, op. cit., p. 180
44. For details, see ibid., p. 165
45. See the first edition of The Eye-Witness, 22 June 1911, for just such an accusation. For a further discussion of this situation, see Chapter 10
46. See The New Witness, 19 December 1913

47. Daily News, 14 December 1913
48. The New Witness, 26 December 1913
49. See correspondence between Sir Albert Spicer and Asquith, Asquith Papers, MS 24, 231-5 and information from P.W. Wilson, a long-serving member of the Daily News staff, who referred to the free flow of information; he received his from Sir Henry Norman (Ibid., MS 24, 237)
50. 26 March 1913, Gardiner Papers, quoted in Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., pp. 132-3
51. Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., p. 133
52. 25 June 1913, Lloyd George Papers, C/9/4/65, quoted in ibid.
53. C.P. Scott to Lloyd George, 7 June 1913, quoted in J.L. Hammond, op. cit., pp. 99-100n. According to Hammond, this is the only document in the Scott Papers dealing with the Scandal.
54. See, for example, The Outlook, 26 October 1912
55. When Lloyd George was nearly expelled from the Liberal Party over the General Strike, Scott was advising him on policy (Taylor (ed.), op. cit., p. 100). Lloyd George described Scott as 'my oldest and best political friend' (Lloyd George to Frances Stevenson, 1 January 1932, in ibid., p. 173)
56. Vivian Phillips, My Days and Ways, (n.d. - c. 1943, for private distribution only), pp. 54-5, quoted in Trevor Wilson (ed.), The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott, 1911-1928, (London, 1970), p. 26
57. Reynolds's Newspaper, 23 March 1913
58. It was O'Connor who recruited the capital to launch the Star in 1888 (Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., p. 30)
59. Reynolds's Newspaper, 30 March 1913
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 29 June 1913
62. Ibid., 22 June 1913
63. See, for example, the situation during the 1910 elections, as described in Blewett, op. cit., pp. 303-5
64. This was chiefly due to the editorship of Powell (see Chapter 2)
65. By 1914, the Express sold twice as many as The Times (300,000 to 150,000), according to Read, op. cit., p. 61, whilst the Mail exceeded the million mark in 1912. See Blewett, op. cit., p. 301 for a summary of the position in 1910 and Wadsworth, Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society, op. cit., for a more general picture.
66. Evidence of Guinness, S.C., Vol. 1, p. 903

67. See Chapter 2
68. The Outlook, 30 March 1912
69. S.C., Vol. 1, p. 911
70. The Outlook, 20 July 1912
71. S.C., Vol. 1, pp. 917, 920, 928
72. Ibid., p. 928
73. See, for example, 3 August 1912 edition
74. The Outlook, 17 August 1912
75. S.C., Vol. 1, p. 778
76. The Outlook, 29 March 1913
77. Ibid., 5 April 1913
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 54, col. 443
81. The Outlook, 14 June 1913
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., 28 June 1913
84. See Chapters 5-7
85. See Chapters 9 and 10
86. Ibid.
87. This was certainly true at the beginning of the century, when it sold between 22,000 and 23,000 copies a week (Read, op. cit., p. 61)
88. Hugh Thomas, John Strachey, (London, 1973), p. 11
89. Spectator, 19 October 1912
90. Ibid., 14 September 1912
91. Ibid., 26 October 1912
92. See, for example, summary of National Review article in Spectator, 9 November 1912
93. Spectator, 19 October 1912
94. Ibid., 22 February 1913

95. Ibid., 14 June 1913. It was no secret that Belloc and Strachey were enemies. When Belloc was an M.P., he had, according to Strachey, libelled him in the House of Commons and not repeated it outside that privileged arena, so that an action could be brought. (ibid., 12 April 1913)
96. 4 April 1913, Strachey Papers, S/17/4/7
97. Spectator, 22 March 1913
98. Ibid., 29 March 1913
99. Strachey to Bonar Law, 31 March 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/2/48
100. Ibid. Also to be found in Strachey Papers, S/9/8/8
101. Spectator, 5 April 1913
102. Ibid., 10 May 1913
103. The Times, 17 June 1913
104. Strachey to Bonar Law, 17 June 1913, Bonar Law Papers 29/5/31
105. Spectator, 21 June 1913
106. Ibid., 16 August 1913
107. Ibid., 27 Spetember 1913
108. See Chapter 1
109. Strachey Papers, S/8/12/5
110. Letter to Strachey, 3 January 1919, Strachey Papers, S/8/12/5
111. Strachey to Manners, 11 February 1919, ibid.
112. Strachey Papers, S/8/12/6 (See Chapter 1)
113. Fowler to Strachey, 19 December 1918, in ibid.
114. Strachey to Fowler, 31 December 1918, in ibid.
115. See Chapter 1
116. Strachey to Hamilton, 9 January 1919, Strachey Papers, S/8/12/4
117. See Norman Cohn, Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, (London, 1967 - Pelican edition, 1970), pp. 169-70
118. Ibid., p. 169
119. Cited in ibid.
120. See letters, 15 October 1912, 21 March 1913

121. See interview with Baxendale, manager of the English Poulsen syndicate, 8 October 1912. Note also that the Post gave publicity to the campaign of another young Tory M.P., Gwynne, in the Indian Silver scandal (see Chapter 9).
122. Morning Post, 12 October 1912
123. Ibid., 21 March 1913
124. Ibid., 20 June 1913
125. Ibid., 28 March 1913
126. Ibid., 12 June 1913. Similarly, saying that all it asked for was that ministers didn't take tips from government contractors, it maintained that the present situation was unique and asked for a return to the 'ancient standard of British tradition and nothing more'. (ibid., 14 June 1913)
127. Ibid., 20 June 1913
128. Ibid., 25 June 1913
129. Ibid., 12 June 1913
130. Ibid., 13 June 1913
131. Ibid., 4 April 1913
132. The Throne, 17 May 1913
133. Financial News, 14 April 1913
134. Pall Mall Gazette, 13 February 1913
135. Ibid., 20 March 1913
136. Quoted in Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., p. 304
137. This was also a two-way process. Geoffrey Dawson, editor at the time of the Scandal, was a strong Unionist, but took special pains to contact leading Liberals for debate and information (J.E. Wrench, Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times, (London, 1955), p. 88
138. Michael Kinnear, op. cit., pp. 22-3
139. See The Times, 2 August 1912
140. Paul Ferris, The House of Northcliffe, (London, 1971), p. 165. Harold became a baron in 1910 and, in 1914, Lord Rothermere.
141. Ibid., p. 186. It was also suggested that Harold Harmsworth had purchased large numbers of English Marconi shares for himself and certain Liberal ministers (see Leo Amery to Robert Cecil, 9 January 1914, cited in Cregier, op. cit., p. 205).
142. Ibid., p. 187

143. 10 March 1913, quoted in Reginald Pound and Arthur Harmsworth, Northcliffe, (London, 1959), p. 441
144. Ferris, op. cit., p. 187, Donaldson, op. cit., pp 96-7.
145. The Times, 20 March 1913
146. Northcliffe to Dawson, 20 March 1913, quoted in The Times, The History of The Times, Volume 4, 1912-1948, p. 1056. See Donaldson, op. cit., p. 97n
147. Ferris, op. cit., p. 188
148. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 132. No source is given for this statement.
149. Baird to Bonar Law, 21 March 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/2/31.
150. Ferris, op. cit., p. 188
151. Undated letter (copy), Lloyd George Papers, C/3/15/21. See also Pound and Harmsworth, op. cit., p. 441. This letter gave Northcliffe's assessment of public opinion on the Scandal.
'... the whole Marconi business looms much larger in Downing Street than among the mass of the people. The total number of letters received by my newspapers has been exactly three, one of which was printed - the other two were foolish.'
152. Reading, op. cit., p. 260
153. See copies of both letters in Pound and Harmsworth, op. cit., pp. 441-2
154. Northcliffe to Lloyd George, 24 March 1913, Lloyd George Papers, C/6/8/14.
155. Northcliffe to Isaacs, 24 March 1913, quoted in Pound and Harmsworth, op. cit., p. 442. Note the stereotype of Jewish 'clannishness' implied by Northcliffe.
156. Undated letter (copy) to Churchill, Lloyd George Papers, C/3/15/20. Ferris puts the date at 7 May 1913 (p. 188). On the 8 May, the leader in The Times referred to the 'amazing ineptitude' of the affair.
157. The Times, 4 June 1913. cf. 20 March 1913 (note 145)
158. Ibid., 9 June 1913
159. Ibid., 14 June 1913
160. Ibid., 20 June 1913
161. See Ferris, op. cit., p. 189. This grudge may have lasted some time. In 1916, C.P. Scott noted in his diary, with reference to the Scandal, that 'There is a rumour going about - I should hope it is quite unfounded - that Northcliffe has some information about this which he holds over George in terrorem'. (Wilson (ed.), op. cit., p. 236)
162. Ferris, op. cit., p. 189. Ferris claims that the system had worked before, Northcliffe showing some sympathy for the Liberals in the Lords crisis of 1911, again on Harold's instigation.

163. Justice, 28 June 1913
164. See Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 42, cols 712-7
165. Raymond Postgate, The Life of George Lansbury, (London, 1951), p. 116
166. See Daily Herald, 7 August 1912
167. See Chapter 2
168. Daily Herald, 1 October 1912
169. Ibid., 12 October 1912
170. Ibid., 20 March 1913
171. See announcement in ibid., 14 February 1913
172. Daily Herald, 5 April 1913
173. Ibid., 28 May 1913
174. Ibid., 9 June 1913
175. Ibid., 14 June 1913
176. Ibid., 20 June 1913
177. For details of the birth and policy of the Daily Herald, see Holton, International Review of Social History, op. cit., pp. 350-359
178. See Hynes, op. cit., pp. 39-45. It had a very impressive list of contributors, including Belloc, Bennett, Brooke, Chesterton, Galsworthy, Pound and Shaw (p. 43). For a study of guild socialism in these years, see S.T. Glass, The Responsible Society: The Ideas of Guild Socialism, (London, 1966)
179. Havighurst, op. cit., pp. 155-6
180. See Chapter 3
181. New Age, 17 October 1912
182. Ibid., 3 April 1913
183. Ibid., 10 April 1913
184. Ibid., 12 June 1913
185. Ibid., 19 June 1913
186. Ibid., 26 June 1913
187. Kitty Muggeridge and Ruth Adam, Beatrice Webb: A Life, 1958-1943, (London, 1967), p. 200
188. New Statesman, 12 April 1913

189. Ibid., 14 June 1913
190. Ibid., 21 June 1913
191. Ibid.
192. Justice, 19 October 1912
193. Ibid., 5 April 1913
194. Ibid., 28 June 1913
195. Truth, 5 November 1913
196. June 1913
197. 21 June 1913
198. Investors' Review, 19 October 1912
199. Ibid., 8 February 1913
200. Ibid., 29 March 1913
201. Ibid., 21 June 1913
202. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 127
203. John Bull was started in 1906 as 'the poor man's Truth', (Alan Hyman, The Rise and Fall of Horatio Bottomley: The Biography of a Swindler, (London, 1972), p. 83)
204. Bottomley was, at this time, championing a Business Government - a non-party approach to politics. This followed his departure from parliament in 1912 owing to bankruptcy. (See Hyman, op. cit., p. 131)
205. John Bull, 19 October 1912
206. Ibid., 15 February 1913
207. Ibid., 29 March 1913
208. See Hyman, op. cit., p. 31
209. John Bull, 5 April 1913
210. Ibid., 21 June 1913
211. see Truth, 8 May 1912, 24 April 1912
212. Truth, 9 October 1912
213. Ibid., 19 February 1913
214. Ibid., 9 April 1913. See also 4 June 1913
215. Ibid., 18 June 1913

216. Punch, 21 May 1913
217. Ibid., 18 June 1913
218. New Statesman, 12 April 1913
219. All quotations from Stephen Koss, Lord Haldane: Scapegoat for Liberalism, (Columbia, 1969), pp. 149-50
220. Ada Chesterton, op. cit., pp. 45-6
221. The Outlook, 24 August 1912
222. Ibid., 31 August 1912
223. Financial News, 21 January 1913
224. The Outlook, 11 May 1912
225. The Throne, 19 June 1912
226. Ibid., 11 September 1912
227. See reproduction of its questionnaire in ibid., 20 November 1912
228. Ibid., 30 October 1912
229. The Christmas 1912 edition (4 December) contained many cartoons, depicting Jews with large noses, plucking various geese, some labelled 'Marconi' and similar racial jokes at the expense of Jews.
230. See Our Flag, November 1912
231. Referee, 28 July 1912
232. Ibid., 8 September 1912
233. For details, see Chapters 9 and 10
234. Referee, 26 May 1912
235. This article dealt with the question of the Sassoon will, details of which are to be found in Chapter 9
236. Daily Herald, 10 August 1912
237. Ibid., 3 October 1912
238. Ibid., 19 May 1913
239. Ibid., 24 March 1913
240. See Chapters 5-7. Note that, by this date, both Chestertons were working for the Herald.
241. See Walter Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900-1921, (London, 1969), p. 32

242. Garrard, op. cit., p. 191

243. Chushichi Tsuzuki, H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism, (London, 1961), p. 128.

Many opponents of the War, from all political persuasions, commented upon the activities of Jewish financiers at this time (see, for example, Harvey Mitchell, 'Hobson Revisited', Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 26 (1965), p. 403) and it is important to place Hyndman's remarks in this context.

There is, of course, the problem of deciding where anti-capitalism ends and anti-semitism begins (Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire, (New York, 1968), p. 202, a problem noted in the study by Edmund Silberner, 'British Socialism and the Jews', Historia Judaica, Vol. 14 No. 1 (April, 1952), pp. 26-52. See Chapter 10 for a fuller discussion.

244. Justice, 24 August 1912, 25 October 1913

245. See, for example, ibid., 29 March 1913

246. Ibid., 15 February 1913

247. See his involvement in the National League for Clean Government, Chapter 7

248. Kendall, op. cit., p. 32

CHAPTER 5

BELLOC, CHESTERTON AND THE EYE-WITNESS

The journal that was most pre-occupied with the Marconi Scandal was The Eye-Witness. This made its first appearance on 22 June 1911, for the stated purpose of revealing and opposing corruption in government circles.¹ The editor of the journal was Hilaire Belloc, who until 1910 had been a Liberal M.P., but for various reasons, chief among which was his dislike of party politics at that time, now vehemently apposed the British parliamentary system. Indeed, in 1911, Belloc, along with Cecil Chesterton, produced the damning indictment called The Party System. The journal was largely financed by Charles Granville, 'one of those strange venturers who now and again break into the newspaper world. He had little experience but blithely sponsored Belloc's idea for a weekly review, which proved a brilliant literary and political success.'²

The first edition of the journal gave some clear indication of its political intentions. 'Junius', who was to be the author of many 'Open Letters' in subsequent issues,³ drew the attention of this new King to the sale of honours by the Liberal government. This was to be a consistent theme in the Witness. There were two other major articles of political significance, which help to explain the foundation of such a journal. The first condemned the vast majority of the press as 'subsidised'; the 'Cocoa Press' as it became known after G.K. Chesterton's attack on the Cadbury consortium.⁴ Wealthy proprietors could decide what news was to be printed to suit their own particular interests. Thus, a 'free press' was a vital necessity in such a situation, and the Witness was an attempt to provide this service. The second article was a direct attack on the Insurance Act of 1911, for this Act contained the essence of many of the things towards which Belloc, Granville and the Chestertons were violently hostile.

It was alleged that the Act involved collusion between big business and the

government. People like Cadbury, the Rothschilds and the Sassoons (note already the Jewish names) had agreed to back this scheme of Lloyd George's as a way of regimenting their workers and of extracting money from them. In return for the financial support that the parliamentary parties received from these wealthy businessmen, both Liberals and Tories favoured this legislation thus allowing the monopoly capitalists to further increase their profits by the blatant measure of deducting money from the wages of the working classes.

Furthermore, the journal offered an opportunity for Belloc and those with similar political convictions to expound their own particular philosophy of 'distributivism'. Briefly, this was a response to 'state capitalism', what Belloc called in his 1912 study, 'The Servile State'. It sought the redistribution of property and a return to peasant proprietorship.⁵ Holton has identified distributivism, and the publication of its ideas in the Daily Herald, as a significant element of the unrest in the years before 1914, showing how support for its philosophy came from 'dissidents within the Labour Movement'. He points to the exchange of writers and of ideas between the Herald and the Witness, which suggests both journals had a basic commitment to the politics of distributivism at this time.⁶

Even if we accept that there was a definite political basis for The Eye-Witness, it should not be forgotten that it also had a certain degree of literary and artistic merit. The first two editions alone carried stylistic articles by Wells, Belloc, Wilfred Blunt and G.K. Chesterton, to name but a few. In this sense, The Eye-Witness was very like the New Age, which was edited by Alfred Orage.⁷ Although the latter was essentially political, Orage believed that it ought to be judged by the standard of the contributors, and he succeeded in having many of the more famous literary figures of the era writing pieces for his periodical. ' "One used to write to The New Age", Belloc later recalled, "simply because one knew it to be the only paper in which the truth with regard to our corrupt policies, or indeed with regard to any powerful evil, could be told." '8

Belloc might well have described the Witness in similar vein; indeed it boasted this claim regularly in its columns. Dudley Barker, in his recent study of G.K. Chesterton, remarked on the high literary standards of the Witness, but added that '... such contributions were only the ornament to the paper, not its purpose, which was to continue the attack launched by The Party System on the Parliamentary parties, to expose corruption, and to oppose measures which seemed to Belloc to limit the freedom of the individual.'⁹

It is difficult to assess accurately the journal's circulation and influence. Descriptions of its circulation as 'exceptional for its age'¹⁰ mean very little in an era of heavily subsidised journalism. The nearest definite figures come from a dubious source, the Witness itself, at the height of the Marconi publicity.¹¹ Belloc's biographer claimed that it was, by the end of 1912, the second-largest-selling weekly, the first being the Spectator.¹² Assessments of its influence are also subjective. It was sold openly, for Herbert Samuel himself bought a copy at King's Cross Station. Donaldson claims that 'in a small but influential circle of intellectuals it was widely read'¹³ and the Spectator described it as an important paper read by important people.¹⁴ It certainly reached members of the Cabinet, since John Burns, President of the Local Government Board, distributed it to his colleagues, 'amongst whom he encountered stiff resistance from Mr Herbert Samuel.'¹⁵ Although Asquith considered it to be unimportant and unimportant,¹⁶ the journal was clearly of some significance, largely because of its controversial nature.

This factor was the most important one in allowing the Marconi Scandal to have such an impact. As Barker says, 'Cecil Chesterton was looking greedily for a scandal to oppose, as the surest way of drawing attention to the new paper and increasing its circulation. He picked the most notorious of those years, the Marconi Scandal.'¹⁷ It was felt that publicity was the best way of destroying the political corruption of the time, and this was the course advocated by Belloc and Chesterton in The Party System.

'The first need is exposure. To tell a particular truth with regard to a particular piece of corruption is of course dangerous in the extreme; the rash man who might be tempted to employ this weapon would find himself bankrupted or in prison, and probably both. But the general nature of the unpleasant thing can be drilled into the public by books, articles and speeches.'¹⁸

Certainly the Scandal had all the elements mentioned above that made it deserving of the attention of the Witness. It also contained one other factor not yet dealt with; some of the politicians and businessmen accused of corruption were Jewish. The attitude towards Jews displayed by the Witness and especially by individuals like Belloc and Cecil Chesterton is of vital importance in considering its treatment of the Scandal.

Belloc's reputation as an anti-semite has been noted in many recent works. When Cox and Dyson drew attention to various 'imaginative writers' who exhibited what they call fascist tendencies in the pre-1914 period, they named Belloc as the chief proponent of anti-semitism.¹⁹ Christopher Sykes' study of Nancy Astor claims that it was Belloc who taught her 'real' anti-semitism, although she had a grounding in the 'mild and unpleasant prejudice' which Sykes describes as 'very common' in the English upper classes at that time.²⁰ Although he provides little evidence in his book for these statements, he has used the private papers of Nancy Astor, which contain letters between herself and Belloc for these years immediately before the Great War. These contain remarks about the Marconi Scandal and some general comments about Jews dominating society - 'No one has the courage to defend his country against them'²¹ - as well as some snide references to 'Yids'. However, before accepting Sykes' specific conclusions, one would need rather more evidence than seems to be available.

There is, however, a great deal of contemporary material to show that Belloc was regarded as being hostile to the Jews. The Jewish community, or at least that section represented by the Jewish Chronicle, recognised Belloc's hostility but saw it as part of a general growth of anti-semitism in Britain.

For example, 'Mentor', a regular columnist, in a discussion of the high aspirations that Jews had held for their freedom and safety in England, referred to various events in the history of the Anglo-Jewish community, such as Disraeli's appointment as Prime Minister, which seemed to confirm their beliefs of acceptance and security, but he then turned to certain occurrences in the last few years.

'From the high water mark of the incidents to which I have referred, we come down in latter years to the restriction of alien immigration and the thunderings of Mr Arnold White, to the frothing against Jews of Mr Hilaire Belloc, to the impertinent onslaught of Sir James Barr, and the philosophic antics of Mr G.K. Chesterton. Deeper we descent to the outbreak against Jews in Limerick, and the still more serious outbreak against Jews in South Wales. Now to-day we realise how vain and futile was our boast of former days.'²²

Other contemporaries also made references to Belloc's anti-semitism. In a review of his work, The Servile State, it was stated that the author was famous for his hostility to Jews,²³ whilst a satirical piece in the New Age on Belloc also dealt with this aspect of his character.²⁴

Indeed, few who have studied Belloc's writing in any detail would refute the fact that he held views hostile to the Jews. Even his biographer, Speaight, who was generally sympathetic towards his subject, admitted 'I had, of course, to meet the charges of Belloc's anti-semitism. The charge was not unfounded. A man cannot spread abroad amusing and insulting verses about Sir Alfred Mond and Sir Herbert Samuel and then be surprised that people think he is anti-Semitic.'²⁵

Cecil Chesterton's views reflected those of Belloc, as will be seen in the account that follows. Two excerpts from The Chestertons, a sentimental recollection by Cecil's wife, suggest that he had formulated a similar type of anti-semitism to Belloc's, long before The Eye-Witness was produced. The first concerns the question of the many penniless tobacconists in Kensington High Street, which arose during a debate with his elder brother some time in the early years of the century, Cecil was arguing against the existence of

such destitute tradesmen, claiming, 'As for the tobacconists, there are only five, and one of them belongs to the firm of Salmon and Gluckstein, a combination which suggests many things, but hardly sorrow at small earnings.'²⁶ The second instance was when Cecil became secretary of the Anti-Puritan League, founded by Hubert Bland of the Sunday Chronicle. 'Herbert Samuel as Home Secretary was already trying to pass the measure which ultimately forced children to wait outside licensed premises instead of accompanying their parents inside. Samuel called it a much-needed change in the habits of our people. "Which people?" Cecil asked.'²⁷

These two examples are sufficient to suggest that Chesterton had certain hostile views towards the Jews. He somehow felt that to be a Jewish businessman, even a tobacconist, was to be wealthy; that is there was some kind of mystical relationship that allowed Jews to succeed in their enterprises. The explanation was suitably vague. He was also determined that, in the case of Samuel, whatever else the Jew might be in legal terms, he could never be anything but a de facto alien. This was a constant position, as can be seen from an account of a public meeting during the war between Chesterton, Bernard Shaw, H.M. Hyndman, the veteran socialist and Israel Zangwill, the 'father' of Zionism. Declaring that he regarded Zangwill not as an Englishman but as a Jew, Chesterton stressed that the Jews were a different nation and that he wished them to return to Palestine. ' "Being a separate nation they had no claim to enjoy equal rights in other countries".'²⁸ This theme of the alien Jew was constantly hammered home in the pages of the Witness.

To show that The Eye-Witness began life as an anti-semitic journal,²⁹ and did not just develop this trait because some of the Marconi ministers were Jewish, it is necessary to study this particular aspect of its contents from its inception. As early as the second issue, the pattern was made fairly clear. An unsigned comment, presumably by the editor, Belloc, who wrote much of the material for the initial editions, discussed recent writings on the

immorality of war. One of the authors mentioned was called Bloch, which provoked the following reaction ... 'Bloch, as his name implies, was a moneylender somewhere in the East of Europe.'³⁰ No direct mention was made of his religion but the association of what appears to be a Jewish name and money-lending is an exaggerated example of the Shylock stereotype; the implication being that to be a Jew is to be a money-lender.³¹ As David Lodge has pointed out, this was the keynote of the 'Chesterbelloc' variety of anti-semitism.

'To Chesterton and Belloc, nineteenth century capitalism was essentially usury and the fact that Jews (most notably the Rothschild family) were prominent in the field of high finance was evidence that capitalism was essentially alien to Christian culture. Much (though not all) of their "anti-semitism" consisted of identifying Jewry with the evils of modern capitalism.'³²

Perhaps the case of Stinie Morrison illustrates this point.³³ Morrison was a Jew, found guilty of the murder of Leon Beron, another Jew. At first, the sentence was death but this was commuted to life imprisonment. There was some degree of doubt about the evidence given by certain witnesses, enough for it to be suggested that Stein, which was Morrison's real name, was probably an accessory to the murder, but did not actually commit the deed. However, the Witness seized on the change of heart shown by the Home Secretary as proof of Stein's innocence. If he was not guilty, then why had he still be given a life sentence? The answer, according to the Witness, was that his imprisonment was a warning by the British government to 'immigrants of his kind'. At this particular time, the press was full of headlines about 'criminal aliens' as a result of the Sidney Street siege, and the xenophobia developing out of this was being used to discourage East European immigration, much of which was Jewish.

Yet, in supporting Morrison, there was a certain element of self-righteousness in the pages of the Witness. It was as if he was being supported in spite of being a Jew and the Witness was using the issue as a defence against accusa-

tions of anti-semitism, which it appeared to define as hostility to all Jews.

'Will not some of those who have reproached us with Anti-Semitism take up the case of this man who is kept, so far as we can understand, solely because he is a foreign Jew, in a living hell on an indictment every point of which has now broken down?'³⁴

However, even in its championing of Morrison, the Witness showed its stereotyped thinking on Jews. Whilst proclaiming his innocence, it accepted the adjective 'undesirable' when applied to aliens 'of his kind'. It was this vaguely patronising attitude which stands out in the articles on Morrison. The government did not understand the character or the culture of the immigrant and had therefore reacted harshly in order to discourage the repetition of such acts as the Houndsditch murders and to dissuade potential immigrants, since they were seen as the cause of such incidents. The Witness appears to have been claiming that only it fully appreciated the significance of the murder. We have already seen that both Belloc and Cecil Chesterton went to great lengths to establish the irreconcilable alien nature of the Jew. In this instance, the suggestion was that Morrison could not be condemned by the society in which he lived, because his value system was totally different. This line of argument enabled Belloc to suggest that the Jews in Britain should have separate laws and courts as part of the recognition of their alien status.

In addition, Cecil Chesterton was able to use the case to attack wealthy Jews. By contrasting Morrison's treatment with that of Dreyfus, who received 'all that the resources of the Hebrew money power could do for him,'³⁵ Chesterton was able to conjure up the vision of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy again.

Whilst the Witness was ready to defend, with certain qualifications, Morrison, who was poor, it showed no mercy to wealthy Jews. Within two weeks of its first report on the murder case, it was attacking the influence of the cosmopolitan Jewish financier. Mention was made of the Rothschilds and

the influence that the family was alleged to have over the Portuguese monarchy, which influence the writer was pleased to note was 'now happily lost.'³⁶ In that same issue, the spotlight also came to bear upon the British government and the power that certain Jewish politicians held in that body. This was to become another constant theme of the journal, with special reference to the Marconi Scandal and the Indian Silver question. However, in this particular case, it was the impending purchase of the National Telephone Company by the Post Office that produced the comment.

'The very important question of the national purchase of the Telephone Service is now before the country; and it is the duty of each patriot to see that the nation gets full measure. We cannot say that the gentlemen in charge of the negotiations - Nathan and Samuel - inspire us with much confidence; they are not appointed by the public and their collocation is significant.'³⁷

This last statement was left unexplained; the explanation being apparently self-evident. It is fairly representative of the Witness's style; insinuation and appeal to a stereotype which it felt readers would identify as reality. The reader was allowed to indulge his own fantasies, but in an obviously channelled direction.

The international nature of this Jewish influence could be detected in all corners of the world. On 17 August 1911, the paper looked at the states of Egypt and South Africa. The cost of administering the Egyptian lands was very expensive for the British government and loans had to be raised for this purpose. Repayment of the loans was only a small fraction of the total costs. ... 'The rest goes to the money-lenders : most of them are of foreign origin and citizenship; very largely Parisian Jews.'³⁸ As for South Africa, mention was made of the fact that the Jewish mine-owners, who had forced Britain into the Boer War, had never paid any compensation to the government, although the Witness alleged that they had promised to pay thirty million pounds.³⁹

In other issues, there was criticism of Jewish moneylenders as the men 'behind' absentee landlords in Ireland and therefore the cause of the 'Irish problem',⁴⁰

whilst there were continual references to the exploitation of India by Jewish capitalists.⁴¹

This particular hostility to the rich Jew was very apparent in an editorial comment by Belloc on the anti-Jewish riots in South Wales in August 1911.⁴²

In attempting to analyse the reasons for the outbreaks of violence, he wrote:

'The anti-Jewish riots in Wales are a significant accompaniment of the stir of real movement in the democracy of England which we have seen of late. Anyone acquainted with the populace of this country might have prophesied that when the democracy moved at all it would move against a certain type of Jew. In East London, where the materials are most explosive, only the heavy hand of the police prevents continual outbreaks. To attack Jews as Jews would be flagrantly unjust; nevertheless it is an unfortunate but unquestionable fact that everywhere a sort of Jew presents himself to the public view, not only as an oppressor of the poor, but, what is much more intolerable, an alien oppressor - an oppressor incapable of even understanding the feelings of those he oppresses. That impossibility of understanding is the real root of anti-semitism and many worse things. To pelt and hustle Jews is no remedy, but still less is it a remedy - nay, it is an aggravation - to try to ignore the misunderstanding or plaster it over with vague platitudes. To treat justly an alien people, settled for centuries among men of wholly different traditions and ideals, is at best a most difficult problem. It is not made easier by pretending that it is not there.'⁴³

What Belloc isolated as the principal explanation for the riots was not merely the exploitation of the poor by the rich but by the alien rich. The concentration was upon the 'fact' that the Jew could not, and never would, be 'British' and Belloc is suggesting that it was this additional element which intensified the natural reaction of the exploited. Once more, we see the stress on the Jew as alien in the pages of the Witness and, as we shall see, it is a key factor in most of the anti-Jewish feeling of the period.

It appears that these riots prompted a series of articles on the "Jewish Question" in the Witness over the following two months. These articles are significant, in that a close reading shows them to be practically identical in style, content and format to Belloc's later work, The Jews, published in 1922.⁴⁴ This should serve to produce a serious re-evaluation of Belloc's post-war writing on this topic. Klein, in her study of The Jews, makes no reference to these articles and is content to see Belloc's book as simply the product of the

post-war period.⁴⁵ Similarly, Skidelsky, in his biography of Mosley, refers to The Jews as a 'Catholic view of the Jewish impact on European life, and particularly the Jewish influence on the Russian Revolution.'⁴⁶ These articles in the Witness suggest, however, that all Belloc had done in 1922 was bring his study up to date by making references to the Bolshevik Revolution; the basic contents had already been published in 1911 and the patterns of thought were established by that date. In this particular case, both Klein and Skidelsky would seem to have ignored this pre-war period and under-estimated the impact and formulation of anti-semitic ideas in these years, a general oversight which this thesis attempts to remedy.

This brief analysis of the contents of the Witness has shown, by a few examples chosen to illustrate a far greater depth of material, the anti-Jewish feelings expressed in its pages. Jewish influence was seen at work in every facet of British life, and, indeed, in most other countries. However, this viewpoint did not go unchallenged. M.D. Eder, who was later to become President of the British Zionist Federation, wrote to the Witness, ostensibly on eugenics, but added a postscript.

'The reasons I have given explain why I write to you, although I must add, with regret, that I must now count you as definitely hostile towards my race. Week after week you have nothing but some indignant notice about the Jews - not only about rich and therefore bad Jews, as I once hoped to see your case.'⁴⁷

The editor's reply to this accusation was 'Why should he think the only paper which has dealt with the problems of his race to be its enemy?' Again this was to become a standard line of defence, that the Witness was openly discussing the 'Jewish Question' and simply showing its awareness of a problem that others refused to acknowledge existed.

Others accused the journal of anti-semitism. George Lansbury in the Daily Herald spoke of personal attacks that made specific reference to nationality, especially the Jewish nationality (sic). The defence offered in

this case by the Witness was even less convincing. Firstly, there was a flat denial that the paper had ever been anti-Jewish. Then there was a list of those who, it was claimed, had profited from the South African war, from the Prudential Insurance Company (which was held to have made millions from the new Insurance Act) and from the Marconi dealings. All the names appeared to be Jewish, and the Witness addressed Lansbury triumphantly - 'if he can believe that all this is one amazing coincidence, well, we do not know what to say to him!'⁴⁸

On 19 December, 'Junius' mentioned the charge of anti-semitism that had been levelled against the journal.

'I have not the smallest ill-will towards Jews collectively or individually. I admire the great qualities of the many men of genius whom in various departments of art and life the Jewish race has produced. I number many members of that race among my personal friends; and am always glad to number more. Never in my life have I written a word which implied either a dislike of Jews as such, or a desire to see them treated oppressively. Never, moreover, so far as I know, has anything capable of being candidly construed as bearing such an interpretation appeared in this paper.'

Having given this blanket denial, 'Junius' went on to give his explanation of why the Witness was being accused of anti-semitism.

'It so happens that during our attacks upon the gross corruption which is eating into the heart of our politics we are compelled to mention certain names which are especially associated with certain very bad instances of such corruption. And it so happens that several of these names are Jewish. Thus an impression is easily created that we are constantly assailing Jewish politicians and financiers on account of their race or religion. But really it is not our fault. You simply cannot discuss and expose the evils which are more and more infesting our politics without continually mentioning such names as Samuel and Isaacs, Rothschild and Sassoon, Abrahams and Schuster.'⁴⁹

Here again we come up against the problem of what constitutes anti-semitism. The journal suggested the question revolved around its contention that certain rich Jews were corrupt and that in discussing corruption, these Jews had to be mentioned. Thus, there was no element of prejudice involved. To the historian, however, the problem lies on a different plane. The

concern is to analyse the nature of, and the assumptions behind, the hostility towards these wealthy Jews and the language used to express such feelings. Since the Witness considered these Jews as legitimate targets, deserving of any kind of criticism, the attacks could not be deemed anti-semitic. The historian is, however, concerned with how the attacks were constituted.

One of the features of the journal's aroused sympathy with the mass of the Jewish people was the claim that the Witness made a clear distinction between them and the minority of wealthy, corrupt politicians and financiers. 'When we draw attention to the tricks and shufflings of men like Isaacs and Samuel - whom we have never dreamed of depicting as typical of their race - we are called Anti-Semites.'⁵⁰ Yet, as has been shown above, the constant assertion about the 'tricks and shufflings' of this minority was that they were prompted by their Jewish characteristics. Thus, it would seem that this attitude fulfils the classic definition of anti-semitism as an element of ethnic prejudice which ascribes 'general qualities to groups, irrespective of - and, indeed, often in defiance of - manifest differences between one member and another.'⁵¹ The views of Belloc and Chesterton were that there was something about the Jew which produced the Marconi Scandal, and their consequent statement that Isaacs and Samuel were not typical of the Jew seems strangely at odds with the approach of the Witness to the various 'scandals'. It is this essential inconsistency which casts doubts on the quality and sincerity of their defence.

The review of Ignatius Balla's book, The Romance of the Rothschilds, illustrates clearly the sentiments that are deserving of such a definition. Firstly, the title was criticised as inappropriate - 'we can see little romance in vultures feasting safely on carrion, with however much carrion they may gorge themselves.' The final paragraph of the review was a full-blooded denunciation of the family.

'When the Rothschilds were made Barons of the Empire and were asked (God save us!) to choose a coat-of-arms they thought, Mr Balla tells us, "of combining the arms of Hesse, England, and Austria, and adding a five-fingered hand" - stretching over them and getting its nails into them, one presumes. That was in their early days : they might have added the armorial bearing of many other gallant nations at a later date. It seems a pity that this picturesque design was subsequently abandoned. It might have served to remind the world that there are certain hands that offend and should be cut off.'⁵²

This led to further accusations against the Witness. As a letter from 'ISRAELITE' protested; 'In what way are Rothschild and Sassoon worse than their Christian fellow-financiers? It seems their nationality is their greatest crime.'⁵³

The Witness's defence might also have been more convincing if its hostile references had been limited to articles dealing with wealthy Jews in politics and finance. However, it saw the Jewish influence in all corners of society, in some cases the comments being incredibly contrived. When news of Captain Scott's death at the North Pole reached England, the Witness, along with every other journal of the time, paid tribute to his courage. But the Witness went further, contrasting the bravery and adventure of this man with the 'alien evils' that were 'stifling and poisoning' Britain.⁵⁴

Even the sports columnist, John S. Sheridan, alias 'Delf'⁵⁵, could be found criticising the Jews. He referred to the football ground owners and team managers as 'semitic organisers of exhibitions drawing thousands in gate-money'. Clearly he was opposed to the development of the game into an entertainment business, thus leading to the exploitation and swindles of other capitalistic enterprises. The Jews were, he alleged, to the fore in taking advantage of this new source of revenue.⁵⁶ On another occasion, the object of his ridicule was the transfer system, which control players' destinies at a whim - usually the whim of 'the Semitic financier who (behind the scenes) runs the show.'⁵⁷ This new morality was such that Herbert Samuel would have no difficulty in becoming a successful football manager, Samuel also came under attack over the British

trials for the Olympic Games. Apparently the winner of the marathon entered the stadium as it was being announced that he was still a mile away from the ground. 'Another tribute to the efficiency of Mr Samuel's electric service', scoffed 'Delf.'⁵⁸

There ought to be some qualification, however, about the degree of anti-semitism expressed in the pages of the Witness. For one year, Belloc was sole editor, that is, from June 1911 to June 1912. His place was then taken by Cecil Chesterton and it seems that the expressions of hostility towards the Jew became more marked after this date. This is not to make any kind of direct comparison between Belloc and Chesterton as to their relative degrees of anti-semitism. Such an exercise would have little value, since the sources are all written ones and need to be seen within their context. The reader cannot tell whether statements are an accurate reflection of the full extent of the writer's hostility. There is evidence, for example, to suggest that Belloc was constrained in the exposition of his anti-Jewish feeling when writing in the Witness. He was convinced that he had a rational solution to the 'Jewish Question' and was aware that extremely hostile references to Jews would detract from any value that his ideas contained. Thus, in October 1913, he wrote to Maurice Baring, 'But just because these matters so nearly verge upon violent emotions, it is essential to avoid anything like the suspicion of fanaticism. It destroys all one's case and weakens all one's efforts'⁵⁹ Belloc's anti-semitism will be discussed more fully later in this study, but it is interesting to note that Oswald Mosley put forward the same kind of criterion against the use of anti-semitic language in the development of ideas. 'Mere abuse we forbid ... [It] is bad propoganda, and alienates public sympathy.'⁶⁰

It is sufficient at this stage to note the definite increase in hostile references to the Jews from June 1912, when Belloc resigned as editor. Many of the references, as we shall see, appear in connection with the Marconi Scandal. There is no doubt that Chesterton became obsessed by the affair, and by the

general feeling that Jews were acting in a way which was opposed to the general good of the British people. In this, he echoed many of Belloc's sentiments, as one would expect from co-authors. Barker describes their relationship as 'a kinship of minds',⁶¹ If one looks at the account of the Marconi campaign written by Chesterton's wife, the degree of their involvement is obvious. However, as Frances Donaldson suggests, Chesterton was perhaps less restrained than Belloc. 'If Belloc's feeling against the Jews was instinctive and under some control, Chesterton's was open and vicious, and he shared with Belloc the peculiarity that the Jews were never far from his thoughts.'⁶²

Brocard Sewell, a sympathetic biographer, suggests that, of the triumvirate (the Chestertons and Belloc), Cecil was the most vehemently opposed to the Jews. One might question Sewell's criteria for assessing anti-semitism; for instance he cites Gilbert Chesterton and Belloc's 'sympathy' with Zionism as an indication of their compassionate attempt to solve the Jewish problem.⁶³ It may be more historically accurate to compare this 'sympathy' with the cries for repatriation of immigrants in the 1960s and 70s. But, although Sewell goes to some lengths to soften the charges of anti-semitism, suggesting that Cecil was sincere in his denials of prejudice (sic) and pointing out his support for poor Jews like Stinie Morrison (the defence Chesterton himself used), the writer is forced to concede that Chesterton's language was 'excessive even by the standards of the early nineteen-hundreds.'⁶⁴

Chesterton's willingness to use his hostility as a journalistic weapon against corruption is reflected in the pages of The Eye-Witness and The New Witness, as the paper became known after October 1912.⁶⁵ Certainly there were circumstances which allowed the expression of anti-semitism to occur more often, mainly the fact that 'scandals' such as Marconi and Indian Silver developed. There was also the fact that Chesterton himself came under the influence of someone even more outspoken in his opposition to Jews. That man was

Hugh O'Donnell, a former Irish Nationalist M.P. and co-founder of the National Democratic League in 1899, who had lived in various European countries after leaving parliamentary politics in 1883.⁶⁶

O'Donnell appears to have been one of those many secondary figures of literature and politics whose names are sparingly recorded in the annals of history, but whose influence is often important. According to Chesterton, Frank Hugh O'Donnell 'played so brilliant a part in the Parliaments of the seventies and eighties' that it was a journalistic scoop to have him write for the Witness. According to Belloc, O'Donnell was a liability.

'... the detestation of the Jewish cosmopolitan influence, especially through finance, is one thing, and one may be right or wrong in feeling that detestation or in the degree to which one admits it; but mere anti-semitism and a mere attack on a Jew because he is a Jew is quite another matter, and I told him (Chesterton) repeatedly that I thought the things he allowed O'Donnell to publish were unwise and deplorable.'

He went on to say that the tone of the Witness now exhibited such a racial antipathy that it could not be ignored. 'This is just what O'Donnell's letters have done and many other passages unsigned in which the national term 'Jew' has been used simply as a term of abuse, much as Lower-Middle-class Americans will use the term "lush",'⁶⁷

O'Donnell's first communication with The Eye-Witness was as a result of some correspondence with The Times, whose columns had contained some discussion about the treatment of Jews in Russia. O'Donnell was prompted to write to The Times, expressing his views on the subject, which The Times 'politely declined to publish'⁶⁸ The letter began

'At a moment when the enormous influx of an Asiatic race into England, and their increasing monopoly of the capital, housing and feeding of the country form the main and growing cause of the social unrest, Messrs Alexander and Montefiore publish in your columns a lengthy condemnation of the means used by the Russian Government to prevent the Russian middle classes and a peasantry from being reduced to the condition which has long prevailed in Poland and which is becoming dominant here.'⁶⁹

The main purpose of his letter was to deny that religious intolerance was the

cause of this reaction; 'no more than in the exclusion of the Asiatic races from the United States, Canada and Australia.'⁷⁰ The legislation in Russia was 'against a dangerous race - a race absolutely ruinous to European peoples; and if the Jews were to call themselves Protestants or Muhammedans, and become such, while maintaining their racial and economic organisation and pursuits, it would be equally necessary to protect the European against the racial enemy.'⁷¹

O'Donnell then considered the situation in England,

'... with Asiatic names on every prominent position, or with sly aliases which conceal, for a purpose, the Asiatic invader behind the mast ... The myriads of English families who used to live as keepers of tobacco-shops, tea-shops, etc., are simply swept out of existence by the innumerable branches of a vast confederacy of Asiatics, financed by the gains of the Stock Exchanges of Europe, where the current capital of Christendom is subtilised (sic) into the business reserve of universal Jewry.'⁷²

He went on to expound the other monopolies which he felt the Jew held in England, and then concluded.

'You let in five hundred thousand superlatively skilful Asiatic aliens during the last generation : all parasites on English trade and labour, all taking the bread out of English mouths. They will be one million soon, or are already, under numberless disguises. And labouring England starves and revolts and will tear down the constitution!'⁷³

One can understand why The Times was reluctant to publish such a letter.

O'Donnell, therefore, sent it to the Witness in an attempt to show that this reluctance was a refusal to recognise the truth. As he wrote to Belloc - 'Honestly I think you ought to let the matter be known to your readers, as your "Eye" claims to see things as they are.'⁷⁴

Whilst Belloc reproduced O'Donnell's letter to The Times, it is clear from his editorial comments that he was not in agreement with O'Donnell.

'We do not agree with our correspondent that the exclusion of the Jewish race is either possible or desirable. We do agree, as a series of articles recently published in these columns show, that a public recognition of that race and a reaction against the cowardice which forbids such recognition is essential to the welfare not only of Europeans but of the Jewish colony which lives in, but is not of, Europe and is nowhere more powerful than in

this country. We cannot agree that the rise in prices, or indeed any other social phenomenon of our time, has any relation to an imagined Jewish Conspiracy. The friction between the two races is just as severe when the Jew is poor as when he is rich. If - as we believe - the presence of that race amidst our own is inevitable, it has a clear and inalienable title to a just status, and our conviction is that such a status can only be assured by recognition, registration, and separate laws. The alternative, sooner or later, is cruelty and violence.'⁷⁵

From this, it is likely that Belloc would not have employed O'Donnell as a weekly columnist. O'Donnell's views on the 'Jewish Question' are clear from the letter, and it can only be concluded that whoever agreed to his joining the journal wished those views to be put forward.

O'Donnell was given space for a rejoinder to Belloc's comments. He rightly stated that his original letter had contained no reference to the exclusion of the Jews. As he remarked, 'I only stated facts. I suggested no remedy.'⁷⁶ On the question of his holding a conspiracy theory, as Belloc seems to have alleged, he strongly denied this. 'I am not even aware that the Jews are accused of conspiracy. The Jews are not a conspiracy. They are an alien race.'⁷⁷ On Belloc's own solution to the 'Jewish Question'; recognition, registration and segregation, he pointed out the formidable difficulties.

'By the way, will you permit me to point out that your suggestions of meeting the Jew by registration, segregation and elimination have been exactly anticipated by the Jew in every country which he succeeds in dominating. In France and Italy, for example, every representative of the old European civilisation, whose prominence is feared by the Jew, is the object of a universal and Argus-eyed inquisition, marking down, boycotting, exclusion from public functions, injury in commerce and trade, denunciation by all manner of organs, and ultimate sequestration from politics, trade, art, science, letters, the drama. There are hundreds of thousands of representatives of European civilisation in several modern countries who know that they are registered, marked down, tabooed, reduced to helplessness and poverty, solely through the vast organisation controlled by the Jew.'⁷⁸

In conclusion, O'Donnell apologised for the lengthy correspondence.

'I have taken some of your valuable space. But the subject deserves all the space in England.'⁷⁹ Once again, the editorial comment revealed Belloc's dislike of O'Donnell's views. 'We are sorry if we have misrepresented our

correspondent and hope that this letter will make his position clear. It is not ours.' It must be concluded that responsibility for O'Donnell's permanent connection with the Witness lies not with Belloc, but with Cecil Chesterton, since his writing did not appear regularly till after Belloc's departure from the editorship.

O'Donnell's writings in the Witness began on 16 January 1913 with a letter headed 'The Rarity of Jewish Corruption in England.' In this, he expressed the opinion that recent articles were somewhat misguided.

'You hint, in fact, occasionally that there are corrupt Jews, and that a corrupt Jew is a dangerous person to the public weal. Now I hold, and I am convinced that all England will come to accept this view, that it is not Jewish Corruption - if that exists - but Jewish Perfection which is the danger, and the appalling increasing danger, of the Jewish action and development in this country of England which is so rapidly on its way to be a transplanted and magnified Ghetto-ridden, Ghetto-eaten West Poland.

It is, I maintain, distinctly unfair to criticise the Great Alien Tribe on such grounds as unpatriorism, immorality, rapacity, inveracity, lack of European civilisation, in a word, when they exist entirely outside of European civilisation, when they have no origin in European civilisation, no love of European civilisation, nothing but aversion and contempt for European civilication.'

After attacking various Jewish 'ramps' such as the opium monopoly, he apologised for seeming to judge them by European standards, and called for a careful examination of the 'facts',

'Here we have a vast tribal organisation of Asiatic heathens, devoted to gain and domination according to ideas which you can read in the Pentateuch, alien to our beliefs, alien to our codes, alien to our very humanity. No Jew holds that all men are equal. He knows that all men are inexpressibly inferior to the Jew.'

A second letter appeared the following week from the same source, recounting the story that the Rothschild family had made vast fortunes from the Battle of Waterloo. It was claimed that they had received prior knowledge of Wellington's victory and used the information to purchase a great deal of stock in the depressed London market, which was still ignorant of the triumph. As a result, they made huge profits by selling when the news arrived and the

market rose. As O'Donnell phrased it,

'... the London Rothschilds traded on the depression and despair of the English people in the hour of England's blackest anxiety, and then reaped an enormous harvest of shekels at the expense of the unfortunate Englishmen who had been deluded into selling their property for a song to the wiley organiser of valuable intelligence, and who, though seated in London, had organised (mediately) from Frankfurt-am-Rhein.'⁸⁰

Once more, however, O'Donnell emphasised that the Rothschilds ought not to be reprimanded for their action.

'As I observed last week, the business morality of Asiatic heathens is necessarily as irreconcilable with European principles as, let us say, the harem arrangements of a Sultan of Israel or Judah with the domestic morality of a European family. And it would be utterly unfair to expect them to feel one pulse of the sentiment which is second life to a Newman or Wilberforce, a Vicar of Wakefield or a Colonel Newcome.'⁸¹

This letter also contained references to facets of Jewish life and culture that O'Donnell clearly disliked. He made mention of the 'enormous immigration of Asiatic parasites.' He also referred to the historical incident in London where, in 1650, certain Jews from Spain and Portugal fled to escape the Inquisition. They attended mass at the chapel of the Portuguese Ambassador, 'himself a Crypto-Jew'

'You know that mere Irish Catholics, for instance, outfaced every form of ruthless proscription rather than call themselves anything but Catholics; that French Huguenots suffered every extremity of proscription and confiscation rather than hide the creed of Calvin and Coligny. Quite otherwise with the Jew. According to his own chronicles, in the Standard, for example, false pretences on the holiest matters fits him like his own garment.'⁸²

O'Donnell's letters provoked some reaction. The letter from 'ISRAELITE' previously referred to,⁸³ was in direct reply to the accusations reproduced above. But in spite of this reaction, (or perhaps because of it?), on 6 February, the following announcement appeared in The New Witness. 'The Editor feels great satisfaction in having been able to induce Mr Frank Hugh O'Donnell, who played so brilliant a part in the Parliaments of the seventies

and eighties, to contribute a series of articles, which must needs be of notable historic interest.'⁸⁴

His first article gave a clearer indication of O'Donnell's political stance, and suggested that he was using the Jews as a scapegoat for his own discontent.

'Speaking for myself, I have often felt absolutely appalled at the degradation of public life of every sort which met me on every hand on my return after a prolonged residence in continental countries. It was really a hideous picture, where the prominent features were the domination of the Jew, the servility of the Englishman, the cosmopolitanism and brigading of the Press, the decay of citizenship, the spread of officialism, the suppression of opinion, the descent of Parliament, the rampant insolence of wealth in its coarsest manifestations, the growing enslavement and skilful misdirection of labour, the disregard towards womanhood, the infectious habit of state pauperism, the general discouragement of individual initiative and personal dignity.'

Clearly O'Donnell felt himself in a situation that was greatly to his distaste. The reasons for the crisis which he felt England was facing were left unexplained; indeed he seems to have had little idea of why standards had so declined. He was therefore content to place the blame for this moral degeneration onto the Jews. This was quite blatantly expressed in this article, since after listing the faults of the 'new' society, he continued -

'I suppose that hardly an Englishman in ten realises that there were practically no Jews a generation ago, though they are on top of us all over the place today... there were no Oriental battalions on the front and back benches of both parties, no gigantic Jew trusts eating up every kind of shop and business which were the especial patrimony of the English middle class. Within the very first few days of one of my revisits I passed through street after street where every tea-shop, every tobacconist was Jew, Jew. I met everywhere the careering vehicles of a Jew announcing himself in big letters that he was everything special to his Majesty. In a turn round Wimbledon way I found the exile from Jordan was sending his baker carts through the suburbs ... London was getting like a Polish town, with its middle class being eaten up, and the Jew shop and the Jew pub the only sort in the place. My excellent solicitor, an old City man, said: "You cannot sell a business without paying blackmail to the Jew. There is hardly a firm in the City but has to take a Jew partner or a Jew mortgagee squat in the back parlour. And look at all these morning and evening papers. The London Press is simply shekels and cocoa." '

O'Donnell went on to describe how certain trades, such as cabinet-making and tailoring were under the control of the Jew, and how they ran the businesses dealing in fruit and vegetables and fish. As for accommodation, 'Hundreds and thousands of Englishmen must pay their weekly rents to the hordes of Jews who have bought up or run up the lodging houses of English labour. Just as in Lodtz and Kovno.' He then turned to the question of Jewish influence in parliament.

'The walls and furniture and the attitudes of the honourable ones had not altered much; but in everything else what a revolution, not sublime! The Jew Kings were come, but the Parliament of England was gone. I was pointed out a Jew King of opium, and a Jew King of railways, and a Jew King of petrol, and a Jew King of silver, and a Jew King of soap, and a Jew King of salt and soda and nickel; while lesser Princes and Powers of the Oriental Immigration showed their swarthy profiles in equal distribution of patronage among the subjugated natives. I heard that they ran India, exploited China, corresponded with Hechts and Erlangers and Camondes and Schiffs and Guggenheims, etc., etc., in three or four continents, advised the monarchy on law and justice, held what is called abroad the Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs, and Ways of Communication. Why, why did not Mr Speaker wear the robe of the Grand Rabbinate? The tribe had recently induced those Christians to spend £230,000 and tens of thousands of Christian lives in order to secure its African mines and investments. Canaan-on-Thames was, indeed, a Promised Land.'⁸⁵

In spite of the disclaimer referred to previously (p.194), these sentences suggest a belief in a Jewish conspiracy; one very similar to that described in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, although perhaps not in the sophisticated language of that work.

The sort of hostility that O'Donnell held for the Jews provoked, as well as angry reaction, a definite sympathy. A letter from 'DEL CREDERE', who described himself as an Englishman living in Munich, showed his approval of the material appearing in the Witness. He felt that England was being overrun by Scots, Welsh, Irish and Jews - 'especially the most objectionable class of Jews, those who are ashamed of being known as Jews, and try to hide their Israelite noses under a good Scots family name.' He then went on to give examples of this, and to point out that these Jews dominated English life. 'And not only do these Israelites figure as our rulers in the government, but we find most

walks of life infested with them,'⁸⁶

This is simply one example of the support given by readers of the journal and Chesterton seems to have made no attempt to censor any of O'Donnell's material on this particular subject, despite Belloc's warnings. It must be concluded that Chesterton and his associates were in sympathy with O'Donnell's sentiments (or, failing that, saw that his writing sold sufficient copy to make it desirable to retain him.)

The next chapter will show, in some detail, O'Donnell's attitudes to the Marconi Scandal. But it should be noted here that he saw the affair simply as part of the pernicious Jewish influence running throughout the world. He maintained a continuity of thought on this subject that was remarkable. On 8 January 1914, his article referred to the Jews as 'wreckers of European Civilisation'.

'Taking hold of the two factors of industrial life, Capital and Labour, the Judaeans reconstructed the sphere of Capital so as to reduce the working world to wage-slavery, and revolutionised the sphere of Labour in order to perpetuate the War of Classes for the supreme benefit of Judaeian Capitalism dominant in the Slaver State and the servile Proletariate ... By its instinct as a rodent, as well as by its experience as a parasite for twenty centuries, the Judaeian Race - always invariably and necessarily - must corrode the Historical Entity of a European or Asiatic nation before it can penetrate, corrupt, and dominate.'

This formulation of a conspiracy theory was even more blatantly developed in July 1914.

'Everywhere, in the United States, in England, in the British Empire, in India, in South Africa, enormous confederations of Judaeian promoters and directors lead and control a cosmopolitan strategy for acquiring and exploiting every possible source of wealth or prosperity throughout the world.. The Dernburgs, the Rothschilds, the Sassoons, the Samuels, the Isaacs, form the General Staff, conduct the operations, and absorb the bulk of the profits... The New Jerusalem grows and grows by what it feeds on and what it spares not. We call this the Judaeian victory. "Le Juif Roi de L'Epoque".'⁸⁷

Therefore, to summarise the relationship between the Witness and anti-semitism before moving on to look at the specific example of the Marconi Scandal, it is of interest to note certain trends. First, we have established

that the anti-semitic outlook of the journal was present from its inception, and that the scandal was only part of a much wider campaign against Jews, and in particular, against Jewish wealth and power. In this context, it might be added that attacks on Rufus Isaacs, Herbert Samuel and other Jewish politicians whose names became linked with financial scandals, had begun long before rumours of corruption in connection with the Marconi contract became widespread.

In dealing with the actual language of anti-semitism, it is important to note the frequency of use of words such as 'foreign' and 'alien' applied to these Jewish financiers and politicians. This use would appear to have a definite psychological importance, giving some indication of the personality of those using such language in this particular context.⁸⁸ More specifically, the use of the term 'Oriental', when applied to a person of the Jewish faith, whilst no doubt being part of the general xenophobic hostility of the era, may also have a special relationship to the 'Yellow Peril' threat that so often appears in Edwardian writing. Donald Read described it as 'a persistent Edwardian bogey'.⁸⁹ It may well be that in stressing the Oriental background of the Jewish 'race', the Witness was playing on this fear of the 'Yellow Peril'. This would have been simply another way of gaining support for their cause by appealing to this fear. If this hypothesis has some truth, then it would present some new insights into the language of anti-semitism in this particular period.⁹⁰

CHAPTER 5 : FOOTNOTES

1. 'They say the "Eye Witness" was started in order to oppose the Employers Insurance Bill? - It is not true. The general purpose, and that is the purpose in which I was in sympathy with Mr Belloc, was an attack upon the corruption of the Party system of government.'
Evidence of Charles Granville, S.C., Vol. 2, p. 417
2. Ada Chesterton, op. cit., p. 84
3. As far as can be established, Cecil Chesterton was the author of the 'Junius' letters - see Robert Speaight, The Life of Hilaire Belloc, (London, 1957), p. 307, Brocard Sewell, Cecil Chesterton, (London, 1975) p. 38
4. In January 1913, whilst being employed by the Cadbury-owned Daily News, Chesterton wrote some verses in The Witness, remarking that 'Cocoa was a cad'. A.G. Gardiner, editor of the Daily News was forced to dismiss Chesterton as a result. Dudley Barker, in G.K. Chesterton, (London, 1973). p. 219, says Chesterton wrote the verses when he could no longer tolerate the paper's support of the Liberal government. Although offered the chance by Gardiner to say that the lines were not directed at Cadbury, Chesterton felt unable to do so.
' "I believe my brother and Belloc and the rest are right about the future of England! and so there is nothing for me but to back them up." '
Chesterton to Gardiner, n.d., Gardiner Papers, quoted in Koss, Fleet Street Radical, op. cit., p. 117
5. See Glass, op. cit., pp. 21-2, Holton, International Review of Social History, op. cit., pp. 353-6. Cox and Dyson, op. cit., p. 129, describe the movement as a reaction to the 'emerging shape of advanced industrial society in which individuals were absorbed into a featureless mass and their lives were wholly dominated by vast organisations, an ever more powerful state and immense business concerns run by financiers.'
6. International Review of Social History, op. cit., pp. 353-4
7. For details of Orage, see Samuel Hynes, Edwardian Occasions: Essays on English Writing in the early Twentieth Century, (London, 1972), pp. 39-46. On his literary style and writings, see Wallace Martin (ed.), Orage as Critic, (London, 1974)
8. Hynes, op. cit., p. 44
9. Barker, op. cit., pp 120-1
10. G.C. Heseltine, 'G.K. Chesterton - Journalist', in John Sullivan (ed.), G.K. Chesterton: A Centenary Appraisal, (London, 1974), p. 132
11. See The New Witness, 31 July 1913. The company organised round the journal was about to 'go public' and therefore had to give a certified estimate of its financial standing, including its potential readership. 'The directors estimate that at no distant date, the circulation of the paper should not be less than 7,000 copies per week.' This estimate was accepted by the auditors.

12. Speaight, The Life of Hilaire Belloc, op. cit., p. 308. The Spectator had a sales figure of between twenty and thirty thousand a week in 1903 (Read, op. cit., p. 61)
13. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 58
14. Spectator, 19 October 1913
15. Speaight, op. cit., p. 308
16. See his opinions expressed to Rufus Isaacs on the question of suing the Witness, p. 212
17. Barker, op. cit., p. 213. Cecil Chesterton succeeded Belloc as editor in June 1912
18. Belloc and Chesterton, op. cit., p. 194. This extract is a very accurate forecast of the Marconi campaign, Chesterton's trial, and the foundation of the National League for Clean Government.
19. op. cit., p. 116
20. Christopher Sykes, Nancy: The Life of Lady Astor, (London, 1972), p. 145
21. Belloc to Nancy Astor, 23 July 1913, Nancy Astor Papers
22. Jewish Chronicle, 16 August 1912. For a brief account of a confrontation between Belloc and a Jewish audience, one of whom accused him of being 'the greatest anti-Semite in this country', see Jewish Chronicle, 13 December 1912. Although the Chronicle continued to identify Barr as a leading anti-semitic, I have been unable to trace the remarks which produced such a label.
23. Nation, 9 November 1912
24. New Age, 10 October 1912
25. Robert Speaight, The Property Basket: Recollections of a Divided Life, (London, 1970), p. 373. Note, however, that Speaight does not openly acknowledge Belloc's anti-semitism, since it is the content of the verses which would determine whether or not they were racially hostile, not the fact that they were directed at Jews.
For a study of Belloc's major work on Anglo-Jewish relations, The Jews, (London, 1922), see Charlotte Lea Klein, 'English antisemitism in the 1920s', Patterns of Prejudice, Volume 6, No. 2 (1972), pp 23-8
26. Ada Chesterton, op. cit., p. 3 Salmon and Gluckstein is now part of the J. Lyons firm.
27. Ibid., p. 60
28. Joseph Leftwich, Israel Zangwill, (London, 1957), p. 139
29. This is not to suggest that it was the sole purpose of the paper, but that, as will be shown, it was an integral part of its 'radical' philosophy.
30. The Eye-Witness, 29 June 1911

31. For a consideration of the use of the Shylock stereotype in English literature, see Edgar Rosenberg, op. cit.
 This image of the Jew as moneylender was used in the sixteenth century to show that usury was alien to the 'national and traditional way of life' (p. 28). This reference suggests that the moneylender i.e. the Jew was still an alien force in the twentieth century.
 '... the Shylock myth is not a continuous fact of literature, capable of evolving new and complex configurations and relationships, but a stable one, which different generations do not so much reinterpret for themselves as they rehabilitate it.' (p. 187)
32. 'The Chesterbelloc and the Jews' in David Lodge, The Novelist at the Crossroads and other essays, (London, 1971), pp. 149-50.
33. See Eric Linklater, The Corpse on Clapham Common, (London, 1971). This gives full details of the case and also provides some interesting theories about motives for the murder. It is suggested that Leon Beron was killed as one of a series of outrages planned and financed by the Russian government, using agents provocateurs, to alert the people of Britain to the dangers of anarchism, which was seen as coming mainly from Eastern European Jewish immigrants.
 See also Colin Holmes, 'In search of Sidney Street', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, 29, (Autumn 1974), pp. 70-7 for the links between the various events of this period.
34. The Eye-Witness, 25 July 1912
35. New Age, 6 April 1911, quoted in Sewell, op. cit., p. 80
36. The Eye-Witness, 20 July 1911
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 17 August 1911
39. Seeing the Boer War as the creation of Jewish capitalists was by no means limited to the Witness and its writers. See Chapters 4, 10.
40. The Eye-Witness, 26 September 1912
41. See, for example, The New Witness, 22 May 1913. The rise in house prices in New Delhi, the new official capital, was due to Jewish combines receiving 'secret intelligence' of the decision and buying up land.
42. See Geoffrey Alderman, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales', Welsh History Review, Volume 6 (1972), pp. 190-200
43. The Eye-Witness, 31 August 1911
44. I hope to publish a more detailed comparison and analysis in the near future.
45. Klein, Patterns of Prejudice, op. cit.
46. Robert Skidelsky, Oswald Mosley, (London, 1975), p. 553
47. The Eye-Witness, 14 September 1911

48. Ibid., 5 October 1911
49. Ibid., 29 February 1912. For comparison, one might note here the defence which Mosley used against accusations that he was anti-semitic.
'He repeated that the B.U.F. did not attack Jews because of their race or religion, but because of what they did. The interpretation of "what they did" was, of course, Mosley's own.'
Benewick, op. cit., p. 151
50. The Eye-Witness, 5 September 1912
51. W.J.H. Sprott, in introduction to Robb, op. cit., p. v
52. The New Witness, 16 January 1913
53. Ibid., 30 January 1913
54. Ibid., 13 February 1913
55. See obituary in ibid., 28 November 1912
56. The Eye-Witness, 11 April 1912
57. The New Witness, 7 November 1912
58. The Eye-Witness, 23 May 1912. Note the interesting comparison between the Witness and the fascist journals of the 1930s, which gave similar 'total coverage'. From 1937 onwards, 'Action and Blackshirt deepened their anti semitic campaigns until they covered even the film reviews.' (Cross, op. cit., p. 166)
59. Hilaire Belloc to Maurice Baring, 30 October 1913, quoted in Speaight, The Life of Hilaire Belloc, op. cit., p. 363. Contrast this with his jibes about 'Yids' in his letters to Nancy Astor, p. 179
60. Blackshirt, 3 October 1936, quoted in Skidelsky, op. cit., p. 400
61. Barker, op. cit., p. 41
62. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 70
63. Sewell, op. cit., p. 73n
64. Ibid., pp. 105-6
65. The paper ran into serious financial difficulties in the autumn of 1912. Granville was declared bankrupt and Cecil Chesterton had to ask his father for the necessary capital to purchase the paper, so launching the New Witness. There was no gap in production; the first edition followed a week after the last copy of the Eye-Witness. See Ada Chesterton, op. cit., pp. 85-6.
66. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, 6. 1848, d. 1916. He gained an M.A. at Queen's University, Belfast and then entered parliament as an Irish Nationalist in 1874. His publications included The Ruin of Education in Ireland, The Stage Irishman of the pseudo-Celtic drama and The History of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

He had a rather chequered career in politics, losing his seat shortly after his election in 1874 for libelling his opponent (Joan Haslip, Parnell, (London, 1936), p. 54) before winning a by-election in 1877. He also lost much of his influence and leadership of the party to Parnell, whom he described as his 'runaway errand boy' (Conor Cruise O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, 1880-90, (London, 1957), p. 19n). It was his action against The Times in 1887 which allowed the journal to produce further damaging statements about Parnell's link with the terrorist activity of the period (see F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, (London, 1971 - 1973 edition), p. 192). Details of O'Donnell's parliamentary career can be found in Alan O'Day, The English Face of Irish Nationalism: Parnellite Involvement in British Politics 1880-86, (Dublin, 1977).

67. Belloc to Baring, 21 February 1913, quoted in Speaight, The Life of Hilaire Belloc, op. cit., p. 311
68. Letter of O'Donnell in The Eye-Witness, 14 March 1912
69. Letter to The Times, reproduced in The Eye-Witness, 14 March 1912
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
As a matter of principle, it is possible to dispute O'Donnell's claims about the numbers of Jewish immigrants, which he puts at half a million. Although contemporary estimates did tend to exaggerate the figures (Garrard, op. cit., p. 216), it seems likely that immigration in the period 1880-1914 was between 120,000 and 150,000. (See Garrard, op. cit., p. 213 for the varying estimates)
74. O'Donnell to editor in The Eye-Witness, 14 March 1912
75. The Eye-Witness, 14 March 1912
76. Ibid., 28 March 1912
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. The New Witness, 23 January 1913
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. See p. 189
84. This announcement was subsequently quoted at the head of each of O'Donnell's articles
85. All quotations from The New Witness, 6 February 1913

86. Ibid., 20 February 1913
87. Ibid., 2 July 1914. 'Le Juif Roi de l'Epoque' is the title of a French anti-semitic work, which suggests that O'Donnell, who had travelled extensively in Europe, was familiar with such literature.
88. See Otto Fernickel, 'Psychoanalysis of Anti-Semitism', in Dinnerstein (ed.), Anti-Semitism in the United States, (New York, 1971)
- Fernickel suggests that the creation of hostile stereotypes is due to internal repression and that the link between this repression and anti-semitic expression is 'foreignness' i.e. of one's own evil instinct or what one holds to be evil, and the 'alien' nature of the Jew.
This explanation will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.
89. Read, op. cit., p. 21
- The impact of the 'Yellow Peril' is vividly described by Somervell.
'In the general election of 1906 it is said that the most effective vote-winning poster consisted of no more than a hideous yellow Chinese face, but whether votes were won because the elector hated Chinamen or because he hated the enslavement of Chinamen is not so clear.'
D.C. Somervell, British Politics since 1900, (London, 1950), p. 46
90. See references in Chapters 9 and 10 to 'Oriental' nature of Jews suiting them for service in the India Office.

CHAPTER 6

THE WITNESS AND THE MARCONI SCANDAL

The coverage of the Marconi Scandal in the Witness should be considered in the context of the previous chapter's remarks about the nature of the journal. The Scandal contained elements of alleged corruption in high places, a subject which the Witness was obviously willing to pursue, given its attitude to the political system of that time, and the additional feature of Jewish involvement. Again, the previous chapter has indicated quite clearly the antagonism which the journal held towards Jews and the stereotypes which were employed in this hostility. The fact that Jews were involved in the Scandal fitted into the patterns of thought about Jews as presented in the pages of the Witness and it would not be unreasonable to expect to find this angle of the affair being emphasised.

The material used to illustrate the various points is only a fraction of the total coverage given by the journal. Since the factual criticisms of the contract i.e. were the terms good or bad, was it given to the best system and so on, have been dealt with earlier, this chapter will touch only briefly on this aspect. Its main role will be to illustrate the way that the Witness used the Scandal to advance its anti-semitic viewpoint. The correspondence columns of the journal show that there were supporters for this anti-semitic line of approach, whilst its circulation guaranteed that these views would be heard, if not nation-wide, at least in 'a small but influential and important circle.' This would make the Witness an important factor in the development of hostility against the Jews in this period.¹

The Marconi coverage began in a seemingly uneventful way, as it did in most other journals, in the financial columns. On 4 January 1912, the City editor noted that Marconi wireless shares were much in demand, and as successive weeks passed, he continued to follow their progress, at first without any explanation of the share movement. 'Marconi wireless shares are experiencing a period of

unparalleled strength',² 'Marconi wireless shares have again been active',³ 'Marconi wireless have lost none of their virility',⁴ 'In the Industrial section Marconi wireless shares have continued their upward march, being now not far off the £5 quotation predicted for them in the market.'⁵

The first word of explanation came on 15 February, and its manner suggested that the impending Government contract was fairly common knowledge.⁶ 'In the Industrial market Marconi Wireless shares had a set back in profit-taking sales, but have since regained their perkiness. I learn that there is every prospect of the deal with the Postmaster-General going through.'⁷ The Witness published details of the initial agreement between the Post Office and the Marconi Company as soon as it had been made. The information came presumably from the Company's press release, since the Government made no announcement nor did it give any details of the terms at this stage in the proceedings. At this point, there was no hostility towards the Company in the pages of the journal, and no hint that anything untoward had occurred in the negotiations, or that the Company had been favourably looked on in any way. Indeed, the City editor seemed to have the greatest confidence in wireless as an expanding industry and one worthy of investment. Speculation began to develop about the extent of the Marconi Company's business interests. Rumours of a potential agreement between the Canadian Marconi Company and the Canadian government created a minor 'boom' in Canadian Marconi shares.⁸ The trip to the United States⁸ by Commandatore Marconi and Godfrey Isaacs led to wild speculation about agreements with the United States Government.⁹

It was a period of rumour, counter-rumour, speculation and outright gambling, and it appears that this began to create some misgivings about the nature of Marconi business dealings. At first, it was the tremendous rise in the price of the Company's shares which attracted attention. As we have seen earlier, the climax of the share 'boom' was in April 1912, and shortly before the peak, the Witness was warning readers of the dangers of purely speculative buying. On 18 April, it was noted that although the price of the English shares had touched

£10, there was no indication of what price they would eventually settle at.

The lack of factual information at this stage is abundantly clear.

'With regard to Marconis, there can be little question that the American Company is very much desirous of getting control of the English concern, and the amazing advance in the price of the shares this year can unquestionably be largely attributed to buying from the other side, though, of course, the rise is also due to speculative and investment purchases at home.'¹⁰

As is now known, almost the opposite was true. The English Company almost certainly owned most of the American concern, however violently the Ministers involved in the Scandal tried to establish the independence of the American Marconi Company. Again, this illustrates the kind of muddled thinking which prejudices consideration of the developments in the affair.

That the share 'boom' had been artificially created by profiteers, as opposed to investors, became increasingly apparent to the City editor, and his comments became more bitter: '... that speculative favourite, the Marconi group, at one time rallied on covering purchases by bears who were fearsome of being caught short on shares, but latterly the shares have fluctuated a great deal, and renewed liquidation has caused a drop to under 7.'¹¹ In spite of this, however, he still had enough confidence in the venture to advise that 'at their present price, Marconis are a good purchase for those who can, independent of all speculative considerations, pay for them and lock them up as an investment.'¹²

The first real indication of anything unusual came in June 1912. 'Marconis have been quiet and now that the special settlement in the American shares has been fixed for 20th inst. speculation here will probably be of a restrained kind, as serious trouble is apprehended in certain quarters.'¹³ This point was not elaborated, and little mention was made of Marconis for the next month or so. The most likely explanation of the 'trouble' would seem to be the appearance of the English Company's annual report later in June, which created much disappointment by announcing a dividend of two shillings in the pound, rather less than had been anticipated by the shareholders.

The Marconi affair did not appear again in the pages of the Witness until

1 August, but it was a significant reappearance. It was in this edition that the name of Rufus Isaacs was linked to the Marconi Company. Rufus had already been the target of criticism in the journal¹⁴, and this particular issue also mentioned the fact that his brother, Godfrey Isaacs, was Chairman of the English Marconi Company. There were some fairly innocuous comments about their relationship and the fact that the Isaacs family was familiar in London and Parisian financial circles. This was obviously meant to convey some indication of their Jewishness and their cosmopolitan, i.e. international and therefore unpatriotic, nature. However, nothing specific was alleged against either of the brothers or anyone else connected with the negotiation of the agreement, which was due to come before parliament for ratification in a few days.

After the decision to refer the circumstances of the contract to a Select Committee investigation, the Witness produced some evidence of the position it was to adopt consistently for the next year or so. It pledged that it would stand firm against the acceptance of the agreement between the Company and the government, and later in the edition, produced an article which set out its own version of the truth, coining the phrase 'The Marconi Scandal'

'What progress is the Marconi Scandal making? We ask the question merely from curiosity and under no illusion as to the inevitable end of the affair. Everybody knows the record of Isaacs and his father, and his uncle, and in general of the whole family. Isaacs' brother is Chairman of the Marconi Company, it has therefore been secretly arranged between Isaacs and Samuel that the British people shall give the Marconi Company a very large sum of money through the agency of the said Samuel, and for the benefit of the said Isaacs. Incidentally the monopoly that is about to be granted to Isaacs No. 2, through the ardent charity of Isaacs No. 1 and his colleague the Postmaster-General, is a monopoly involving antiquated methods, the refusal of competing tenders far cheaper and far more efficient, and the saddling of this country with corruptly purchased goods, which happen also to be inferior goods. But this thing will go through presumably as inevitably as Samuel's own career was sold to him, or rather to his family; as inevitably as the Telephone ramp went through, and as inevitably as the £500 a day for the Titanic inquiry will be paid to Isaacs No. 1 - also out of our pockets. Exposure does not stop this kind of thing. No honest man in Parliament will have the courage to stop it, and for the great majority of men in the House of Commons, who sit there

with the object of becoming richer through political life, it would be madness to quarrel with the whips of either party (who have been previously acquainted with the job), unless the objector had some large financial interest to serve opposed to that of the Brothers Isaacs.'

Another reason why the contract would succeed, according to the writer, was the absence of any effective method of punishing those guilty of such offences. Whilst acknowledging that corruption of this kind was rife in most capitalist countries, and that imprisonment was often not a possible deterrent (sic), it was felt that public opinion played an important role in keeping down the number of offences. However, in Britain, public opinion had ceased to be a discouragement and those involved in the corruption continued to be held as highly respected men, at least by their peers.

'That is the nerve of the whole matter. That is the symptom of the disease which is showing itself in twenty other forms upon the skin of modern England. That is why even the populace to whom all information on public affairs is carefully forbidden, have developed an uneasy contempt for their rulers.'

The writer then went on to make a general point about the consequent moral decay which had arisen as a result of this general acceptance of 'public theft and knavery'. To conclude, there was a short paragraph, which was clearly actionable.

'At the beginning of 1911 the shares of the Company stood at 14s. By the end of that year, doubtless after an intimation had been conveyed from Herbert Samuel, Cabinet Minister, through his colleague Isaacs to Isaacs' brother, of the intention of the Government, their value multiplied by nearly five, standing at close to 70s. Between January and March 1912, they rose to just under 100s, which would be about their natural price, supposing the abominable scandal of this contract to be allowed to stand. After this price had been reached the news was deliberately allowed to leak out and the stock was forced up to a fictitious value. At the end of April they stood at £9. Then, of course, they sagged, just as was intended.

We repeat that in other countries people who act in this fashion are driven from public life.'¹⁵

This article encapsulates many of the themes of the Scandal which the Witness was to use in later editions. The first point of note is that it is remarkably unrestrained. The writer, and one presumes it to be Cecil Chesterton, since he claimed at a later date to have written all the material on the Marconi Scandal, at least from June 1912,¹⁶ made definite accusations. Statements like 'it has

therefore been secretly arranged', 'the whips of either party (who have been previously acquainted with the job)' and so on, were open to a libel action, as the Ministers involved had no doubt.

The standard accounts of the Scandal show that, in fact, Herbert Samuel and Rufus Isaacs did contemplate suing the journal over this article.¹⁷ Samuel came across a copy of the journal on a bookstand at King's Cross station, and immediately wrote to Isaacs, who was on holiday at Marienbad, enclosing the offending paper. Isaacs telegraphed his receipt of the package,¹⁸ and wrote a letter two days later with his views on the article. Samuel's letter had suggested that there were certain grounds for containing the natural impulse to sue. The first was that the circulation of the paper was small and its income minimal. 'Secondly it would not be a good thing for the Jewish community for the first two Jews who have entered a British Cabinet to be enmeshed in an affair of this kind; and thirdly, one does not wish to soil one's hands with the thing.'¹⁹

Isaacs' letter in reply showed that he was upset by the article in the Witness; 'its malevolence and prejudice were so marked that only the most blinded partisan could be led to believe the statements.'²⁰ He defended his actions, saying that he had not bought the shares until after the contract had been announced and was therefore innocent of any wrongdoing. However, on reflection, he felt that there was little point in suing, but had informed Asquith of the matter and awaited his decision.²¹ A week later, Isaacs telegraphed Samuel that he had heard from 'the chief' and that he agreed there was no point in bringing an action against the Witness.²² Asquith's letter was short and to the point.

'I have read carefully the scurrilous rubbish, and I am clearly of opinion that you should take no notice of it. Samuel gives some excellent reasons in his letter. I suspect the Eye Witness has a very meagre circulation. I notice only one page of advertisements and that occupied by books of Belloc's publishers. Prosecution would secure notoriety, which might yield subscribers.'²³

Only one standard account, that of Hyde, goes on to show that Godfrey Isaacs, the managing director of the Marconi Company, also became involved in the potential libel suit. The article, of course, also referred to his part in the 'conspiracy'. Godfrey Isaacs appears to have entered the scene rather late, the first information on his intention being a letter to Samuel, dated 27 August 1912, stating that he was ready to take criminal proceedings.²⁴ This seems to have upset the politicians' plans not to attract attention. Samuel obviously contacted Rufus Isaacs about this letter, since Rufus sent a telegram to the Postmaster-General, saying that he would be in Paris the next day. 'Meeting brother there. Discountenance his proceeding. Will wire you.'²⁵ Two days later, Isaacs was able to reassure his colleague - 'Definitely decided take no step. He agrees our views'.²⁶ A letter from Godfrey to Samuel confirmed that decision.²⁷ It is surprising that most current works, including that of Donaldson, who describes Godfrey as a 'natural litigant', should omit this further development in the Witness saga, particularly since Godfrey went on to sue Cecil Chesterton for libel the following year.

One further significant feature of this episode, particularly relevant to the consideration of the anti-semitic coverage by the Witness, is involved in Samuel's letter to Rufus Isaacs on 8 August. It shows Samuel's awareness of both his and Rufus Isaacs' status within the Jewish community and as representatives of that community in English society in general. He was clearly conscious of his Jewishness and at times reluctant to advertise it. When giving evidence before the Select Committee, he read out his letter to Isaacs but omitted the reference to the fact that they, as Jews, ought not to become involved in a scandal.

'There is one sentence which is not strictly relevant and which I would rather not read but I will hand it to the Committee and I will mark it for them to see, and I think they will understand the reason why I do not wish to read it. It does not cast any reflection on anybody in any way.'²⁸

It is obvious that Samuel was aware of the situation, in that his being a Jew

exposed both himself and Rufus Isaacs to anti-semitic attack. A financial scandal involving Jews allowed the language of anti-semitism a great deal of scope, and an inviting target.

This 8 August article in the Witness marked the escalation of its anti-semitic campaign as far as the Scandal was concerned. No evidence was produced to reinforce the various allegations; it can only be supposed that the family connection between the Isaacs brothers and the fact that both they and Herbert Samuel were Jewish were sufficient to convince the authors of the authenticity of the rumours, on which the article was based. Although there was no blatant expression of anti-semitism, it is apparent that the writer is applying an as-yet undefined theory of Jewish conspiracy. Reference to the corruption of the Isaacs family could equally well have applied to a Gentile family, yet the assumption is that Jews combine together naturally in pursuit of huge profits. Gentiles are not classified under this stereotype in the journal.

Thus, in 'The Marconi Scandal', we can see the elements of the anti-semitic coverage emerging. The general theory of a Jewish conspiracy has been noted. The stereotyped references to Jews, particularly in their relationship to finance and alleged secret dealings are also mentioned. The corruption which it is claimed that the Marconi Scandal represents is described as 'the disease which is showing itself in twenty other forms upon the skin of modern England.' This is a well-documented line of anti-semitic jargon, used in many situations.²⁹ In addition, as part of the general theory of Jewish conspiracy and corruption, the article mentions other 'scandals' that Jewish politicians had been involved in; the later notes on the 'Indian Silver' affair will show that the same themes were used to describe these other alleged incidents of financial corruption. It would be profitable, therefore, to see how some of these themes are developed in the Witness's coverage of the Marconi Scandal.

The general allegation of most importance was that certain Jews had conspired together to make money at the expense of the British taxpayer. Referring to those who were operating this 'apalling scandal' as 'a particularly low and nasty gang',³⁰ Chesterton sought to explain the occurrence of the affair in terms which went far beyond the immediate circumstances.

'Now, to tell the full truth about disasters of this kind when a commonwealth has sunk to the stage in which they occur needs far more than the mere statement of the scandal itself. To understand how such a thing could have happened upon English soil and through the actions of men who, whatever their origin, occupy places in an English Executive, it would be necessary to tell one hundred other truths relative to this particular truth. One would have to go into the story of the Samuels, of the pawnbroker's shop in Liverpool, of the moneylending business in London, of the financing of the politicians from this obscure and hidden corner. One would also have to tell the story of the Isaacs family in full.'³¹

Even at this early date, the reader is left with very little doubt about Chesterton's intentions of pursuing an anti-semitic campaign against Isaacs and Samuel, using a conspiracy theory. This was used in such libellous statements as

'Samuel, in the presence of several competitors, privately favoured with his patronage the Company run by Isaacs' brother and secretly negotiated with it a contract so very advantageous to the chosen - shall we say people? - that the shares went up from 14s to 100s - They now stand at about 110s.'³²

Frequently the conspiracy was widened to include various groups of Jewish 'sympathisers', which often meant most politicians. By November 1912, Chesterton seemed convinced that the contract between the Company and the government could not survive. Advising all holders of Marconi shares to sell immediately, he added

'... frankly, we do not believe it possible after what has now come out, for all the politicians combined to put through so monstrous a ramp successfully. The Marconi Company, its contract, and all the politicians concerned in the arrangement of that contract, are already judged and condemned by honest men throughout the country.'³³

In similar vein, after Chesterton had been found guilty of libel in the case brought by Godfrey Isaacs, the City editor of the Witness enlarged the net

of conspiracy to encompass the whole of the Liberal party. He alleged that they were all in the 'rig' which was being put through for the benefit of the Marconi company and its friends.³⁴ At a later date, the Liberals, now being called the 'Marconi Party' were referred to as 'the combination of George and his hangers-on and the Jews and their hangers on.'³⁵

The 'discovery' of other financial scandals also contributed to the build-up of a Jewish conspiracy. Attempting a 'state of play' summary at the end of November 1912, Chesterton claimed that '... it is quite impossible for a weekly, it would be difficult for a daily, it would not be too easy for an hourly paper to keep pace with the scandals - few enough when compared with the many that are concealed - which force themselves upon the public eye.'³⁶ He went further and attributed the latest 'scandals' to the fact that Jews were in positions of authority. 'Faced with such facts, what man in his senses can believe that the various Isaacses, Samuels and Schusters are really in complete ignorance of each other's operations.'³⁷

The following week, he was making clear his intentions towards this rise of Jewish corruption. He promised to attempt, whenever possible, to drive out these evil influences, although this might be an impossible task. Targets mentioned were Rufus Isaacs, whom Chesterton hoped to prevent becoming a judge, and 'the various Samuels'. The article concluded with the words 'The politicians are found out.' Since, throughout the diatribe, he referred only to Jewish politicians, and to incidents involving Jews, it is clear that the phrase 'of Jewish birth' could be added to any reference to 'politicians'.

As another example of the conspiracy theory, the incident of Messrs. Wertheim and Gompertz is important. As mentioned in an earlier chapter,³⁸ Gerald Montagu, a banker and close relation of Herbert Samuel, had allowed his name to be used in the purchase of some Marconi shares by the Amsterdam firm for an undisclosed client. When a list of shareholders was published in the Financial News, Montagu's name was noted with interest. The explanation given by Montagu, and

the production of letters to corroborate his statement, was not enough for the Witness. It demanded a much fuller explanation. 'If anyone supposes that Messrs Wertheim and Gompertz' bad English will satisfy them he does not understand the English people - which perhaps the Samuels can hardly be expected to do.'³⁹ The Witness also wanted to know whether Wertheim and Gompertz were connected with the 'group of Amsterdam Jews (who) were especially prominent in boosting Marconis during the boom.'⁴⁰ The following week, the Witness attributed the recent check in the falling price of Marconi shares to 'systematic buying; and those who bought were the same Amsterdam Jews who created the original boom and whom we now know to be in close touch with the Samuel family through the mysterious Wertheim and Gompertz.'⁴¹

This statement is an outstanding example of how rumours and snippets of information could be fitted together to create a scandal. Only the previous week, these statements about 'Amsterdam Jews' had been couched in much more moderate terms. They had been 'prominent in boosting Marconis during the boom.' Now they were held directly responsible for creating the boom. Also, in that earlier edition, the relationship with the Samuels was in some doubt. 'Were Messrs Wertheim and Gompertz in any way connected with that group? (i.e. the Amsterdam Jews). And what was the relationship between that group and the Samuel group in London? These are two questions for the Committee to press.'⁴² A week later, the Witness was presenting the Committee with the solution to these questions, although it gave no evidence which cast fresh light on the question. It was very useful, however, to be able to make these assertions, since they fitted neatly into the scheme of Jewish 'clannishness' and the secret dealings associated with the Witness's ideas of the cosmopolitan world of Jewish finance. Here was a clear case of facts being manufactured and twisted to fit the stereotype.

The other important incident which enabled the Jewish conspiracy theory to be propounded at great length was the Ministers' action against Le Matin.⁴³

The main conclusion of the journal was that the case had been carefully arranged by the politicians involved, in order to allow themselves an opportunity to explain their dealings, without fear of cross-examination. It would also perhaps have allowed them to make partial statements of the truth, leaving out the more unpleasant aspects of their involvement (which, it was assumed, existed). The journal involved, Le Matin, was discredited in some detail.

'(1) Le Matin is not a national journal but represents cosmopolitan financial interests of a type with which we are only too familiar in this country; (2) Le Matin is the one 'French' paper which has had connections with the Harmsworth Trust; (3) The allegations made in Le Matin bear no resemblance to what has been said in this paper, or, for that matter, to what has been freely said in the genuine and characteristic French Press, which has⁴⁴ vigorously discussed the truth about the Marconi business.'

The writer might almost have added, 'Reader, draw your own conclusions.'

The allegations, implied or otherwise, continued and involved not only Cecil Chesterton. O'Donnell's contribution on the Jewish editor of Le Matin, Stephen Lausanne, contained even franker language. This editor was called 'the Jew of Jews'; his paper 'the Jew financial organ of Jew financial organs.' The insinuation was clear, that there was some pre-arranged plan by the ministers to use the pages of Le Matin to clear the air, when it seemed impossible to hide their secret any more. 'Decidedly, the penitent David could not have offered a more convenient "leg-up" to Jonathan.' As evidence for his claim, O'Donnell quoted the Standard of 19 March 1913. 'The action is undefended, and in political circles is construed as having been brought for the sole purpose of vindicating the character of Sir Rufus Isaacs immediately prior to his elevation to the position of Lord Chief Justice.' O'Donnell remarked that there was 'no more philo-Judaeian organ in the London Press upon every question connected with the enterprising cosmopolitans', and therefore the remarks must be true, if even the Standard could exercise such cynicism.⁴⁵

O'Donnell's view of the Jewish conspiracy was even more vivid than that of

Cecil Chesterton and, if anything, took a world-wide approach. When the original contract had lapsed, and news of fresh negotiations was made known, O'Donnell warned that another Judaeian 'boom' was likely if such a contract were signed. 'Does not the British taxpayer emphatically prefer to pay for his own British Government wireless system, instead of paying Scharkstein and Schtinkstein to work our electrical agency in connection with the Judaeian Financial-Intelligence Departments round the globe?'⁴⁶ His estimate of the profits made from the share booms in English and American Marconis and the 'swindle' of Indian silver, which he put together as parts of a vast organised strike against the British people, was in the region of seventeen or eighteen million pounds. 'Such are the enormous sums which have enriched the Gold Thugs of Judaea in our midst ... was there ever such a gambling-hell as these omnivorous aliens are making of the British Empire?'⁴⁷

An essential element of this conspiracy theory was the belief that Jews acted in certain ways, particularly in relation to financial matters. This stereotyping helped to convince the writers that their overall view of the matter corresponded to reality. We have already seen this above - the image of the Jew as a swindler, a moneylender, the Shylock image. One of the most vivid examples of the Jewish moneylender must be in a poem entitled 'Le Bon Juif Sans Merci.'

'O what can ail thee, Minister,
Alone and palely loitering?
The House has risen long ago
And no bells ring.

O what can ail thee, Minister,
So haggard and so woe-begon?
The Speaker long has left the chair
The Session's done.

I see on thy dishonoured brow
Anguish and fear like fever dew,
And in thy hands a faded cheque,
Dishonoured too.

I met a gentleman last night;
His eyes were closed when he smiled,
His nose was big, his face was dark,
His voice was mild.

He found me what I needed most,
 Not honey wild or manna-dew
 But a most handsome cheque against
 My I.O.U.

He took me home with him to dine
 And, as I feasted well content
 And indolent - he made me sign
 A document.

And then he lulled me to sleep
 And then I dreamed - ah woe betide
 The latest dream that e'er I dreamed
 By the Thames side.

I saw pale debtors, share-holders
 Watch-pledgers - death pale were they all
 They said: "-- -- --*
 Hath thee in thrall!"

And that is why I soujourn here,
 Alone and palely loitering,
 Though the House rose at four o'clock
 And no bells ring.

K.

* Names omitted at the request of the printers,⁴⁸

Here, we have the traditional Shylockian Jew, with particular attention being paid to the physical features of what is believed to be a typical Jewish appearance - Armenian nose, dark complexion, narrow eyes, quiet voice. This stereotype appeared frequently in the pages of the journal. For example, O'Donnell took great delight in repeating the description, from the journal Truth, of the 'Caledonian Super-Jew', alias James Falconer, one of the two Liberal M.Ps on the Select Committee who were given prior information about Rufus Isaacs' share dealing.⁴⁹ Although there is no reason whatsoever to suggest that Falconer was Jewish, O'Donnell found him guilty by association. 'Mr Falconer is a Scotsman. He is even a writer to the Signet. But this does not alter the fact that he has Abraham's beard, Isaacs' nose, Jacob's subtlety, Job's patience, Solomon's smile, and the delusive meekness of Moses.'⁵⁰

O'Donnell was particularly fond of applying a stereotyped view of Jewish involvement in secret dealings, especially associated with finance. In an

attack on Rufus Isaacs, he attributed the Marconi affair purely and simply to the fact that Isaacs was a Jew.

'Beyond all possibility of a doubt, Rufus Isaacs - of a notorious Jew financial family, insolvent member of the Stock Exchange, skilful commercial lawyer, knowing every turn of company law practice - was the planning brain and the crafty will in the whole transaction ... The mean treachery of the Isaacs person is, of course, manifest. But that is of less moment. Isaacs had it in his blood and tribe ... Israel like the leopard, changes his habits but not his spots.'⁵¹

This is a consistently exhibited view of the Jewish race, which goes well beyond the dislike of certain behavioural traits attributed to Jews in general. It is not merely a general ascription of qualities but a formal assertion of inherent and derogatory characteristics, displaying a deep-seated racial antipathy. As such, it represents a rather rare form of anti-semitism, one hardly ever displayed in Edwardian England. It would be more familiar in the context of certain German writings of the 1930s. In this respect, O'Donnell is an important figure in the history of British anti-semitism and the fact that he was so closely linked with the Witness reinforces the journal's significance.

Another prominent feature of its anti-semitic attack was the constant emphasis on the alien nature of the Jew. This is apparent in what has been seen as the launching point of the Witness's campaign, the 8 August article on 'The Marconi Scandal'. Even at that early stage, the Isaacs brothers and Samuel were seen as 'outsiders'. Cecil Chesterton made the point that these three combined 'that the British people shall give the Marconi Company a very large sum of money'. The emphasis is on 'British people', the implication being that Jews do not belong to this category, whatever their place of birth and citizenship. This thesis is the backbone of the thinking exhibited by Belloc and Chesterton on the Jewish-Gentile conflict.

Chesterton's influence in this matter is important. The alien nature of the Jew was no more vividly described than in a piece by 'Junius' in the series

'For the Defence' - articles in the form of a lawyer's defence plea on behalf of his client.

'My Lord, - It is my duty to-day to place before you the case for the Right Honourable Samuel M.P., His Majesty's Postmaster General, who is accused of various offences, against the policy and morals of the nation in whose territory he has taken up residence.'

This theme continued throughout the 'lawyer's' defence. For example - 'like that other eminent recipient of public money (a reference to Rufus Isaacs) he is not of our blood or tradition and owes no real allegiance to the foreign state which has very unwisely hired him to serve it.'⁵²

This lack of patriotism was also applied to the other Jewish 'conspirators'. Godfrey Isaacs was an easy target, since, during the negotiations with the Post Office, who seemed rather reluctant to conclude a bargain, he had made vague threats about the possibility of selling the Marconi system to Germany if the British government was not interested. When this was revealed by Sir Alexander King, the chief negotiator for the Post Office, in his evidence to the Select Committee, the Witness was quick to criticise, because it emphasised the point that even native born Jews felt no obligation to England.⁵³ Again, a patronising air was adopted; the Jews cannot help being unpatriotic, it was simply part of their make-up. 'Mr Isaacs is not of our blood.'⁵⁴

Godfrey Isaacs' empathy with Germany was also noted much later on in the campaign, when he and Commendatore Marconi went to Berlin for negotiations of an undisclosed nature. The old fears of the system being sold to the Germans and the possibility of intercepted messages were revived, and Isaacs' previous threats were recalled.⁵⁵ This was used to establish that the man had neither scruples nor patriotic feeling, and the implication was that the reason for this was his Jewishness. When war broke out in 1914, there was an increased awareness of 'German Jews' and enemy aliens in general, and the Witness played a leading part in a campaign against such individuals, although it should be stressed that the emphasis of this hostility, in most cases, was on 'German' rather than 'Jew'.⁵⁶ Godfrey Isaacs was caught up in the allegations, mainly

because official German news was being dispensed in England through the medium of the Marconi system. The Witness published the following warning to Isaacs.

'Seeing that "patriotism" was the plea on the strength of which the Marconi Company was allowed to obtain a monopoly of wireless telegraphy throughout our dominions, as well as to help itself liberally to public money, this close connection with the enemy hardly seems reassuring. Would it not be wise for Mr Godfrey Isaacs in his capacity of British patriot ... to make himself and his company a little less prominent in this matter?'⁵⁷

His brother, Rufus Isaacs, was also attacked as an alien, again on the grounds that Jews could never be true citizens. In Isaacs' case, or rather in O'Donnell's case, for it was O'Donnell who produced the following examples, the implication was that the Jew could never become a citizen of any state. Early in 1913, rumours began to spread about the possibility of Isaacs being made Lord Chief Justice, the usual procedure for the Attorney-General. O'Donnell was very much against this promotion, as was the Witness.⁵⁸ His view was that Isaacs had a 'special disqualification' which ought to prevent his appointment to this office. Jews, he maintained, had

'... a racial tendency to extremes and exaggerations as well as to an imperfect sense of public duty. The proverb 'Either Terrorist or Parasite' has long been accepted as a summary of this Judaeian attribute. Sedition has no such furious emissaries. Despotism has no more subtle satellites.'⁵⁹

His conclusion was blunt. 'We may make allowances for an Asiatic mentality; but can we call it a qualification for Lord Chief Justice of the Realm.'⁶⁰ Whilst many other journals opposed Isaacs' promotion on the grounds of his involvement in the Scandal, only the Witness used this additional racial objection.

This last quotation introduces another of the elements of anti-semitism of the Witness, and one that is closely related to the 'alien Jew' claim. Frequently, the most significant way of labelling the Jew as 'foreign' was to use the words 'Asiatic' or 'Oriental'. The deeper significance of these terms has already been suggested; that the use of 'Asiatic' association has connections with the 'Yellow Peril' scare of Edwardian England. The attempt to put forward these views is best illustrated by one of O'Donnell's attacks on Sir Rufus Isaacs;

this one after Isaacs had given evidence to the Select Committee.

"I observed Sir Rufus Isaacs in his ordeal with interest. Though set against the sinister influence of his co-racialists in the degeneration of European civilisation in our day, I knew, in the first place, that the worst that had been said against the Marconi gamble was lighter than thistledown compared to what had been deserved by a hundred other enterprises of the new Jewry, which began with the poisoning of the French Revolution, and which did not end with the Young Turk Lodges at Salonika or the deeds of the Jew Prefect of the Accroupis at Vendôme. Secondly, let me say frankly, I quite accept Sir Rufus Isaacs as a true witness in declaring that nothing he has done in the Marconi gamble violated in the slightest degree his standards of right and wrong. Besides, I knew the terrible strain upon the subtle, ambitious, exotic man of this bolt which had fallen upon him out of space, when he had no idea of the slightest danger, and when every son and daughter of the old Asiatic race was proudly, passionately, anticipating in feverish visions the glorious realisation of that dream, that rapture of Israel, the triumphant ascent to the wonderful, the unprecedented, dignity, never before approached by a child of Abraham, the Lord Chief Justiceship of England! As I looked in the keen, saturnine, dark-skinned face, and followed the furtive glances of the dark-gleaming eyes which could be soft as a woman's and harder than a hawk's, as I marked the strong, restless hands, the resolute calm which could not hide the fierce emotion, I mused upon deep proverbs and strange interpositions of the unknown. It is a fine race, is the Judæan. And oh! the pity and the pitilessness of it all.

Certainly Sir Rufus Isaacs was not like a European witness. Whether he crouched over the table, as if half to spring, or raised himself erect in mute defiance, or swept out an arm to clear off every aspersion, or slapped the board with quivering hand, or now spoke in deep tones of appeal, and again in high notes of compressed anger, here was no stolid Anglo-Saxon, but a nature more akin to dark Sheiks with tumultuous impulses hidden under the white or striped burnous or to tireless traders in strange goods, watching for custom with avid eyes out of stalls in close bazaars.⁶¹

There is no doubt about the attempt to show Isaacs as an alien, because he was a Jew; a member of the 'old Asiatic race' and 'akin to dark Sheiks'. By evoking a strange and somehow sinister image, the writer was able to convey his views on the subject with much more effect. When O'Donnell remarked on the 'rigging' of the Select Committee, he used the same technique. 'Phew! the thing is too odorous for anywhere but the dirtiest ghetto in Damascus or Alepp ... or ... a British Ministry under the Party System.'⁶²

The most common victim of this 'Oriental' label was Herbert Samuel.

Again, its use was part of the general attempt to show that Samuel was an alien,

unable to accept or understand the British way of life. When it became apparent that negotiations between the Post Office and the Marconi Company for a new contract had been taking place in the early summer of 1913 whilst the Select Committee was still investigating the circumstances surrounding the first agreement, the Witness was outraged. Mr Samuel should be informed that 'Europeans will not stand for this sort of thing.'⁶³ In succeeding editions of the journal, Samuel was described as an 'insolent Oriental'⁶⁴, the 'Oriental Postmaster',⁶⁵ 'that undistinguished Asiatic'⁶⁶ and 'the Oriental, whose creed was fashioned in the days when slavery was accepted on men.'⁶⁷ During discussions about the possibility of postmen working longer hours, the Witness was prompted to comment about the inability of Samuel's Oriental mind to gauge the Western character; i.e. to see that postmen did not want to work longer hours.⁶⁸ All these references seem to suggest a systematic attempt to convey the idea of the alien Jew.

This approach prompted others of similar inclination to voice their ideas. Felix Elderly wrote to the journal, criticising the attitude of J.L. Garvin, editor of the Pall Mall Gazette,⁶⁹ towards the Ministers. Elderly's criticism was not, however, out of any sympathy for the Isaacs family. 'God made all creatures after their kind, and the Isaacs kind is not of our race or creed.'⁷⁰ Similarly, the theme of the 'Asiatic' Jew was taken up by E.S.P. Haynes.⁷¹ He had a letter published in the Witness, describing Samuel as having 'all the haughtiness of an Oriental potentate.'⁷²

O'Donnell was even able to extend this line of criticism to include non-Jews, who seemed to be 'acting like Jews'. At one point, he considered that, out of the trio of Lloyd George, Rufus Isaacs and Herbert Samuel, Lloyd George was the most despicable. [It should be noted that this position of honour did fluctuate between the three during the campaign]. The reason for this was that Lloyd George was 'a European who stooped to do that dirty trick against his countrymen, and co-civilised, in order to promote the robbing boom of a pack of Asiatic bandits.'⁷³

Following from this description of Jews as aliens, lacking in the essential qualities of patriotism and sense of duty, the Witness subsequently attacked the political influence of Jews who held positions of power. Often it was believed that these particular Jews were able to hold office because the two major political parties were dependent on Jewish finance, and therefore had to reward certain of their number. Thus, the power-structure was such that it allowed men like Rufus Isaacs and Herbert Samuel to become influential ministers, and abuse their authority with no real fear of recrimination. Their actions could not be censured for fear of losing the financial support of the Jewish millionaires who provided the political parties with their only means of survival.⁷⁴ This state of affairs was self-destructive, warned the Witness.

'The truth which is perfectly clear in facts such as these is that an appalling scandal, the like of which can hardly be paralleled of recent years in the history of any rival nation, has been inflicted upon our public life by a particularly low and nasty gang: and the further truth is that if we do not get rid of these men and if we have not the political vitality to chastise them and to expel them and to prevent a recurrence of their tricks, nothing in our public life is safe.'⁷⁵

The corruption of the party system of government, which produced this effect, was brought to the public's attention in subsequent issues. One of the factors which they identified as a cause of this corruption was the sale of peerages, a trade that was to become even more infamous after the First World War.⁷⁶ It was alleged that Lord Swaythling, the uncle of Herbert Samuel, had purchased his peerage and had subsequently used his influence to have his nephew and his son, Edwin Montagu, placed on the Liberal Front Bench.⁷⁷ Again, this action had a sinister purpose. It was not simply for these men to receive the large salaries which went with their position, but in order that they might use their offices to gain bigger and better rewards. With regard to Herbert Samuel, 'Junius' decided that 'Lord Swaythling's intention must have been that his nephew should use his position in order to obtain certain indirect benefits, that he should work in with this or that financial interest and share profits

with this or that raider of the public Treasury.'⁷⁸

The themes of The Party System were expounded at great length. Whilst many of the references were general in their accusations, it does appear that often the element of corruption is identified as Jewish. In the following example, which illustrates the theoretical base of the allegations against the political structure, the Jewish influence is singled out as being the most contemptible. The writer begins by pointing out that party intrigue is now the rule rather than the exception.

'We know that they sell peerages, that they sell places on the Front Bench, that they sell policies. We know that a rich financier, though an alien and an unsavoury one at that, can get hold of a politician just as he gets hold of a race-horse, and back him for the sake of what he hopes to get later on. We know that a group of rich men can, by judicious expenditure of money, get any Government to propose a particular measure which favours their personal interests and prevent any opposition from effectively resisting it ... And seeing all this, we cannot but feel it to be a little ridiculous when professional politicians exclaim at the hard-heartedness of those who are capable of suspecting their immaculate honour.'⁷⁹

Whilst this quotation was couched in moderate language, the same point could be made in a much less restrained way by the journal.

'It is bad enough that alien moneylenders should be allowed to buy not only historic titles once held in honour by Europeans, but permanent and harsh legislative power in a great European nation; but it is intolerable that we should have their progeny swarming all over our administrative departments and behaving in the way that the Samuels behave.'⁸⁰

O'Donnell was clearly in sympathy with the identification of the Jew as the contaminating force in British political life. He totally rejected the proposal that the salaries of public officials ought to be raised in order to avoid the temptation of becoming involved in an offer such as Marconi. 'Sir Ikey Moses and Mr Pecksniff Chadband may infect English public life. They do not constitute it. A sanitary operation is required; but the English part of English public life is still fairly sound.'⁸¹ O'Donnell's summary of the political corruption of the period, as exemplified by the Marconi Scandal, was that it consisted of an alliance between the cosmopolitan Jewish money-power

and the 'Party System'. 'We need not trouble about the matter being Marconis. The same thing would be done tomorrow to hide any other Judaeo-Liberal swindle.'⁸²

This last remark came from an article entitled 'The Need for Clean Government', which served as an introduction to the political movement launched as a result of the Marconi Scandal by the Witness and its supporters. The National League for Clean Government brought anti-semitism into play as a political force, and it was an important bridging movement in the history of such political groups in Britain. There are studies of the fascist movements of the 1920s and 30s and of the British Brothers' League in the early 1900s. The absence of any work on the period between these two suggests that there was no activity and this is a false impression. Only when the gaps have been filled can the developments of the later period be fully explained and the League is a vital component in the history of anti-semitism in these years.

CHAPTER 6: FOOTNOTES

1. 'The rate of anti-Semitism in any society or social group is determined by two variables: the extent to which individuals are exposed to an anti-semitic ethos and the extent to which they are able to resist it.'

- Gertrude D. Selznich and Stephen Steinberg, The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America, (New York, 1969), p. xv n.

2. The Eye-Witness, 11 January 1912
3. Ibid., 25 January 1912
4. Ibid., 1 February 1912
5. Ibid., 8 February 1912
6. Indeed, potential contract had been public knowledge for some time. See Investors' Review, 27 January 1912 - 'The much-discussed agreement with the Post Office will probably be an accomplished fact before long.'
7. The Eye-Witness, 15 February 1912
8. Ibid., 21 March 1912
9. Ibid., 28 March 1912
10. Ibid., 18 April 1912
11. Ibid., 9 May 1912
12. Ibid., 30 May 1912
13. Ibid., 13 June 1912
14. Attacks on Isaacs began very early on in the paper's life, in the 27 July 1911 edition, when his name was associated with the much-disliked Insurance Act. A major criticism came over his involvement in the Titanic inquiry, where he was charged with dragging out the proceedings to increase the 'exaggerated professional fees' he was being paid.
15. All quotations from The Eye-Witness, 8 August 1912
16. See his claim in The Eye-Witness, 14 November 1912
17. See, for example, Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 56-8
18. Isaacs to Samuel, 12 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/4
19. Samuel to Isaacs, 8 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/3
20. Isaacs to Samuel, 14 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/5A
21. This letter to Asquith was mislaid or destroyed, according to Isaacs in his evidence to the Select Committee.
22. Isaacs to Samuel, 19 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/6

23. Reproduced in The Marquess of Reading, op. cit., p. 242
24. Samuel Papers, A/38/9
25. Isaacs to Samuel, 29 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/7
26. Ibid., 31 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/8
27. Godfrey Isaacs to Samuel, 31 August 1912, Samuel Papers, A/38/10
28. S.C., Vol. 2, p. 133. See also Hyde, op. cit., p. 131n. In Reading, op. cit., pp. 240-1, this passage is omitted from the reproduction of the letter. Also, the author leaves out the section where Samuel stated that, if an action was to be initiated, he would prefer Isaacs to nominate a solicitor, 'as my own solicitor is my brother and I think in a case like this it would be better to have someone else.'
Possibly the author felt that this concern of Samuel reflected on his father's close association with his brother, Godfrey, which helped to produce a potential focal point for anti-semitism.
29. See, for example, Cohn, op. cit., pp. 242-3, for an analysis of Nazi anti-semitism equating Jews with bacteria.
30. The Eye-Witness, 15 August 1912
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 26 September 1912
33. Ibid., 21 November 1912
34. The New Witness, 12 June 1913
35. Ibid., 28 May 1914
36. Ibid., 28 November 1912
37. Ibid.
38. See p. 42
39. New Witness, 26 December 1912. The reference to 'bad English' was no doubt to emphasise the fact that the firm was foreign.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 2 January 1913
42. Ibid., 26 December 1912
43. See p. 15
44. The New Witness, 20 March 1913
45. Ibid., 27 March 1913
46. Ibid., 3 July 1913

47. Ibid., 26 February 1914
48. Ibid., 5 September 1912
49. See p.
50. Quoted in The New Witness, 13 February 1913
51. The New Witness, 9 October 1913
52. The Eye-Witness, 15 August 1912
53. See The Eye-Witness, 31 October 1912
54. The New Witness, 7 November 1912
55. Ibid., 18 September 1913
56. See, for example, the warning against aliens in The New Witness, 14 August 1914. For details of the anti-alien feeling, see Chapter 9
57. The New Witness, 20 August 1914
58. See Chapter 1 for other opposition to Isaacs at L.C.J.
59. The New Witness, 27 March 1913
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., 3 April 1913
62. Ibid., 17 April 1913
63. Ibid., 10 July 1913
64. Ibid., 14 August 1913
65. Ibid., 4 December 1913
66. Ibid., 8 January 1914
67. Ibid., 26 March 1914
68. Ibid., 28 August 1913
69. See Chapter 4 for details of the Pall Mall Gazette's coverage of the Scandal.
70. The New Witness, 15 May 1913
71. Edmund Sidney Pollock Haynes, b. 1877, d. 1949. Educated Eton and Oxford, articulated into father's firm in 1900. His publications include Standards of Taste in Art, (1904), Early Victorian and other Papers, (1908) and Divorce Problems of Today (1912). In addition, he was a playwright, and author of many pieces on liberty and divorce. He was very much involved in a campaign for divorce reform in the late Edwardian period, and a frequent contributor to the Witness.

72. The New Witness, 8 January 1914
73. Ibid., 17 April 1913
74. See The Eye-Witness, 8 August 1912, for examples of this philosophy.
75. The Eye-Witness, 8 August 1912
76. For a lively account of the trade, see Tom Cullen, Maundy Gregory: Purveyor of Honours, (London, 1974)
77. The Eye-Witness, 8 August 1912. This allegation is to be found in an article by 'Junius', i.e. Cecil Chesterton
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 17 October 1912
80. The New Witness, 7 November 1912
81. Ibid., 10 April 1913
82. Ibid., 9 October 1913

CHAPTER 7

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR CLEAN GOVERNMENT

One notable result of the Marconi Scandal was the creation of the National League for Clean Government. The incentive for the establishment of this pressure group, or more correctly, shared attitudes group,¹ came from the publicity aroused by The New Witness over the Marconi affair. Apart from the League's superficial aim of opposing 'parliamentary corruption', it also had strong views on the sources of this evil - the Jewish influence in England. Indeed, the corruption most frequently referred to involved Jewish politicians since the campaign was based chiefly on the Marconi Scandal and its siblings, Indian Silver and the purchase of honours by wealthy Jewish plutocrats. The birth of the League is very much tied up with the campaigning of the Witness, which has already been seen to be the focus of much anti-Jewish opinion. The people concerned with the propaganda of the League were those involved in writing for the Witness, the obvious example being the triumvirate of Belloc and the two Chesterton brothers. It would be no exaggeration to say that the League was the political off-shoot of the journal.²

This is not to say that the League was violently and overtly anti-semitic. As described earlier, Belloc and Gilbert Chesterton were aware of the levels of social acceptability in the degree of anti-semitic expression, and were careful not to fall into the more violent abuse that could be used against the Jews.³ Thus, in the League's propaganda, there are few examples of openly-expressed hostility. It is the association of the League with the Witness, whose attitude was anti-semitic, which suggests the conclusion. In addition, the people connected with the League were open to charges of anti-semitic beliefs. Hugh O'Donnell was one of the League's main speakers and an official of the Organising Committee. Cecil Chesterton was another of the principal speakers. Other important adherents were Rowland Hunt, a Conservative M.P., and Vivian Carter, editor of the Bystander. Hunt's views on politics were given at a League meeting on 8 December 1913.

'Politics have become a profession for obtaining appointments, Honours and well-paid jobs, and I am sure you all agree with me, we want it altered. The old-fashioned member who has done his duty to his country for many years has nothing like the Honours or the influence wielded by the new plutocrat who has just bought an estate. We are really in danger of being ruled by alien votes and foreign gold. The aliens and foreign plutocrats are driving out British blood. (Applause) .⁴

This particular 'patriotic' theme is one which featured very strongly in the anti-Jewish attitudes of the Witness and its circle. It illustrates an ethnocentric hostility to Jews which can be traced back to the nineteenth century and the views of critics like Goldwin Smith.⁵ Hunt had been active during the Scandal, asking embarrassing questions of the Prime Minister and following on from that, he spent his parliamentary time decrying the operation of the Aliens Act. He maintained that the administration of the Act made it easier for aliens to enter the country and that it was a known fact they worked for less wages and under worse conditions than the native population, hence cheapening the value of labour and taking jobs previously held by Britons.⁶

Vivian Carter had given his opinions on the Jewish Question in a series of articles in the Witness, 'What shall we do with our Jews?'⁷ His ideas were very much in line with the Witness's attitude - that Jews should be Jews and conspicuous as such. He was anxious for Jews to have Jewish names, so that people might be able to tell they were dealing with a different 'nationality', as he called it. Carter was also in favour of clearly defining Jewish areas in London and other big towns. The theme of his article was for distinct and separate identity to be imposed; the ghetto and the yellow star policy of earlier and later dates.⁸

Thus, many of those associated with the organisation of the Clean Government League were part of the anti-semitic circle of literary, journalistic and political figures. Leo Maxse, editor of the National Review, spoke in glowing terms of the need for such a movement as the League.⁹ Indeed, it might be said that some of the momentum for 'Clean

Government' came from Maxse. As early as March 1913, the National Review had begun a series called 'The Fight for Clean Government', featuring the Marconi Scandal. Maxse's view of politics was similar to that of the Witness, and he was undoubtedly anti-semitic.¹⁰ Is it, therefore, justifiable to call the League anti-semitic, given that many of its founders and adherents were themselves hostile to Jews?

Admittedly, part of the campaign was, on the surface, purely political. It could be described as a destructive philosophy, in that it consisted chiefly of opposition to the Liberal government. Of course, this disenchantment had occurred for many of the members of the League long before its foundation. G.K. Chesterton's opposition to Liberal corruption was apparent as early as 1907. He defended H.C. Lea, a Radical backbencher, who had written to The Times denouncing 'jobbery and title-mongering' in the government. This led A.G. Gardiner, editor of the Daily News, to refuse to publish Chesterton's column on the subject, because it sympathised with Lea's attack on Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal Prime Minister.¹¹ Chesterton's 1907 campaign on behalf of Lea presaged his subsequent rampages against ministers who trafficked in Marconi shares, who sold peerages, and who otherwise perpetuated the dreaded 'party system'.¹² Belloc himself was the Liberal M.P. for South Salford from 1906 until the December 1910 election, when he did not stand. The reason for this was largely due to disillusionment with the Liberal party, again over the question of the party system and all it implied. Indeed, Belloc had never really been a Liberal 'party' man, and had fought the January 1910 election without official support, and felt that he could no longer stand as a Liberal candidate, as did his constituency party.¹³ Thus, it could be argued that the fight for 'Clean Government' was based on this political stance of disenchantment with the Liberal government.

There is, however, another dimension to this question. Corruption, as seen in the party system, was synonymous with Jewish influence. The sale of peerages was annoying, because it seemed to be alien financiers who were being

made peers. It was in return for their financial support that they received the honours, and therefore, to some extent, the Liberal Party was dependent on 'Jewish money'. Obviously, this was a sphere of politics which was open to criticism, but the League seems to have concentrated solely on the Jewish element. David Low, the cartoonist, attended one of their early meetings.

'The occasion had been a public meeting at Chelsea Town Hall to expose the sale of honours and the corruption of the House of Lords. There was a full house, naturally, since there was in these subjects much matter for exposure. It did not see the light on that occasion. Nobody came down to cases and all the audience got was vague anti-semitism, which I found very irritating'.¹⁴

With this background, it is not hard to realise why the Marconi Scandal was so important to the League. It represented the ultimate achievement of this Jewish influence; politicians and businessmen combining to make profits for themselves at the expense of the British public. The fact that the Scandal was the impetus for the League does suggest that a strong element of anti-semitism was inherent in its programme.

The League arose as a direct result of the campaigning on certain issues by the New Witness. Initially, the plan was to hold a series of New Witness conferences, hoping that they would become a weekly event.¹⁵ The first meeting was planned for 27 June 1913; the speaker was to be Hugh O'Donnell¹⁶ and his subject 'The Meaning of the Marconi Scandal'. Gilbert Chesterton was to chair the meeting. For supporters of the movement, this meeting was a triumph. The hall had been too small to hold all those who wished to hear O'Donnell, and the Witness promised that a bigger hall would be booked for the next conference, when G.K. Chesterton was to speak on 'Why he is not an official Liberal'.¹⁷ O'Donnell's speech was reported in the Witness, and it proved to be a regurgitation of points he had made in his previous journal articles. It is significant that the first point was to defend himself and the Witness against charges of anti-semitism. O'Donnell maintained that what the Witness condemned was corruption, not race or religion. 'When you catch an English pickpocket, he does not quote his Church membership.

When you catch a Jewish pickpocket, what right has he to scream out: "You are attacking my holy religion".¹⁸ Here is yet another example of O'Donnell's racial belief that there was a clear distinction between an Englishman and a Jew; a distinction which could not be overcome.

At this first meeting, a resolution was passed to set up an organisation to boost the Witness campaigns. The journal was delighted.

'We need hardly say that the resolution passed last week with much enthusiasm in favour of a non-party association to fight for clean government has our warmest approval, and we hope that the efforts which are being made to carry it into practice will meet with the success they certainly deserve'.¹⁹

There was a meeting of those interested in forming this association before the next conference. This clearly resulted in some policy decisions, for, in two weeks' time, the following announcement appeared. 'A meeting of members, and those interested in the League for Clean Government, formed in accordance with the resolution carried at THE NEW WITNESS Conference on June 27th, will be held on Friday, July 25th, at 7.30 in the small Essex Hall'.²⁰ Invitations for forms of application were invited, and soon an advertisement appeared weekly in the Witness.²¹ It read:-

'The National League for Clean Government.
This organisation has now been constituted, and will shortly issue its Statement of Principles and Objects. All those joining or helping the League are invited to send their names to the Hon. Sec., c/o The New Witness, 20 & 21 Essex Street, Strand, W.C. '.

After the usual lapse of interest in business and politics during the summer months, when London lost its business population to the holiday resorts, involvement in the League began again in October. The Witness published an appeal by the Secretary for readers to join the organisation and to encourage others to subscribe. The Secretary, H. Vernon Casey, appealed for a national society.

'We want to form branches of the League in every constituency and especially in the constituencies now represented by men prominently associated with notorious instances of corruption; the work of these branches will be to distribute literature in the form of letters and pamphlets which are now in course of preparation to hold meetings, and to support candidates, whom it is hoped that the League would place in the field'.²²

He listed those who had expressed their sympathy with the League, amongst whom were several bishops, Sir James Barr,²³ Oliver Locker-Lampson²⁴ and F.W. Jowett M.P.²⁵ The objects of the League were also made clear.

- '1. The exposure, punishment, and prevention of corruption and jobbery in legislation and the public services.
2. The establishment of a Free Parliament emancipated from the domination of the Caucus and the Party Funds.
3. The restoration to the House of Commons of its control over the executive and National Finance'.²⁶

These points were later elaborated in a letter to the Witness on 30 October 1913.²⁷

- '1. To reform the Party system of Government.
2. To secure and maintain the freedom of Parliament.
3. To provide the electors with an opportunity to select their Parliamentary candidates without the control of a Caucus.
4. To demand purity of Government and to expose and punish political corruption.
5. To prevent the sale of honours.
6. To secure adequate Parliamentary control over the National expenditure'.

This letter also gave an idea of the increasing support for the League. The signatories included, in addition to Barr, Jowett and O'Donnell, Thomas Burt M.P.,²⁸ Lord Auckland,²⁹ G.K. Chesterton, Rowland Hunt and Arnold White.³⁰

The Witness itself, whilst anxious to support the League, also made it clear that it was an independent association.

'In a word, the League will be in no way bound to the special and pretty well defined principles upon which this paper has been from the first consistently conducted, but only to the single principle that there is urgent need of cleansing our politics from that corruption which is soaking them more and more, and which, if not speedily expelled, must weaken and at last destroy our country'.³¹

In that same article, the writer attempted to analyse the nature of the corruption which existed in government. The chief cause was, as he saw it, (and one suspects that Cecil Chesterton, as editor, was the author), the control of politics by 'The Money Power'. The Indian Empire had already been brought to near-destruction 'by the action of alien money-lenders'. Attention

was brought to bear on the Insurance Act, which had been 'purchased by certain specified plutocratic interests',³² and on the Marconi Scandal and the pending promotion of Rufus Isaacs to Lord Chief Justice. Reference was also made to the Indian Silver affair. In fact, every issue dealt with referred in some way to Jews in office, and associated corruption.

Hugh O'Donnell, just announced as Chairman of the Committee for the League, had a four page article on Unclean Government in the same edition, and there was no doubt about his conception of the problem.

'Granted that a Free and Representative Parliament could work great good for the popular welfare, you have still to get it first. The problem of Clean Government underlies all other problems. Today is the reign of the Judaeon, simply because the Jew finds everywhere material for his activity and willing flunkies for his tips and his ground floor prices. No larva can thrive and multiply except in the soil or the sediment which is its suitable environment'.³³

O'Donnell condemned Rufus Isaacs for his part in the Marconi Scandal, 'but that is of less moment. Isaacs has it in his blood and tribe'. Similarly, when he criticised Herbert Samuel, he explained why the Postmaster-General was corrupt - 'the Judaeon must act according to his Tribe. He cannot act otherwise'. There were many other examples of the Jewish influence in leading to 'Unclean Government' and since O'Donnell held a responsible position in the League, it must be presumed that many of its supporters were in accord with his sentiments. It might be said that, at the least, they were anti-semitic in a passive sense, by having an official with the beliefs that O'Donnell held. This very point was made by A.H.M. Robertson in a letter to Justice, the journal of the British Socialist Party. He noted that O'Donnell was a speaker at League meetings, but despises his attitude. The articles in the Witness were called 'the most atrocious, scurrilous and malevolent outpourings of anti-semitism that have ever been offered to English readers', and he noted with disgust that O'Donnell accepted the accusation of ritual murder which had recently received publicity in the Beiliss case.³⁴ Robertson hoped that all socialists and Jews would ask:-

'... whether the lecturer's ideas of "Clean Government" include the hounding from the country of everyone who is guilty of the crime of being of Jewish blood or creed, and how it is that a sworn fomenter of such cruel and bloodthirsty hatred between races dares to come and expound "Clean Government" to an audience of decent Socialist and internationalist workers'.³⁵

Most members of the League must have been aware of O'Donnell's views, through the Witness articles and his speeches. Supporting this particular demand for Clean Government, which implied removal of Jewish officials and their lackeys (as Lloyd George was frequently described), they must therefore be seen as supporting a movement which had a definite base of anti-semitism.

Effective political action by the League was sparked off by the promotion of Isaacs to Lord Chief Justice. Although there had been rumours that Isaacs was to be opposed by an independent Reform candidate, an accountant well-respected in the City, at the next election, a move supported by the Witness,³⁶ nothing concrete seems to have come from this. Now, there was an obvious determination that a Liberal should not be returned in Isaacs' former constituency of Reading. A government that promoted the kind of corruption typified by the Marconi Scandal, and then rewarded the participants, could not be allowed to continue. 'They know that every honest man in the three kingdoms is spitting in their faces; and they do not care'.³⁷ Thus, the principal objective of the League was to destroy or at least to hamper the Liberal Party in office. An appeal was launched for funds to carry out a campaign exposing the corruption. Whilst speakers and the main League organisation were to go to Reading, pamphlets were also to be distributed at Keighley, where there was also a by-election. Since the organisation was only able to concentrate on one constituency at a time, Reading, which was Isaacs' home, was taken as the obvious choice.³⁸

There were three candidates at Reading; Captain Leslie Wilson (Unionist), G.P. Gooch (Liberal) and J.P. Butler (Socialist). Wilson had the advantage of having contested the seat before, and of 'cultivating' the constituency since 1910, whilst Gooch, a former Liberal M.P. for Bath, was a new-comer. The

nomination of a third candidate, Butler, the London organiser of the British Socialist Party, meant that the Liberal candidate would have an even harder task than usual to maintain Rufus Isaacs' rather slender majority.³⁹ Thus, the League had a relatively easy task in trying to defeat the Liberal candidate, since it could well be argued that, even without their intervention, he would have lost the seat. The main issues of the campaign seem to have been the Irish Question and the Insurance Act. The victory of the Unionist was described as 'A Blow for Home Rule',⁴⁰ and most journals agreed that the merits or otherwise of this question had been central to the campaign.⁴¹

Gooch also found that many of the pressure groups which came to Reading seeking to publicise their causes were against him. The Anti-Vaccinationists were annoyed because he would not support them, and they threatened to run their own candidate.⁴² Many of the women's suffragists were determined to attack the government over its failure to agree to votes for women, although the N.U.W.S. simply distributed its propaganda and did not campaign for any of the candidates.⁴³ The National Workmen's Council said that the working classes ought to vote for the Tory Party, because it would provide more employment, and also more food by taxing imports.⁴⁴ The fact that Gooch was a prohibitionist meant that the Reading Licensed Trade Victuallers' Association issued a handbill to brewery shareholders urging them to vote for the Conservative candidate.⁴⁵ He also appears to have lost many Jewish voters who previously would have been strongly behind their co-religionist, Isaacs.⁴⁶ No manifesto had been issued by the leaders of the Jewish community, as had been done in previous elections, and the local paper records that the Jews were left with a 'free vote'. Some indication as to how they might have voted was given in the report that Mr Solomon Joel and Mr Percy Cohen, President of the local synagogue, actively supported Captain Wilson.⁴⁷ All in all, it appears to have been a very active campaign which in itself suggests a reaction against the government. The Times of 1 November 1913 listed twelve sets of canvassers who had called at the homes of Reading electors; Unionists,

Liberals, Socialists, Home Rulers, anti-Home Rulers, anti-Socialists, Suffragists, anti-Suffragists, Tanff Reformers, Free Traders, and those for and against Welsh disestablishment.

The Clean Government League, then, was simply one of the many groups campaigning in Reading.

'To the babel of tongues of contending organisations in the streets of Reading, another has been added by the appearance of representatives of the "Clean Government" League. Mr Cecil Chesterton addressed a large crowd in the Butts, and other speakers who are to supplement his efforts against the Government include Mr G.K. Chesterton and Mr H. Belloc'.⁴⁸

This was, in fact, the only reference that the Reading Mercury gave to the League's campaign. Indeed, press coverage in general of the League's activities was very scant, and makes it difficult to assess its impact with any objectivity. The Times of 30 October noted that 'The Clean Government League is the latest organisation to invade the town. League offices have been secured, and literature is being distributed broadcast', but made very little of the subsequent campaigning. The most exhaustive accounts are to be found in the pages of The New Witness, the main propaganda organ for the organisation.⁴⁹ Its view of the meetings in Reading suggests that there should have been massive press coverage for the League's activities. The nightly open-air meetings were described as 'larger and more enthusiastic than those of any of the candidates'.⁵⁰ One massive indoor meeting, on the Thursday before the poll, had 'an attentive and sympathetic audience which must have numbered close on 2,000'.⁵¹ Speakers at this included both Chestertons and O'Donnell. The reason for this lack of coverage was, as the Witness claimed, censorship:-

'It is an astounding illustration of the Press boycott which was organised against us on both sides that this meeting was not supported in a single paper. No one could possibly believe that when a man so prominent before the public as Mr G.K. Chesterton addresses a very large and crowded public meeting in the middle of a by-election, that meeting having been thoroughly advertised by posters and leaflets several days beforehand, and especially when he devotes his speech to brilliant and vigorous attack upon the political party with which he was once associated, there can be anything but deliberate conspiracy in the refusal to report it'.⁵²

This claim may not be so preposterous, or self-opinionated, as it might seem. Chesterton and Belloc were to suffer this kind of censorship in later years at the hands of Beaverbrook.⁵³ Even before the First World War, they were notorious for their attacks on the Party system, on the 'Party Press', and on the domination of the medium by a few wealthy individuals. The pages of the Witness are full of such sentiments. It would not be beyond the bounds of possibility that that same press would feel rather reluctant to publicise its critics' work, claiming that it went beyond the bounds of 'good taste'. A process of this kind was, in fact, taking place during the election; a 'selective publicity'. The Reading Mercury, which clearly supported Captain Wilson, and was full of political comment from the Morning Post and the Daily Telegraph, did not mention once the campaign of the Socialist candidate, Butler.

However, there may be another reason for this Press boycott. It could be that they were unwilling to be associated with the League's campaign, since it was tainted with anti-semitism. The Witness often boasted that it was the only journal to pay attention to the 'Jewish Problem',⁵⁴ and that no other paper dared to venture opinions on the subject. The League's campaign, as far as can be determined, was based almost solely on the charges of corruption arising from the Marconi Scandal. As already described, the elements of anti-semitism in this affair are quite clear and it was clearly this approach which the League used to attack the Liberal government and its candidate, Gooch.

'To judge from their printed matter this body intends during the week, with the help of Mr Belloc, Mr G.K. Chesterton, and a gramophone, to draw some morals from the Marconi affair, which otherwise would not have been exploited at all in this campaign!'.⁵⁵

It was unfortunate, or rather fortunate for the League, that the Liberal and Conservative candidates had agreed not to mention the Marconi affair during the election campaign. This played into the hands of the Clean Government men, who could point out their claim of party collusion and show that politics was a phoney war. As G.K. Chesterton claimed 'When the Tory candidate at Reading openly agrees never to say "Marconi" - then the cat is out of the bag

for ever'.⁵⁶

The justification for this pact of silence was that the inhabitants of Reading would resent any censure of their former member of parliament. Indeed, Gooch, the Liberal candidate, claimed that Isaacs was 'too popular in Reading for his opponents to make use of the recent Marconi Scandal, even had they desired to do so'.⁵⁷ However, the action disgusted the Witness.⁵⁸

'The activities of the Clean Government League at the by-election have at any rate succeeded in exposing this piece of hypocrisy ... it is found by practical experience that nothing is more favourably received than a taunt directed against Isaacs and his accomplices. The vehemence with which the crowd cheered a speaker who said that an ordinary man who did what Isaacs had done would, if he stood in the dock, be convicted of corruption, and that "therefore they put him, not in the dock, but on the Bench", would have made an end of that illusion for ever if it had ever been anything but an excuse for a private deal'.⁵⁸

Maxse was also indignant about the compact but felt that it had been destroyed

'because the people insisted on hearing about every aspect of Marconis - Unionist speakers responded to the demand and the spirited campaign of the "League for Clean Government" under the auspices of the New Witness supplied a much felt want and was an important factor in producing results which astonished all conventional politicians on the declaration of the poll'.⁶⁰

The Socialist campaign, which Maxse claimed benefitted from these Marconi exposures, did use the affair in its meetings. Thomas Kennedy, Butler's election agent, admitted that it had played a part in their success,⁶¹ and H.M. Hyndman, addressing an audience at one of Butler's meetings, claimed that 'the most significant thing about the two capitalist candidates is their remarkable agreement not to mention Marconi', and then went on to score political points from the details of the affair.⁶² Against these claims, we must set the report from the Times, which recorded that attacks on Isaacs were greeted with 'angry cries',⁶³ and the possibility that Reading was perhaps not the most likely constituency to accept anti-Jewish propaganda. As a staunch Liberal paper put it:

'Nor has Reading shown any prejudice against the Jewish race and religion. Not twenty years before Sir Rufus was first chosen for Reading he had a forerunner, both as lawyer and Jew, in Sir Francis Goldsmid, K.C., the first Jew to attain to the dignity of silk; and to him the constituency faithfully adhered during many years till he retired'.⁶⁴

However, the Witness felt no compunction to follow this particular line. In greeting the Conservative victory, it wrote of Isaacs' successor ... 'He differs from the late member for Reading in being an Englishman, and, so far as we know, privately an honourable man'.⁶⁵ The journal, as spokesman for the League, was unrepentant about the anti-Liberal campaign and felt that it had been justified.

'The compact which we were primarily out to fight emerged in a somewhat damaged condition. The candidate indeed managed to keep silent on the issue about which everyone in the constituency was talking, but it was continually on the lips of his supporters and made constant appearances at his meetings'.⁶⁶

Some indication of the tone of the League's campaign was given by O'Donnell's article in the Witness shortly after the election. It also shows why other journals might be reluctant to publicise the campaign, for it showed O'Donnell at his most vehement, spouting his own version of a Jewish conspiracy theory.

'At the big meeting of the Clean Government League in the Corn Exchange at Reading, there came an organised band of Liberal rowdies to interrupt and roar. Their success in the line was not great. They made the vast majority of the meeting more unanimous. That was all. The reason why I mention the pitiful creatures is this. They were led by a sallow Jew boy who boasted that he was a clerk "in the office of the Samuels". That band of Liberal hooligans commanded by a semi-civilised Jew boy! Even in its rowdyism, our official Liberalism must take its orders from the Undesirable Alien'.⁶⁷

Describing interrupters of meetings as Jews was also done by Cowley, the League secretary, at a later date (see p.253), and it has interesting parallels with the procedure of the British Union of Fascists. There are several recorded occasions on which Mosley and other speakers, without any obvious evidence, identified (and vilified) hecklers as Jews.⁶⁸

O'Donnell went on to link this particular incident (which is not referred to by any other journal) to the alleged Jewish control of the Liberal Party.

'I do not explain, I only observe the curious fact that contemporary Liberalism appears to acknowledge its inferiority to the Judaeo Asiatic in so many respects. It asks the Judaeo Asiatic to direct its justice, as well as its share market, its posts and telegraphs, as well as its Cocoa Press, its Secretaryships of India as well as its Silver deals'.⁶⁹

From here, he went on to express the view that England was 'the natural pasture and the destined prey of the closely-knit, intensely organised, concurrently rapacious alien tribe, which is the predatory race of history for two thousand years'.⁷⁰ In his view, it was only a matter of time before the Jew swamped England, in influence if not in numbers. He was particularly concerned about the effect of this on the government of India.

'The Jew has no claims whatever to be admitted to circles of Government from which Indian princes and statesmen are excluded. He is not a European, and never can be. He is associated with occupations hostile to the public interest and allied with demoralisation and rapacity. Numerically, he is an insignificant handful. Socially he is an outsider, to put the matter as gently as possible; and he is also an outsider by reason of his Racial Separatism which is a confederation against Mankind'.⁷¹

Thus, in one article, O'Donnell begins with the League campaign and shows how it can be linked in with his own anti-semitic attitudes and stereotypes. Since O'Donnell was an important figure in the Clean Government Campaign, it is hard to imagine that its supporters did not echo his sentiments to some degree. Certainly O'Donnell was able to use the organisation as a vehicle for his prejudices. Presumably, other members did the same.

The next target for the League was the by-election at South Lanark 'where there is, we believe, a very good chance of unseating another nominee'.⁷² The following week, the Witness reported that committee rooms had been opened in Lanark and that pamphlets were being distributed. A lengthy quote from the Glasgow Herald's account of a meeting of the Unionist candidate was given to show that the League was already making an impact. The meeting was held at Lanark Auction Market, and the Herald report was from the 18 November edition.

'Another heckler asked if the candidate regarded "gambling" by members of the Government in "Marconis" as most corrupt, and if he agreed "that a Government of that sort should be driven out of public life".

The candidate replied that he was sorry that the question had been asked. He had his own views as to the high standard that ought to be observed in public life, but personally he had never mentioned that transaction on the public platform. (Hear, hear) He thought it was a matter of which the electors would form their own judgment without him making that a reason for his party getting into office. He did not wish to treat it as a party hack question. (Applause)

Replying later to the same heckler, the candidate said that in principle it was wrong for a member of the Government to take a financial tip under the circumstances indicated by his questioner.

The Heckler: Why do you refuse to deal with this question? Have you a compact with the Liberals not to touch that subject?

The Candidate: I have not.

The Heckler: Well, they have in some other constituencies'.⁷³

The Witness ended its record of the conversation there, but the Glasgow Herald continued for a few more lines, showing that the heckler may well have been a League 'import'.

'The Candidate: Are you an elector in this constituency?

The Heckler: No, I am not.

The Candidate: Well, I am not surprised then'.

The first major meeting of the League was held in Carluke Town Hall, on 22 November. The Witness described the audience as 'sympathetic', and said that Mr Kehrhahn, the organiser of the Lanark campaign, 'was heard in perfect silence as he arraigned the present Government and showed how unworthy it, or any supporter of it in Parliament, was to the votes of honest men, be they Liberal, Conservative or Socialist'.⁷⁴ The silence was presumably mentioned to suggest that Kehrhahn had the support of his audience. A somewhat different light, however, is cast on the proceedings by the local reporter.

'The Clean Government League are conducting a campaign throughout the South Lanark constituency, and the first meeting under their auspices was held in the Carluke Town Hall on Saturday night. There was a very small attendance, the audience not being more than one hundred. Mr C. Clifford presided. The meeting was addressed by Mr F.L. Kehrhahn, who explained that the League and its officials were out to attack corruption in public life. The League had issued five questions to be put to each of the three candidates who were now seeking the support of the South Lanark electors.

Mr J. Stephens, an ex-Liberal candidate for a Scottish Constituency, also addressed the meeting, dealing principally with the Marconi Scandal.

Mr J. Territt, of the Gasworkers' Union, said it was little use nationalising the mines and railways if our state departments were to continue to be dens of privilege and patronage, where men obtained position by backstairs methods. The latter speaker had a number of questions addressed to him at the close'.⁷⁵

In spite of this rather poor start, the League maintained its own enthusiasm, promising one or two meetings every evening until the election, although, as in Reading, no more press reports appeared to confirm that these meetings did take place. Yet, on 4 December, the Witness repeated that the campaign had been going well, and that meetings had been held every day and night. 'All these meetings have been eminently successful. A Scotch audience is not emotionally applausive as are audiences further south, but it listens as no Southern audience listens - and it thinks'. The main item of cheer was the answers provided by the Unionist candidate, William Watson, to the five questions posed by the League on 'Clean Government'. The Witness said that he had answered the questions fully and promptly ('predictably' might have been a better word, since he was canvassing for votes and unlikely to say that he was not in favour of 'Clean Government') and, on the basis of his replies, recommended him to the electorate. 'We think that on his answers Mr Watson is entitled to be regarded as a worthy candidate whom it becomes honest men to support'.

The National Review was also pleased with the Unionist candidate.

'It so happens that at South Lanark Mr Watson, the Unionist candidate and present Member, though evading the Marconi Scandal, replied to the questions of the "National League for Clean Government" in a manner so satisfactory as to ensure his replies being boycotted by many Party journals on both sides, as this is the sort of thing calculated to upset their appereat. We reproduce textually from the New Witness the questions and answers which speak for themselves. Mr Watson's answers are admirable'.⁷⁶

Once again, as at Reading, the League's campaign was based on the events and outcome of the Marconi Scandal. There does not appear to have been a compact between candidates similar to the one at Reading, merely a reluctance

to discuss the subject. It is interesting, however, to find Captain Wilson, the Reading victor, who agreed to such a treaty, having no hesitation in referring to the scandal in another constituency. Addressing a meeting at Carlisle, he drew attention to Lloyd George's new proposals for land reform: 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer had evidently found out that the landlords did not get as much out of the land as might be made out of Marconis. (Laughter)'.⁷⁷

As in Reading, there were three candidates, Liberal, Unionist and Labour. Obviously the Labour intervention weighed heavily against the Liberal who was trying to retain his party's grip on the seat. And, as in Reading, there were the independent movements trying to attract attention, as was the League.⁷⁸ The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the Women's Social and Political Union campaigned, each in their own styles, for votes for women.⁷⁹ The Young Scots also conducted a campaign; indeed, they attacked Gibb, the Labour candidate, who had said that Scottish independence was not a major issue at that time.⁸⁰ Thus, the League's activities must be placed in this context of 'outside' pressure.

The victory of the Conservative candidate⁸¹ was greeted as a triumph for the Clean Government League, as was the large number of votes gained by the Labour Party. Since both Conservative and Labour candidates had answered the 'Five Questions' on Clean Government satisfactorily, they were declared to be opposed to parliamentary corruption. Morton, the Liberal, who had not answered, was labelled as pro-corruption, particularly since he was a supporter of the Government 'which has been caught in acts of corruption not once or twice, or three times, but again and again ever since it has been in office'.⁸² The campaign was neatly summed up by the leader in the Witness. 'From the point of view of Clean Government we may therefore consider the result to work out as follows. The Anti-Corruptionist vote was 5,931. The Corruptionist vote was 4,006. Majority against corruption, 1,925'.⁸³

There was little doubt in the minds of the Witness staff that the League had been the crucial factor in gaining victory for Watson. As they described it,

'... the energetic intervention of the Clean Government League was undoubtedly the direct determining cause to which the return of Mr Watson must be ascribed. We do not say this in any mood of idle boasting. We are only recording the deliberate opinion of those best qualified to judge, men on the spot entirely unconnected with the League and in some cases antagonistic to its propaganda. We are also recording our own observations. Those who took part in the fight at South Lanark had no kind of doubt as to the impression that we made. Conversions were effected under our eyes. Men came to our meeting to cheer for George and remained to learn the truth about him and cheer no more. Elector after elector personally assured our speakers that they had intended to vote for the "Liberal" candidate but that having heard the full story of its record they would no longer do so. It was obvious from the first that the miners and ploughmen of Lanark had never been told any part of the truth about the Marconi Scandal, the Indian Silver Scandal, the corrupt purchase of peerages and places on the Front Bench, and the Cat's Meat Contract for the feeding of our soldiers. When they did hear the story of these things told plainly and without embroidery, the effect was visibly overwhelming. Beyond any question what we had to tell them changed more votes than the 250 which were necessary to prevent the advocate of corruption from being returned'.⁸⁴

Just how accurate this statement was is difficult to assess. As at Reading, the press suggested that Home Rule was the main electoral issue and Watson certainly laid great emphasis on this in his campaign.⁸⁵ If this is the case, then the Witness was clearly overemphasising the impact of the League on the election result.

After two 'successes', the League continued its propaganda with renewed vigour. On 8 January 1914, there was a public debate under its auspices between Cecil Chesterton and Sir Henry Seton-Karr⁸⁶ on 'The Party System'. A motion 'that the Party system is useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished', moved by Cecil Chesterton, was carried nem. con.⁸⁷ The following week, a letter from the League Secretary, Vernon Carey, appeared in the Witness. He asked readers in sympathy with the League's aims to help form provincial branches. The objective was to have a branch in every electoral area. However, campaigning in crucial by-elections also continued.

The next venture, Bethnal Green, where Charles Masterman was standing, was something of a personal vendetta by the Witness staff and followers, who had, for years, taken every opportunity of attacking their former colleague. It stemmed from the early years of the century, when Masterman was a young journalist on the staff of the Daily News, with G.K. Chesterton, Belloc and Massingham. Masterman entered parliament as a Liberal in 1903, and rapidly gained promotion under Asquith's leadership.⁸⁸ Chesterton and Belloc felt that he had sacrificed his principles for the sake of office, and continually criticised him in their writing.⁸⁹ They also hounded him at by-elections. At Bethnal Green in 1911, there were examples of this activity, which Masterman's wife described.

'The Suffragettes, Mr Belloc and the Social Democratic Federation in queer combination, had a committee room, which issued leaflets on prostitution and venereal disease, for which evils they appeared to regard the Liberal Candidate as personally responsible, and a complicated genealogical tree intended to show that I was related to Lord Rothschild, and that all politicians for a hundred years were related to each other and to Lord Rothschild'.⁹⁰

Here again is an example of the political use of anti-semitism by Belloc and his supporters.

When Masterman was made Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, he had to resign his seat and stand for re-election. Unfortunately for him, he was defeated by twenty-six votes; a defeat which he attributed to the massive personality campaign directed against him. However, he saw the source of this campaign as Lord Northcliffe, the press magnate, who had deemed him responsible for the twin evils of the Finance Bill, which destroyed the House of Lords, and of the Insurance Act.⁹¹ The Witness's version of the defeat did not refer to Northcliffe, but described how the League had influenced fifty-seven votes that turned the balance against Masterman. These fifty-seven votes belonged to nominal Liberals, whom the League had persuaded on polling day to vote against corruption i.e. against Masterman. 'If those fifty-seven had voted for Masterman, he would have been elected by a majority of thirty-three. So that, apart from those who may have been influenced by

our speeches and leaflets, we can definitely claim a sufficient number of converts to turn the scale'.⁹² In addition to this canvass, the League claimed to have distributed 110,000 leaflets, and held many meetings. This was seen as their finest achievement to date.

'The defeat of Mr Masterman at Bethnal Green is a great victory for clean government. It not only removes from Parliament a member who has in an unusually cynical fashion betrayed his constituents and sold his convictions for "a career" - that is, for money; it not only unseats the Minister who (after George) has most prominently associated himself with the odious and corruptly obtained Insurance Act; but it can be distinctly proved that, but for the intervention of the Clean Government League, the narrow majority by which Mr Masterman was defeated would have been a majority the other way. What was a matter of reasonable conjecture in other recent contests is here a matter of certainty...'.⁹³

Other targets around this time were by-elections at Leith and Poplar. The Leith vacancy arose because of the appointment of its M.P., Ronald Munro-Ferguson, as Governor-General of Australia. As already stated, Ferguson was one of three Liberal members who voted against the Government in the Marconi debate, and there was some suspicion in the Witness that his appointment was simply a way of removing one of the thorns in the side of the parliamentary Liberal party. Thus, it was decided that 'Leith and the burghs, Portobello and Musselburgh, which are allied with it, are places where exposition of the Marconi, diseased meat, and other corruptions will have their full effect'.⁹⁴ As for Poplar, the Witness carried a paragraph on Mr Kerr Clark, the Conservative candidate, who had told the Morning Post that he was basing his campaign on Clean Government.

"I do not care", he is reported to have said, "if it means raking up the whole of the Marconi Scandal again. I have talked about it on the platform and I shall talk about it again If revelations similar to those of the Marconi scandals had been made in England thirty years ago the Government whose members had been implicated in them would have been swept from power never to return again".⁹⁵

Later on in the year, Masterman was again under attack from the League, when he sought re-admittance to the House by contesting the by-election at Ipswich. The League proclaimed in the Witness that it intended to oppose him

and appealed for funds.⁹⁶ Once more, Masterman lost the contest,⁹⁷ and the League's new secretary, Cowley,⁹⁸ had much to say about the result.

'I may say that we were by no means the only anti-Mastermanite Association in the town. From the W.S.P.U., who influenced no votes, to Miss Margaret Douglas's Insurance Tax Resisters' Association - which influenced a great many - the streets of Ipswich swarmed with workers. Sixty Ulstermen walked about anxious for fights - and frequently finding them. Clerical individuals mounted upon tubs to address indifferent crowds upon the iniquity of disestablishment in Wales. Dishevelled suffragettes were hurried to the police station by the officers of the law, pursued by hotting hordes of shuffling hooligans. A fierce-eyed and grey-bearded person, said to be ex-Inspector Syme, held forth in the Cornhill upon the iniquities of the Metropolitan Police. Free Trade and Tariff Reform bellowed against one another in the Butter Market. All these persons doubtless performed good service in ensuring Mr Masterman's defeat'.⁹⁹

Masterman himself said that he was denounced at Ipswich 'by an extraordinary array of opponents for his work at the Home Office and more particularly his association with insurance'.¹⁰⁰ His wife described the opposition as 'the usual circle of Northcliffe, Belloc and Kensit'.¹⁰¹ As far as Masterman was concerned, the chief problem raised at the election was that of the Liberal Party's relationship to 'labour'.

'Had a command been issued and obeyed for labour to support me at Ipswich I should easily have got in. But some voted for Scurr and many, I am told, voted Tory - out of revenge for N.E. Derbyshire. I think an understanding with them is equally imperative and impossible'.¹⁰²

However, the League and particularly Cowley, claimed that it was its campaign, on one single issue, which produced the anti-Masterman vote. Twenty-five thousand leaflets were distributed; indeed the contents of these leaflets were so strong that there seems to have been some trouble finding a printer willing to undertake the task. The League also held meetings, at which Cecil Chesterton was a prominent speaker. It is interesting that Cowley's report contained a description of an event very similar to the one O'Donnell described at Reading.

'An attempt was made upon one occasion to break us up by the interruptions of a hired Jew, obviously primed with information from the Liberal headquarters: but as the interrupter was subsequently attacked by the audience and forced to confess that he had been employed by money for the purpose, he got

little for his pains. The plainly organised nature of his attack - which was supported by a gang - showed the fear of our attacks which prevailed among the Liberals'.¹⁰³

Cowley is another example of an individual, holding office in the League, not only identifying the Jewish element in the Liberal party but also suggesting that it was a corrupting influence. The leading article in the Witness described the Liberal party - 'the Marconi Party' of corruption - as 'formed by the combination of George and his hangers-on with the Jews and their hangers-on'.¹⁰⁴

Ipswich was the League's fourth "victory", the other three being Reading, Lanark and Bethnal Green, and an appeal was made yet again for funds to expand their campaign. The plan was not to fight more elections, but to continue the policy of choosing constituencies where victory i.e. defeat of the Liberal candidate, was feasible. More funds were needed to 'appear in greater force, and to exact that recognition from the official parties and the official press which will not otherwise be accorded us'.¹⁰⁵

Meetings of the League continued, usually addressed by Cecil Chesterton and Belloc. The subject usually revolved around the Marconi Scandal. On 27 June, Chesterton spoke of the sale of peerages and front bench places, and then proceeded to give a full account of the Scandal, asking his audience if they liked 'this sort of unsavouriness'¹⁰⁶ in politics. Belloc was the next speaker, deploring the raising of Isaacs to the office of Lord Chief Justice and talking about the lack of criticism of this kind of corruption. Again, Cowley, reporting the meeting, drew attention to the lack of press coverage, with only the Morning Post mentioning the speeches of such notable personalities as Chesterton and Belloc.¹⁰⁷ At this particular meeting, future policy was discussed. It was agreed that 'the work of exposure' ought to continue, but that there could be no question of putting candidates up for parliament. It would prove too costly, far beyond the means of the League. Thus, it was only through continued publicity that the aims of the League and of 'Clean Government' could be pursued.

It was at this meeting also that a 'highly important incident' occurred. Sir Robert Muir MacKenzie¹⁰⁸ asked, from the audience, if the Ministers attacked by Chesterton were to have the chance of prosecuting for libel the perpetrators of any charges. Chesterton immediately responded by writing and signing a statement of the charges he made against the ministers. Copies of this statement were made available to anyone sending a stamped envelope to the editor of the Witness. Chesterton seemed highly delighted the following week when neither Lord Reading nor Lloyd George had replied to the charges. At another meeting of the League, on 11 July, Chesterton repeated his statement and claimed that 'we sent numerous copies of the actual challenge to inquirers'.¹⁰⁹ In the event of no reply, it was hoped that a question would be asked in the House, possibly by Rowland Hunt. This does not appear to have been done, and the League's activities rather faded away with the coming of war in August 1914.

They did not, however, cease altogether. G.C. Heseltine has recorded that he attended a meeting of the Clean Government League early in 1918, when the scope of the organisation seems to have adapted itself to changing circumstances, although holding on to old favourites. Heseltine described the objectives of the League in 1918 as '... to attack political corruption (as exposed by the Marconi affair and the sale of honours by Lloyd George's party), to restore personal liberties abrogated by the War, to obtain the repeal of oppressive Acts, to secure the rights of small nationalities and the protection of private property'.¹¹⁰

On 11 April 1918, the League for Clean Government became The New Witness League, with Gilbert Chesterton as its first president. Chesterton had taken over as editor of the Witness after his brother joined the army in 1916 (he subsequently died in 1918), and this change of name appears to have been no more than a rationalisation of the close links which already existed between the journal and the League. The journal encountered financial problems; Chesterton was continually subsidising it and finally its end came in May 1923.

Naturally the League also died with the demise of the journal.¹¹¹ However, it was not the end of political and journalistic campaigning. The last editions of the Witness promised a new journal, edited by Chesterton, and this began to appear on a regular basis, in March 1925, as G.K.'s Weekly.¹¹² The journal became the vehicle for Chesterton's political philosophy, now labelled distinctively as Distributivism.¹¹³

G.K.'s Weekly suffered from the same financial problems as its predecessor. It was never a viable concern, and in 1926, the deputy editor, W.R. Titterton, 'proposed that an appeal should be made to the readers for contributions to a fighting fund and that a league be constituted to save the paper'.¹¹⁴ Shortly after this, the Distributist League was formed, having as its direct antecedent the Clean Government League.

There appear to be obvious differences between the 'Clean Government' movement and the Distributist League. One might, for instance, see a progression from a negative approach, a reaction against something without suggesting an alternative, to Distributivism, a positive if somewhat anachronistic answer to the problems of industrial society.¹¹⁵ However, to present such a clear-cut transition would be a gross simplification. The essential concept of Distributivism, the distribution of property, appears before the Great War. G.K. Chesterton's What's Wrong with the World, (1909), posed just such a solution.¹¹⁶ Fundamentally, Distributivism was in existence long before the Distributist League. It was preached in the Independent Political Association, the Clean Government League and The New Witness League in the period before 1920. In that sense, the various organisations are all part of one movement.

A common theme for these groups was a belief in a 'Golden Age'. This became a continual preoccupation of the Chesterbelloc and was particularly evident in pre-war England. 'One finds everywhere in Edwardian writing the sense of disturbing change, and the essential Edwardian mood is sombre - a feeling of nostalgia for what has gone, and of apprehension for what is to

come - ...'.¹¹⁷ Belloc and Cecil Chesterton illustrate this feeling in

The Party System.

'Though we have no history, and be unable to compare the modern wretchedness with the happiness of the past, yet mere instinct and the common conscience of man must, unless he is positively blinded by vanity, teach him that something is very ill with England to-day'.¹¹⁸

One extreme example of the results of such a belief was the Conservative politician, George Wyndham, who was described in 1911 as being 'an uncompromising partisan and an advocate of the most extreme courses. He was shocked and angered at what he regarded as the degradation of England by Jews, foreigners and Liberals in general'.¹¹⁹ One of the essential ingredients of anti-semitism in Britain in this period seems to have been such a view of society.¹²⁰ A concept of a 'Golden Age' and a conviction that the Jews could be blamed for destroying that era appear very evidently in the writings of O'Donnell. Using the Jews as scapegoats, he could explain the changing world.

Having said that the political views of the pre-war years and of the 1920s and 30s are essentially the same, the question about the part played by anti-semitism must also be asked. More work needs to be done before any conclusions can be reached about the Distributivist League and its attitude to Jews. One opinion on G.K. Chesterton sees him mellowing in the 1920s - 'a new tolerance ... is extended towards the Jews, who for the first time are represented in something like a favourable light' - which provides a launching pad but little else.¹²¹ Did the Distributivists use the same kind of language and imagery in attaching monopoly capitalism in the 1920s and 30s as the Clean Government League did in the 1910s? The answer lies in future research. A study of the Distributivist reaction to the fascist movements of the 1930s would be revealing, one way or the other.

We now must ask what is the significance of the League for Clean Government. Its inspiration, as has already been noted, was the Marconi Scandal. Its connections with the New Witness, an anti-semitic journal, are

beyond dispute. Its own tendency to anti-semitism has been illustrated, both in its campaigning and in the personnel attracted to the movement. Can it therefore be claimed that the League was a fore-runner of the Fascist movements of the 1930s, at least in its use of anti-semitism as a political weapon? This would, I feel, be an over-simplified claim, relying again on hindsight, a dubious historical methodology. Similarities need not prove a natural progression of thought and action. However, similarities do exist and possibly it is the historian's task simply to point to these and leave the reader to his own conclusions.

The League served as a focus for three strands of anti-semitism, although the distinctions between these categories were often blurred and sentiments expressed sometimes cannot be clearly placed under one particular heading. First, as already identified, was the ethnocentric 'Britain for the British' viewpoint. Second, there was a distinct element of racial hostility, as exhibited by O'Donnell and described in the preceding chapters. Finally, the formulation of a conspiracy theory is evident - Jews are manipulating finance, dominating politics and destroying the old order. A fuller discussion of the nature of anti-semitism in these pre-war years will be found in the concluding chapters of this work. For the moment, let it suffice to say that these three elements can also be found in other anti-semitic writing, both before and after the Clean Government League.

For example, 'Britain for the British' was a slogan used consistently by fascist groups in the 1920s and 30s. The Britons, founded in 1919 by Henry Hamilton Beamish essentially as a propaganda and publishing society, had the motto 'Britain for Britons' and the objective of eradicating foreign influence from politics and industry.¹²² This meant, in effect, excluding Jews from all positions of authority. This compares with the Clean Government League's policy of demanding the removal of all Jews from government office. Similarly, one of the elements of reform in the programme of the British Fascists, formed in 1923, was that 'civil servants and parliamentary candidates would have to be

of "British birth and race".¹²³ In the 1930s, the British Fascists took on the outright fascist platform of the B.U.F. 'Jews and aliens would be barred from public posts, from voting and from "controlling" the financial, political, industrial and cultural interests of Great Britain'.¹²⁴ The National Fascists, who broke away from the British Fascists in 1924 to pursue 'true Fascism' also had similar aims. They sought 'a governing executive of men of British birth and breeding with the will and power to govern'.¹²⁵

Skidelsky describes the early anti-semitism of the B.U.F. as having an 'intensely nationalist "Britain-for-the-British" line',¹²⁶ and it is recorded that Mosley called for a ban on Jews as officials and members of parliament.¹²⁷ One can also distinguish similar approaches in the splinter groups of the B.U.F. The National Socialist League was conceived as a 'British national movement with British organisational methods',¹²⁸ and an appeal at the end of William Joyce's book described the movement as 'the only 100% British organisation working with British people and British funds for the rebuilding of Britain in the modern way'.¹²⁹

Fitting these examples into a broader perspective, it is possible to point to earlier manifestations of a distorted jingoism in Goldwin Smith (see above) and in some of the writings of J.A. Hobson.¹³⁰ Recent work has also drawn attention to the connection between agitation against alien immigration and 'a more general theme of jingoism' in the origins of the British Brothers' League.¹³¹

These few examples illustrate a particular emphasis of British anti-semitism in a period of one hundred years and the place of the Clean Government League's propaganda in that history. The other strands, the racialist approach and the conspiracy theory are not so common and deserve more detailed attention. True racists are a rare occurrence, and therefore O'Donnell is in a special category, along with people like Joseph Banister.¹³² Traces of a conspiracy theory can be found in the work of Hobson, who sees the Jew 'plotting to carve out one more area of the world in his ageless quest for universal domination',¹³³

but its real European impact comes essentially with the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution. The League's role in establishing an atmosphere which allowed the Protocols to have such an impact is perhaps more significant than previously believed.¹³⁴

The importance of the League for Clean Government is that it seems to fit into a pattern, or rather into a continuity of groups and people in Britain who were prepared to use anti-semitism to achieve their political ends. In this sense, the League is a 'missing link', filling in a gap between the early 1900s and the 1920s. Indeed, this examination of its activities helps to establish that there was, in fact, a continuity of organisations using anti-semitism as a political tool. The Clean Government League, along with the British Brothers' League and The Britons, shows that political anti-semitism was not a unique product of the 1930s.

The general purpose of this thesis is to establish that the conspiratorial emphasis of British anti-semitism so apparent in the 1920s and 30s was conceived before 1914. This chapter's concern with the Clean Government League helps to reinforce such an argument. It also suggests that one can talk about a tradition of British anti-semitism, a theory by no means universally accepted or acceptable, and it indicates just what elements combine to make up such a tradition.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER 7

1. See Allen Potter, Organised Groups in British National Politics, (London, 1960), p.25.
2. In this context, I think it important to note the close links between the political aspects of anti-semitism and the liberary movements. Benewick, op.cit., distinguishes between what he calls 'organised group activity', i.e. The British Union of Fascists, and the 'intellectual journalism of the Chesterton-Belloc circle' (p.47). The case of the League is significant, because it illustrates the artificial division that can be created by making such a distinction. Here is a concrete example of organised group activity arising directly from the intellectual journalism.
3. For examples of the more extreme forms of anti-semitic language used in the campaign against immigrants at the turn of the century, see Garrard, op.cit.
4. The New Witness, 18 December 1913. Fear of Jewish influence in politics and in court circles was a continuous element of anti-semitic works around this time. See, for example, the introduction in Arnold White, The Modern Jew (London, 1899).
5. See Colin Holmes, 'Goldwin Smith (1823-1910): a "Liberal" anti-semite', Patterns of Prejudice, Vol.6, No.5 (Sept.-Oct.1972), pp.25-30.
6. See Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol.58, Col.2257. These arguments are simply those advanced in the 1880s and 90s against unlimited immigration and taken up by the British Brothers' League in the early years of the twentieth century.
7. The New Witness, 25 September 1913.
8. Carter had been censured by the Jewish Chronicle for some jokes at the expense of Jews which had appeared in the Bystander. The Chronicle produced the correspondence over the accusations of prejudice which it had levelled at Carter (see 19 September 1913 edition). It would seem to be this incident which prompted the Witness to seek a contribution from Carter for its series on the Jews, which led to his involvement with the League.
9. The New Witness, 4 December 1913.
10. See Chapter 8, 'Maxse and the National Review'. Work on a D.Phil. and book dealing with Maxse is currently being undertaken by Harold Snyder at Oxford University.
11. Koss, A.G. Gardiner, op.cit., p.113.
12. Ibid., p.114.
13. Speaight, The Life of Hilaire Belloc, op.cit., pp.278-284. In December 1910, the seat was gained for the Conservatives by Belloc's opponent in the January election, C.A. Montague-Barlow, turning a majority of 316 into a loss of 225 - practically all accounted for by the decline in the Liberal vote. See F.W.S. Craig, British Parliamentary Elections, 1885-1918 (London, 1974), p.179.

14. David Low, Autobiography (London, 1956), p.133.
15. The New Witness, 19 June 1913.
16. See chapters 4 and 5 for details of O'Donnell.
17. The New Witness, 3 July 1913.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 17 July 1913.
21. The advertisement first appeared on 31 July, and then every week until October.
22. The New Witness, 9 October 1913.
23. Sir James Barr, b.1849 d.1938. Created 1905. According to Who Was Who he was a member of the Conservative Club. His political sympathies are clear from a letter he wrote to Bonar Law following the news of the ministers' involvement in Marconi. He complained of not believing the rumours but was now aghast at the truth. His attacks on Lloyd George were particularly vehement, alleging that he had formed a limited liability company to avoid death duties and his general complaint was that politicians here were worse than in America. (Barr to Bonar Law, 20 March 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/2/30). Barr's profession was medicine; he was Consulting Physician at Liverpool Royal Infirmary and Vice-President of the B.M.A. His pronouncements against the Jews had been remarked upon by the Jewish Chronicle in 1912 and 1913, and the journal consistently categorised him with Belloc and Chesterton as leading anti-semites.
24. For the role played by Locker-Lampson, Tory M.P. for Huntingdon, in the Marconi Scandal, see Chapter 3.
25. Labour M.P. for Bradford West. Jowett was one of the five Labour M.P.s who abstained from the Commons vote in June 1913 - his attitude was 'that the two Ministers had been guilty of indefensible transactions, but that the charge of corruption had been disproved. Accordingly, he abstained from voting on the Tory motion which did not acknowledge this'. (Fenner Brockway, Socialism over Sixty Years: The Life of Jowett of Bradford (1864-1944) (London, 1946), p.91). Jowett fought and won the 1906 election without a Lib-Lab agreement, disliking intensely the Party system, which he felt was a game, and gradually moved away from the official Labour line in parliament, feeling that the party had compromised too much (ibid., pp.69, 73, 107). This makes his link with the Clean Government League more intelligible. Whether or not he supported the anti-semitic undertones is hard to tell. His bitterness at the Indemnity Bill to relieve Sir Stuart Samuel of the penalties incurred during the 'Indian Silver Scandal' (see Chapter 9) was recorded in the Bradford Pioneer of August 1913 (quoted in Brockway, p.79) but otherwise there are few, if any, clues about his attitude to Jews.
26. The New Witness, 9 October 1913.
27. This letter appears to have been sent to many local journals in an attempt to gain publicity and support. For example, it appeared in the Stalybridge Reporter of 1 November 1913.

28. Miners' leader and Lib-Lab M.P. for Morpeth from 1874 to 1918. He remained faithful to the Liberal Party all his life, deploring the emergence of the I.L.P. He refused to sign the constitution of the Labour Party (see Bellamy and Saville, op.cit., pp.59-63, for biographical details). There seems no particular reason why he should side with an organisation such as the League.
29. William Morton Eden, 5th baron. b.1859, d.1917. No recorded political activities or involvement with the League apart from this reference.
30. See Chapter 4 for White's journalistic outbursts against the Jews at this time and Chapters 9 and 10 for his place in the history of British anti-semitism.
31. The New Witness, 9 October 1913.
32. This attitude compares with a certain left-wing approach to the Insurance Act. It was claimed that it benefited certain Jewish interests; insurance companies obviously making profits from the new legislation. The Prudential Insurance Company was one specifically named. See, for example, the bold headlines of a Daily Herald article on 12 August 1912.
 'THE PRUDENTIAL PLOT'
 Sassoon = Rothschild Company - An Insurance Octopus'
 For further details, see Chapters 9 and 10.
33. The New Witness, 9 October 1913.
34. See Chapters 9 and 10.
35. Justice, 8 November 1913. O'Donnell was to address a meeting of the Hackney British Socialist Party, which prompted Robertson's protest. It may be that the Hackney branch delighted in having 'opposition' speakers! On 7 November, they were addressed by a Mr Temple of the Anti-Socialist Union on 'The Fallacies of Socialism'. On a more general note, Silberner's article, op.cit., and Garrard's book have suggested that not all socialists in this period were averse to a little anti-semitism.
36. The New Witness, 16 January 1913.
37. Ibid., 23 October 1913.
38. Ibid., 30 October 1913.
39. Gooch attributed his downfall to this factor. 'The unexpected emergence of a Labour Candidate at Reading destroyed any chances of my success. The strenuous contest lasted nearly a month and ended, as was expected, with a Conservative gain' (G.P. Gooch, Under Six Reigns (London, 1958), p.160). Note, however, that the Conservative candidate had a total majority over both Liberal and Socialist candidates. Brief details of Butler's political career, beginning as a local organiser of the Westminster branch of the SDF, can be found in Paul Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour: The Struggle for London, 1885-1914 (London, 1967), pp.196, 204, 207, 291.
40. Glasgow Herald, 10 November 1913. The result was Wilson 5144
 Gooch 4013
 Butler 1063

41. The Spectator described it as the major election issue, proclaiming that emissaries of the Irish Labour Party had been active against the Liberal candidate and that there were popular demonstrations in Dublin on the news of Gooch's defeat (15 November 1913). In the absence of further evidence, this source should be treated carefully.
42. Reading Mercury, 25 October 1913. There is some confusion on this point, since The Times of 23 October claimed that Gooch removed the threat of a fourth candidate by agreeing to support the anti-vaccinationists. This issue was of some importance in Reading; for instance, in 1898, the electorate had voted out of office the local Board of Guardians over the question of compulsory vaccination (see The Times, 23 October 1913).
43. Reading Mercury, 1 November 1913. The W.S.P.U. were active against the Liberal candidate (The Times, 28 October 1913).
44. Reading Mercury, 1 November 1913.
45. The Times, 28 October 1913.
46. For a discussion of the Jewish vote, see Chapters 9 and 10.
47. Reading Mercury, 1 November 1913.
48. Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, quoted in ibid.
49. Other references can be found in Justice, 25 October, 8 and 15 November 1913, mainly carrying details of Butler's campaign, and a letter from 'X.Q.P.' in The Outlook, describing 'the success of Mr C. Chesterton's meetings at Reading last week, and the interest they evoked'. (22 November 1913).
50. The New Witness, 6 November 1913.
51. Ibid., 13 November 1913.
52. Ibid.
53. This appears to have happened twice in the 1920s; firstly in 1922, when Bonar Law became Prime Minister and press attacks on him increased: 'The New Witness, the organ of Belloc and Chesterton, was most scathing of all. It said outright that Law stood for corruption and plutocracy: "he represented that colonial commercialism of the Beaverbrook school that does not differ in the least ... from the cosmopolitan commercialism of the Mond and Montagu school".'
- Tom Driberg, Beaverbrook (London, 1956), p.159.
- This upset Beaverbrook, who placed a ban on the mention of the names of Belloc and Chesterton by Daily Express reporters.
- The second incident, according to A.J.P. Taylor, took place in 1927. Rothermere received a letter from Beaverbrook in March, with quotes from The New Witness and its successor, G.K.'s Weekly, which were directed against Beaverbrook.
- 'All this stuff emanates from one source. I have given an order to the Express Newspapers that neither G.K. Chesterton nor Hilaire Belloc are to appear in the columns of those papers. They spend so much time in writing articles in abuse of me elsewhere, that I feel they

have not got time to do good work for the newspapers with which I am associated.

In the "Evening Standard" Diary there was a perfect passion for mentioning the names of Chesterton and Belloc. I have cut down the space allowed to advertising them. Now their names seldom appear. Besides, their journalism is so dull, and their statements are utterly unreliable'. Taylor, op.cit., p.229.

54. See Chapter 5.
55. The Times, 4 November 1913.
56. Daily Herald, 8 November 1913.
57. Gooch, op.cit., p.159.
58. It was not alone in its dislike of the agreement. The National Review went as far as to attribute the bulk of the thousand votes gained by the Socialist candidate to the disgust of electors at the 'reputed "compact" between the other Parties, not to mention Marconi'. (January 1914).
59. The New Witness, 6 November 1913.
60. National Review, December 1913. Maxse would have become actively involved but felt that the presence of a third candidate, Butler, would split the vote and blur the issue.
'I should very much like to have made a speech on Clean Government at Reading, but I would not run the risk of doing anything which might conceivably promote a candidature which in my opinion can only help the Government out of a hole'.
Maxse to F.L. Kehrhaun (the League's organiser), 3 November 1913, Maxse Papers, p.445.
61. See letter in Justice, 15 November 1913. Kennedy had stood as an SDF candidate in Aberdeen North in 1906 and January 1910. He was finally elected in 1921 for Kirkcaldy Burghs, with Labour Party endorsement, and re-elected in 1924. When Socialist party funds ran short, he was sponsored and elected by the local Labour Party in 1929. (Craig, op.cit., pp.104-5).
62. Justice, 8 November 1913.
63. The Times, 8 November 1913.
64. Westminster Gazette, 2 August 1913.
65. The New Witness, 13 November 1913.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. See Benewick, op.cit., pp.155-6, W.F. Mandle, Anti-Semitism and the British Union of Fascists (London, 1968), pp.2-3, 9.
69. The New Witness, 13 November 1913.

70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Cited in ibid., 20 November 1913.
74. Ibid., 27 November 1913. Kehrham had been chief organiser of the League's Reading campaign, which shows a certain continuity. He seems a strange bedfellow for many of the League's members, having been Trading Secretary of the British Socialist Party earlier in the year. He organised the supply of cut-price tea, tobacco, coffee and cocoa - 'Strike Capitalism with a bit of its own machinery' (Justice, 15 February 1913). The Daily Herald described him as manager of the Advance Trading Stores, carrying an advertisement for the shop and the slogan 'Funds for Socialism' (26 April 1913). He was also a public speaker, taking part in a Central Branch debate with Lawrence Arthur on the theme 'Which would benefit the working classes most: Tariff Reform or Socialism?' (Justice, 15 February 1913). Just how he came to be associated with the League is not clear.
75. Carluk and Lanark Gazette, 29 November 1913.
76. National Review, January 1914.
77. Glasgow Herald, 28 November 1913, also reported in Carluk and Lanark Gazette, 29 November 1913.
78. According to The Times' correspondent, these groups were insignificant compared with the Reading electioneers - 'very few outside organisations have appeared to distract the attention of the voters'. (6 December 1913).
79. See Carluk and Lanark Gazette, 8 November 1913, Glasgow Herald, 20 November 1913.
80. Carluk and Lanark Gazette, 6 December 1913. The activities of the Young Scots, a 'ginger group' of the Liberal Party formed about 1900, provide an interesting sidelight to the party's problems in this period. A standard work, H.J. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism (London, 1969), suggests that, by 1910, the Young Scots had lost much of their impetus (p.95) and that 21 Scottish Liberal MPs, alarmed that Scottish Home Rule would become a non-issue after Ireland had received its freedom, formed a Scottish National Committee to maintain the pressure. The chairman was Munro-Ferguson, one of three Liberals to vote against the party line in the Marconi debate (see Chapter 3). Two political propaganda organisations helped to bring about a great deal of support in the period up to the war - a publicity association founded in May 1913 (International Scots Home Rule Association) and a journal, the Scottish Nation, launched in November 1913 (Hanham, p.96).

The Lanark by-election came at a convenient moment for this new organisation. The report here suggests firstly that it brought about a resurgence in nationalism and, in particular, the Young Scots movement, and secondly another very good reason for disposing of Munro-Ferguson (see Chapter 3).

81. The voting was Hon. W. Watson (U) 4257
 G. Morton (Lib) 4006
 T. Gibb (Lab) 1677
 N.B. In December 1910, the result was Sir W. Menzies (Lib) 5160
 Dr C.M. Douglas (U) 3963

82. The New Witness, 18 December 1913.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. See The Times, 5 December 1913.

86. Sir Henry Seton-Karr was an old protagonist of the Chesterton/Belloc group, a similar debate having taken place between him and G.K. Chesterton under the auspices of the Independent Political Association, a forerunner of the League (Morning Post, 24 January 1912).

Seton-Karr was the Conservative MP for St Helens from 1885 to 1906, and a candidate for Berwickshire in 1910. He had some connection with the Marconi Scandal, being the author of a letter to The Times on 31 May 1913, asking for the Select Committee to cease the investigation into ministerial speculation and to concentrate on the issue of an 'All-Red Wireless Route'. He had previously written to Bonar Law on the topic (29 May 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 29/4/27) decrying 'unscrupulous outside people who are trying to grab the Marconi deal for their own selfish and unpatriotic ends'.

However, Seton-Karr was not himself neutral. Both he and his wife, Jane, appear in the records of the English company as shareholders and, according to the 1923 pamphlet campaign against the company (see Chapter 1) Lady Jane was one of the friends and relatives who received American Marconi shares from Godfrey Isaacs in his bid to guarantee the successful launching of the new venture. In this case, Lady Jane received 2000 shares. Thus, Seton-Karr's views must be seen in the context of his connections with the Marconi Company.

87. The New Witness, 22 January 1914.

88. For details, see Lucy Masterman, C.F. Masterman (London, 1939).

89. See, for example, The Party System, op.cit. Making the point that representation of the people's will by an MP was a fallacy, they used the specific example of Masterman and his Bethnal Green constituents as an illustration (p.16).

Similarly, when they criticised the governmental system which created placemen, willing to play the game in the hope of gaining office, Masterman was the illustration of this process (pp.44-6).

Note, however, that it was not only Belloc and Chesterton who felt Masterman betrayed his principles by accepting gifts. The Labour Leader, 17 April 1908, described his appointment to a junior government position as a cause for sorrow, not joy, since it meant Masterman was 'not likely to vote against the Government any longer' (quoted in A.J.A. Morris, 'Introduction', in A.J.A. Morris (ed.), Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914: Some aspects of British Radicalism (London, 1974), p.8.

90. Masterman, op.cit., p.197.

91. Ibid., p.263.

92. The New Witness, 26 February 1914. The voting was Sir M. Wilson (U) 2828
Masterman (Lib) 2804
J.Scurr (Ind.Lab.) 316
93. The New Witness, 26 February 1914. Note that Masterman was not the most popular of members with his constituents. At the 1911 election, some of the local radicals objected to his candidacy and formed a Labour Association. Scurr also stood at this election, polling 134 votes (see Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour, op.cit., pp. 199-200 - some biographical details of Scurr, who became a Labour M.P. in 1923, can be found on p. 27).
94. The New Witness, 19 February 1914.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., 21 May 1914.
97. The voting was Ganzoni (U) 6406
Masterman (Lib.) 5874
Scurr (Ind. Lab.) 395
98. Cowley's inclination towards anti-semitism was revealed in a letter written to the New Age on the subject of intellectual 'fluidity' in ideals and values.
'The origins of this disgusting phenomenon is hard to ascertain, but it has been found from time immemorial in the repulsive race of Jews, and has been the source alike of their facile half-successes and their ultimate impotence'. (13 November 1913).
99. The New Witness, 28 May 1914.
100. Letter to Arthur Ponsonby, 30 May 1914. Ponsonby Papers, quoted in Edward David, 'The New Liberalism of C.F.G. Masterman, 1873-1927' in Brown (ed.), op.cit., p. 32.
101. Masterman, op.cit., p.264. The Kensit referred to here was the son of John Kensit (1853-1902), the Protestant agitator and founder of the Protestant Truth Society. The main purpose of this movement was to challenge what was seen as the Anglican Church's slide towards Catholicism. Masterman was a staunch evangelist and had strong attachments to this aspect of the Anglican Church. Kensit and his son, who carried on the propaganda after his death, saw this attitude of Masterman's as their main target. Both men stood as parliamentary candidates (for details, see Craig, op.cit.).
102. David, 'The New Liberalism ...', op.cit., p. 32.
103. The New Witness, 28 May 1914.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. The disadvantages of historical hindsight are obvious here. One should not attribute the post-war attitude of the Morning Post towards Jews,

particularly the publicity it gave to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to this period. Although the pre-war journal was right-wing and vaguely hostile to immigration, it had as yet shown little signs of proposing an elaborate conspiracy theory. For a fuller discussion, see Chapter 4.

108. This could be a reference to the 4th baronet, Lt. Col. Sir Robert Smythe Muir MacKenzie, b.1841 d.1918 or to the 5th baronet, Sir Robert Cecil Muir MacKenzie, b.1891 d.1918 (Who Was Who, 1916-1928 [London, 1929]). The family had a reputation as a military one, but, as far as can be established, no political involvement.
109. The New Witness, 16 July 1914.
110. G.C. Heseltine, 'G.K. Chesterton - Journalist', in Sullivan (ed.), op.cit., p.135. This was the period when the sale of titles and other honours reached its peak. For a lively description of this process, see Cullen, op.cit.
111. See Heseltine, 'G.K. Chesterton ...', op.cit., p. 136.
112. For a brief outline of the paper's history, see A.E. Day, 'The Story of G.K.'s Weekly', Library Review, Vol.24, no.5 (Spring 1974), pp. 209-12.
113. The policy of Distributivism is described by Chesterton in a series of articles from the journal, collected together under the title, The Outline of Society (1926). For a discussion and explanation of Distributivism, see Patrick Cahill, 'Chesterton and the Future of Democracy', in Sullivan (ed.), op.cit.
114. Day, Library Review, p. 211. Again the continuity of personnel is clear, since Titterton was a regular contributor to the pages of The Eye-Witness and its successors.
115. For a first-hand account of the Distributist League and its activities, see Brocard Sewell, 'Devereux Nights: A Distributist Memoir', in Sullivan (ed.), op.cit.
116. See Christopher Hollis, The Mind of Chesterton (London, 1970), p. 117.
117. Hynes, op.cit., p. 2.
118. Belloc and Chesterton, op.cit., p. 150.
119. J.W. Robertson Scott, The Life and Death of a Newspaper: an account of the temperaments, perturbations and achievements of John Morley and other editors of the Pall Mall Gazette (London, 1952), p. 325.
120. This 'Golden Age' view is by no means limited to British anti-semites. One of the classic works of French anti-semitism, La France Juive (1886) by Édouard Drumont, 'painted an idyllic picture of the old France, a France that had been destroyed and conquered by the Jews'. (F.L. Carsten, The Rise of Fascism (London, 1967), p. 220). Norman Cohn, op.cit., p. 56 notes that the revival of French anti-semitism in the 1880s and 90s was 'the protest of traditional, rural society against the forces of modernity'.

121. Ian Boyd, 'Philosophy in Fiction', in Sullivan (ed.), op.cit., p. 55. One might contrast this with a 1925 report in G.K.'s Weekly of a meeting with Israel Zangwill, which shows how the Conception of Zionism still fitted into Chesterton's desire to see Jews segregated from Christian society.
 'Mr Zangwill's ideal at least is clear and rational enough; it is a self-contained Jewish nation, with Jews selling to Jews and buying from Jews, or employing Jews and working for Jews according to whatever social structure a community of Jews may desire for themselves and for nobody else'.
 (Quoted in Leftwich, op.cit., p. 79).
122. For details of The Britons, see C.C. Aronsfeld, 'The Britons Publishing Society', Wiener Library Bulletin, Vol.20 (1966), pp. 31-5, Benewick, op.cit., p. 43.
123. Quoted in Benewick, op.cit., p. 29.
124. Ibid., p. 30.
125. Ibid., p. 37.
126. Skidelsky, op.cit., p. 380.
127. Carsten, op.cit., p. 220.
128. John Beckett, 'Foreword', in William Joyce, National Socialism Now (London, 1937), p. 8.
129. Joyce, op.cit., p. 68.
130. See Mitchell, Journal of the History of Ideas, op.cit., p.401.
131. See, for example, Garrard, op.cit., pp. 55-6.
132. See Colin Holmes, 'Champion of "English race feeling": Joseph Banister's antisemitism', Patterns of Prejudice, Vol.4, July-August 1970, pp. 29-31.
133. Quoted in Mitchell, Journal of the History of Ideas, op.cit., p. 404.
134. See Chapters 9 and 10 for more detailed discussion.

CHAPTER 8

MAXSE AND THE NATIONAL REVIEW

Before turning to a more general consideration of the nature and implications of British anti-semitism before the First World War, it is appropriate to consider one other journal in depth. Perhaps the only serious rival to the Witness in terms of coverage of the Marconi Scandal was the National Review. There were certain points of similarity between the two journals : both were outside what was generally held to be the mainstream of the British press, both opposed the Liberal government and both had similar views on many topics.

The Review was the sounding board for its editor, Leo Maxse¹, who had been given the journal by his father in 1893, after illness had destroyed his original plans of being called to the Bar and of entering politics. Maxse was 'a diehard Tory closely connected with political circles at home and abroad'², but, by the time of the Scandal, he was dissatisfied with what he felt was the passive nature of the parliamentary party in opposition. He also criticised the Unionist Press for not providing sufficient encouragement to the Party and blamed the 'radicalism' of the newspapers and journals for the general deviation from 'real' Conservatism.³

This situation has clear parallels with that of the Witness, most of whose staff had been Liberals but had deserted the Liberal Party for much the same reasons as Maxse despaired of the Conservatives. Maxse also opposed the 'Party System', because collusion prevented true Conservative ideology being put into practice, and he disliked intensely the Party Press, which he felt was controlled by Jews, monopoly capitalists and 'wire-pullers'. The essence of many of his leading pieces in the Review was Germanophobia; he was obsessed with the idea that Germanic influences were at work in every facet of British life.⁴ This was virtually a life-time obsession; as early

as 1899, he had turned down an offer of the editorship of a great colonial newspaper, saying ' "I must stay in England to warn people of the German danger." '5. By the end of 1911, he saw and explained the moral decay of Britain as the result of its domination by 'Jews, Quakers, sentimentalists and cranks.'6

The quotation illustrates another of Maxse's obsessions, that Jews were an essential ingredient of this alien influence. The Jew was more often than not working for Germany and for the submission of Britain to Teutonic power.

'If the hateful truth may be told, there is a large and powerful international syndicate, with ramifications in every capital, including London and Paris, working chiefly through corrupt or cosmopolitan papers, inspired or controlled by that hateful figure the International Jew* - if we may use a word which shocks our esteemed contemporary, the Spectator. These internationalists, alias pro-Germans, demand that, in "the interests of peace", Europe shall pass unresistingly under the German yoke.

*We shall always be careful to distinguish between the National Jew, who is a patriot, and the International Jew, who is a cosmopolitan and usually an enemy of England and a more or less avowed agent of Germany.'7

This distinction between the two classes of Jews was made throughout the period under consideration, but whether it was applied with any logic or consistency is doubtful. Until a certain Jew aroused the dislike of the editor, he was a patriot. However, Maxse did accept that there were many Jews who, even after the outbreak of war, were loyal to Britain.⁸ Very few references to Jews working for Germany were specific and it is difficult to establish the consistency of the application of 'good' and 'bad' labels.⁹

According to Maxse, the main spheres of this Jewish influence were the journalistic and financial circles. He referred to the 'pro-German' papers as the 'Potsdam Press',

'... which knowingly, or unknowingly, is wirepulled in the interests of Germany and against the interests of this country largely through the instrumentality of cosmopolitan Jews who repay the excessive hospitality they enjoy here by, to use a well-known phrase, "working for The King of Prussia" ...'10

This alleged Jewish domination and manipulation of the British press was constantly emphasised in phrases like 'heavy Hebrew control of several "British" newspapers,'¹¹ 'Hebrew press,'¹² and 'Hebrew journalists at the beck and call of German diplomats.'¹³

Here we can again see parallels with the Witness, which referred to the control of the press by a few individuals, although not always Jews. It should be noted that this cry of 'Jews control the media' appears to be a consistent theme of anti-semitic individuals and groups from the late nineteenth century onwards. Arnold White referred to the press as 'the product of Jewish brains and capital to an extent quite out of proportion to their numerical importance.'¹⁴ whilst, in September 1975, John Tyndall of the National Front wrote of the 'alien and cosmopolitan clique who control most of the media or propaganda in this country.'¹⁵ Because of its importance, this topic will be considered in detail in the following chapters.

Maxse also regarded high finance as part of this German-Jew conspiracy. In the April 1912 edition of the Review, he wrote scathingly of 'cosmopolitan financiers domiciled in London in order to do "good work" for the Fatherland' and an article by 'Ignotus' entitled 'The Triple Entente and its Enemies', identified, amongst others, the enemies as cosmopolitan Jews and international financiers. Indeed, the wealthy Jew was seen as more dangerous than the poor one.

'Much has been said, much has been written, about the pauper alien, and in many places he is a curse and a pest, but he is nothing like so dangerous to national well-being or to our national security as plutocratic aliens who divide their energies between maintaining a fiscal system which sweats the Englishman for the benefit of the foreigner and intriguing on behalf of the beloved Fatherland, though curiously enough several of them have not even the excuse that they are of German origin.'¹⁶

The point is reinforced in other issues. A somewhat misleading headline, 'Disloyal Jews', prefaced an attack once more on those Jews seen as enemies of the state.

'A certain number of disloyal Jews who infest both parties are equally active in playing Germany's game by intriguing against the Triple Entente. We say this without a particle of Anti-Semitic prejudice, because the loyal Jews, who have unreservedly and without arrière pensée thrown in their lot with this country, constitute a valuable element in the community. But Great Britain would be infinitely richer in everything that is worth having if those other Jews, who are really little better than German spies, returned with their money-bags to the various countries they came from.¹⁷

Thus, the term 'German Jew' was not used essentially as a term of origin; rather it was an expression of their ultimate loyalty (or so Maxse believed). This was made abundantly clear after war had broken out in 1914, when Maxse was demanding much stricter control over the extent of Jewish influence in Britain.

' "Never again" must the International Jew, guided and governed by racial prediction and by financial interests of which we are ignorant, become a factor in British policy. He must either end his intrigues or change his domicile. If he can't learn wisdom there will arise an irresistible demand that all German Jews shall return to the various countries they came from.'¹⁸

This Jewish interest in finance filtered through into British politics. When Sir Ernest Cassel, the Jewish financier, accompanied Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, on a trip to Germany, Maxse was indignant. Speaking for the 'man in the street', he declared that 'Englishmen prefer that their Government should keep clear of the Cosmopolitans of la haute finance'.¹⁹ Unfortunately, as far as Maxse was concerned, the ordinary man's preference had become completely neglected. 'All decent, self-respecting men are thoroughly nauseated by the repulsive hypocrisies of a professedly democratic coalition which is largely financed by multi-millionaires of alien extraction',²⁰ he wrote, and went on to complain about the links between politicians and the Hebrew press, and the sale of honours, and corruption. The charges were extremely insulting, and very vague. But there was no doubt about Maxse's conviction concerning the source of Britain's sorry condition.

'The deterioration of the standards of public life is the topic of the hour, and we can only hope that a relief from the present purgatory may be at hand, in spite of the Hebrew clutch upon

the Radical Party, and the spread of Hebrew power and Hebrew ideals in Parliament, in the Press, finance and society.'²¹

Despite his declaration that there were many patriotic Jews, Maxse saw very little good in the Jew as such. 'The victory of Germany is for some mysterious reason a desideratum of almost the entire Jewish race.'²² Since every aspect of British life had been affected by Jewish influence, there was a grave threat to the survival of the British people. But the Review also saw this alien menace at work in other countries. J.O.P. Bland, in an article called 'New York Revisited', referred to the growth of Jewish power in America. '... the growing numbers and racial solidarity of the Jews seem to create a vague uneasiness, foreshadowing the growth of an old problem on new soil.'²³ Mrs Donald Shaw, describing the Canadian 'problem' was more specific.

'Now the Jew would provide no menace to Canada if Canada understood him or knew how to handle him, but she no more knows how to manage him than she knows how to manage the Oriental, the Doukhobor, or the Mormon ... He finds himself, on his entry into Canada, only one degree less hated and despised than he is in the countries from which he has escaped ... Is it to be wondered at if his ideals remain low, if his natural acquisitiveness takes a form repellent to the civilised sections of the community, if he sees little to admire in the ideals or the morals of a so-called Christian country?'²⁴

The tone of this article suggests an inevitability about the clash of culture, and expressed no surprise at the antagonism displayed towards the Jew. His alien nature was emphasised and, as with the general coverage of the Jewish question in the Review, seems to be the crux of the problem of Jewish-Gentile relations. But the problem, having been identified, had to be explained in cautious terms. As noted in the chapter on the Witness, expressions of open hostility were still largely unacceptable in Edwardian society, at least in public. The dominant cultural patterns of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain discouraged such utterances.²⁵

Maxse was anxious to defend himself against charges of anti-semitism and frequently declared himself free of prejudice. Thus, in September 1914, after

asserting that most Jews seemed to side with Germany in the war, he went on to praise the many loyal Jews in England. This was emphasised the following month.

'The Jews form a valuable and stable element in the community. We are richer by their presence. They set a fine example of industry, pertinacity and capacity in many areas of activity, while their domestic virtues are altogether admirable. There is no racial or religious prejudice against Jews in England and I should regret if anything appearing in this Review should cause pain to a single Jew qua Jew.'²⁶

As with the writers in the Witness, Maxse's definition of anti-semitism was active hostility to all Jews. As long as one made exceptions and said nice things about certain Jews, one could not be anti-semitic, whatever language was used against 'bad' Jews. For example -

'As people bluntly put it in private conversation, "Considering how badly the Germans treat the Jews, and how generously we treat them, why should they almost always be working for Germany and against us." We have no quarrel with Jews and greatly admire many of them, whom we recognise as patriots with the best Englishmen. Lord Rothschild, if not all his relations, is of this type, as the late Alfred Beit certainly was. But there are others who shall be nameless for the moment, though they could easily be named, who have constituted themselves a sort of advance guard of the Prussian Junker, and devote their energies, their talents, and their fortunes to furthering German aims at British expense.'²⁷

In an attack on Sir Edward Speyer, a wealthy Jewish financier, Maxse tried to make it clear that there was no element of anti-semitism behind the criticism. 'As we have said, we have no prejudice against Jews qua Jew, but we are not prepared to stand by and see this country eaten up by Jews of German proclivities.'²⁸ When he did encounter accusations of being anti-semitic, his reply was that he was simply pro-British, and therefore anti-German. This was sufficient to explain his attitude, since according to his own theory of the German-Jewish conspiracy, to be anti-German was to be anti-Jewish, albeit in a secular, unprejudiced manner.

'It is their politics and not their religion or their race that we resent. Unlike many other extraneous elements in British civilisation they have not unreservedly thrown in their lot with us. If they have not remained Jews in religion, they have

certainly. for national and international purposes, remained German at heart.'³⁰

It was a simple but essentially irrational defence. In the general atmosphere of spy scares and xenophobia of an approaching war, it may have appeared reasonable to many. However, Maxse was propounding his theory long before August 1914, as has been shown. He may have had some justification for suggesting that certain Jews had some sympathy with Germany. There may well have been financiers whose business made them uneasy about a disruption of relations between Britain and Germany, and whose pacifist ideas arose as a result of economic motivation rather than moral conviction. The case of Sir Edgar Speyer, already referred to, is one which may be considered as being in this category. Speyer Brothers were bankers in London, Frankfurt and New York, and the firm did seem rather more German-oriented during the war.³¹ There are, no doubt, other examples of pro-German international companies, whose operations extended to Britain, and who had certain financial influence in the City. But was Maxse justified in alleging that all German sympathy came from Jews, and that there was a conspiracy, intentional or otherwise, to destroy British confidence and security? His obsession with the topic, and his continual emphasis on its Jewish aspects, suggests that he was stepping beyond the bounds of rational expression.

There were critics of Maxse's phraseology. H. Pereira Mendes, Minister of the Spanish and Portugese Congregation in New York, complained about comments in the January 1912 edition of the Review, which he felt contained 'remarks which are likely to create ill-feeling and promote prejudice where there is cause for neither.'³² He added 'why this animus against the Jews? Why impugn their patriotism, their loyalty, so unjustly?' The letter then set out rational arguments and information, in an attempt to correct the image created by Maxse, and concluded with a plea for 'justice, equality, liberty and toleration.' The Jewish Chronicle was also critical of the same edition, referring to the

writing as 'spiteful and foolish abuse'.³³

Mendes had some justification for accusing Maxse of promoting prejudice. Many of the letters received by the editor were in support of his ideology and may have come from correspondents encouraged by the publicity of these views in the journal. Maxse often justified his expressions of prejudice by putting them into the mouths of the general public, as if he were simply reflecting their opinions. 'Even good-natured easygoing Englishmen immemorially accustomed to be trampled on by the least desirable aliens, are growing restive under the odious Hebrew domination which has operated exclusively in the interests of Germany and to the detriment of Great Britain.'³⁴ Maxse was something of a populist, 'believing in the excellence of ordinary men's judgement',³⁵ and that his was an accurate assessment of how they felt, hence his claim to speak for 'the man in the street.'³⁶ In terms of influence, the correspondence which he received belies Donaldson's view that 'he was not taken very seriously by his contemporaries.'³⁷, although the Liberal Nation described the Review as being representative of the 'tea-table splutter of the golf-house and the club-room.'³⁸ The circulation figures, at the height of the Marconi publicity, approached 20,000,³⁹ a very reasonable distribution for a 2/6d (12½p) journal, comparable to those of the Spectator.⁴⁰

Given his views of the British working man, Maxse may well have felt that since a large proportion of letters received contained anti-Jewish sentiments, a high percentage of the British people supported his attitude on the topic, an illogical assumption. Many of the letters echoed the idea of a Jewish conspiracy. Theodore Rich, writing on the subject of the Swaythling Will,⁴¹ which provoked some controversy about Jewish 'clannishness', began with the usual disclaimer of prejudice, and then went on to abuse Jewish financiers, describing them as 'the financial pillars of the Radical party.'⁴² Another example of this attitude came from J.L. Garvin, editor of the Observer and the Pall Mall Gazette.⁴³ He wrote to Maxse, agreeing with his opinions on Jewish influence in the Liberal Party -

'... with you, I think it is of the utmost importance to say how vast is the wealth in the hands of the cosmopolitan millionaires of the Coalition,'⁴⁴

Maxse also received anonymous letters expressing hostility towards Jews and using the stereotyped language of anti-semitism.

'Bravo, Mr Leo Maxse - I raise my hat to you as a Man in the Street, one who approves of a man who does what he considers to be his duty, justly and fearlessly - poor Lawson I'm afraid he was "got at" - "doped" - with liquid gold from some source. I and many other moderate Liberals in my Club think its time the viel (sic) that at present hides the financial (secret and otherwise) transactions of the Welshman George and the two Jews Samuel and Isaacs during the past 18 months should be torn on one side and the character of the political trio of Cabinet money grubbers exposed to the light of day and public opinion.

What a revelation would come forth could the Bank Books, Cheque and Pass Books connected with all their Banking ^a/cs of the three Shylocks mentioned ... '⁴⁵

This letter from Tooting Liberal Club is a useful illustration of the kind of atmosphere engendered by the Marconi Scandal. There was political opposition to the particular Ministers involved and there was anti-semitic feeling, both in the underlining of the word 'Jews' and in the use of the term 'Shylocks'. Added to this, we have a fairly dogmatic personality - his refusal to accept that Lawson had little evidence for his journalistic accusations and the alternative explanation of bribery, rather than recognition of the truth. 'A Man in the Street' seemed to recognise a kindred spirit in Maxse and it would be hard to deny that they held certain shared assumptions in political and racial beliefs.

On the subject of the Marconi Scandal, the National Review played the part of a campaigning journal. There was an obvious concern about the technical aspects of the contract and the terms agreed by both parties were heavily criticised. The recognition of the danger in allowing such a contract to pass unnoticed seems to have originated in the publicity aroused by Lawson's articles in the Outlook. Maxse was anxious that this publicity be extended and, besides employing Lawson, gave space to other critics. A short article on the technical aspects of the contract by Major Martin Archer-Shee M.P., the chief critic in

the House of Commons, appeared in September 1912.⁴⁶ Archer-Shee kept in contact with Maxse, writing after the October debate to repeat his criticisms about royalties (which he felt were too high) and the monopoly given by the terms of the agreement.⁴⁷ Other critics also aired their views in the pages of the Review. Leo Amery, another Conservative M.P., prominent in the attacks on the contract, offered his services after the Select Committee hearings, when the Scandal had lost much of its impact. 'I don't know if you want to keep pegging away at Marconi but possibly you might find the enclosed speech worth publishing. I have at any rate spoken my mind pretty plainly about L.G.'⁴⁸ Maxse clearly was interested in prolonging the campaign, because Amery wrote again a few days later, offering a title for his piece,⁴⁹ and in August 1913, the article, with Amery's suggested headline, 'Saint Sebastian of Limehouse', appeared in the Review.⁵⁰

Another important aspect of the campaigning nature of the coverage was Maxse's refusal to reveal his sources to the Select Committee. When asked if he would produce the names as evidence for his accusations of corruption, he used the journalistic principle that an editor does not risk his credibility by such an action. Whether he had any names to give is not certain. However, he was supported in his stand by other journalists and editors. H.W. Wilson, editor of the Daily Mail, congratulated him on the fight, using language like 'It is good to see an Englishman who does not fear ...'; and he promised to have a special article on the subject in the Mail.⁵¹ Walter Guinness, Tory M.P. and owner of The Outlook, wrote with all sorts of helpful advice on Maxse's possible fate and on the best course of action.⁵² Others simply praised his courage. 'It is now a question of whether a newspaper may be browbeat into subjection by a prejudiced body of politicians whose judicial abilities would be unequal to an inquest on a drowned cat.'⁵³ 'I wish all our people had only half your spirit and courage. We'd have the rascals out in no time.'⁵⁴

Maxse's refusal to reveal his sources led indirectly to many of the revela-

tions about the Marconi affair. It was a garbled version of his evidence before the Select Committee which appeared in Le Matin, and led to the libel suit brought by Rufus Isaacs and Herbert Samuel against that journal. This case produced the statement from Rufus Isaacs about his purchase of American Marconi shares. Maxse's part in producing this evidence brought him praise from other crusading journalists. H.A. Gwynne, editor of the strongly Tory Morning Post, had no doubt as to Maxse's importance in this matter.

'... if it had not been for you I do not believe the thing would have come out at all, or if it had, it would have come out in a quite different way. In my opinion we have got them fairly by the back hair and it seems to me that it is left to you and me and the "Express" among this great Press of England, to fight the fight for purity and decency in political life.'⁵⁵

Being in such a prominent position in the crusade against Marconis, Maxse received many offers of advice and suggestions as to how to proceed with his campaign. 'A Man in the Street' from Tooting was only one example. Others, like Robert Campbell Scarlett, whose address was given as the Conservative Club, London, offered information. Scarlett had a list of the chief Marconi shareholders, and described the main dealings as taking place in Ireland, France and Italy.⁵⁶ Often, as in this case, the information was already well known (see the list of shareholders which appeared in the Financial News, 14 October 1912, produced by Lawson as evidence to the Select Committee). In other cases, the informer served a useful function. The following example was meant to show that Rufus Isaacs had in fact obtained his shares at an advantage, compared to the ordinary investor. It served its purpose adequately.

'As one of the public, I gave an order several days before the 17th, to one of the largest and most influential stockbrokers in the City, to secure me 100 American Marconis at lowest - and, I was only enabled on the 19 April to secure an attachment of 40 shares, out of the 100 asked for - and which I had to pay £3½ - There are, of course, many like myself, who only got a few shares allotted, and had to buy at a big premium, whereas, Sir Rufus Isaacs, Mr George and Co. were selling at a huge profit, and dividing "the sway" amongst themselves - without having had to put their hands in their pocket for a penny.'⁵⁷

As mentioned before, attention was first focused in the Review on the

technical aspects of the Marconi Contract. No doubt Maxse was aware of the rumours of corrupt practice that were abroad, and also was anxious that some investigation should be carried out. Since other journals seemed reluctant to publicise, or were unaware of, the significance of such a favourable contract for the Marconi Company, Maxse felt additional responsibilities. He employed Lawson to write on the subject for the National Review. At first, Maxse's criticism had been rather vague, based on the premise that the Marconi Company were being given preferential treatment, both in being offered the contract and in the negotiated terms. This was attributed to lack of business knowledge on the part of the Government, rather than to any deliberate conspiracy to defraud the national exchequer. However, some of Lawson's early articles in The Outlook were quoted, and these mentioned 'two financiers of the same nationality pitted against each other, with a third in the background acting perhaps as mutual friend.'⁵⁸ Here, the Jews are clearly identified as belonging to a nation, obviously not British, or else there would be no point in using such a term. Since there was no criticism of the use of this term, it must be assumed that, in this context, it was fairly common.

Lawson's dislike of the Marconi Company seemed to stem from four main points. First, it had a start on other competitors in the field of wireless telegraphy, 'and it used that advantage with systematic selfishness'. Second, its operations were too secretive, and not even the Post Office knew exactly what progress was being made in its pioneer work. Third, the Company used its close and confidential relations with certain Government departments, the Post Office in particular, to its own advantage. Finally, the bulk of the shares were held by foreign or Irish holders. 'Numerically the Irish shareholders are predominant, but in financial power they must yield to the international section. What better breeding-ground than that could there be for share gambling, financial manoeuvring, political intrigue, and ugly rumours?'⁵⁹

This last point is interesting, because attempts were often made at later

dates in the Scandal to discredit the Marconi Company because of its 'foreign' nature. Whilst there is little doubt that the company had its headquarters in England, it did have several overseas concerns, and was indeed an international organisation. This was the natural result of being involved in communication systems throughout the world. But Maxse, along with others, was wary of internationalism, or cosmopolitanism, in wireless companies as in Jews, and called the Marconi Company a 'cosmopolitan Wireless Trust, comparatively useless in peace and potentially dangerous in war'.⁶⁰ For the same reasons, he was unhappy about the financial backing of this company.

'... what is the Marconi Company but a foreign company, and its largest shareholders, if the extraordinary transactions that have taken place abroad are bona fide and not the disguise which British politicians have adopted for purposes of speculation, are foreigners and somewhat undesirable foreigners.'⁶¹

The fact that these shareholders were foreign was enough to make them undesirable, particularly if the company was involved in an Empire Wireless chain. Maxse can have had no real insight into their moral qualities, but simply labelled them as undesirable because he had some kind of instinct. It was this instinctive reaction which produced the xenophobia which was so tied in to his dislike of the Jews. Foreign equals bad, and foreign is anything which did not conform to Maxse's standard of 'Britishness'.

Lawson also played on the personal angle in much of his early coverage. He was convinced of the ministerial involvement that had been rumoured to be an integral part of the Marconi share boom. Lawson felt it was a 'sordid story' similar to that of the South Sea Bubble.⁶² 'Ministers implicated in the South Sea Bubble were impeached and severely punished. What is to happen to Ministers who directly or indirectly may have been responsible for the Marconi Scandal?'⁶³ He rejected the general acceptance of the Ministerial denials of shareholding in that Company which were made in the Commons on 11 October 1912. 'The value of a denial is in the first place purely personal, and in the second place it must depend on the directness and completeness with

which it is made.'⁶⁴ He clearly believed that Ministers had invested in English Marconi shares, in spite of their protestations of innocence. It was, on the other hand, virtually impossible for him to prove his accusation. 'Sufficient has been said to show that a public man who wished to join in a Marconi or any similar gamble would be a very clumsy speculator if he bought or sold shares in his own name. The internal machinery of the Stock Exchange has been developed far beyond that prehistoric stage.'⁶⁵

The personal attacks extended into his belief that there was some kind of conspiracy between the Post Office and the Marconi Company. The family ties between Godfrey Isaacs and Rufus Isaacs were continually emphasised, as was the link with the Post Office, the Jewishness of the Postmaster General and the Company's Managing Director. To an anti-semite, who held definite views about the secrecy and clannishness of the Jews, the conspiracy was apparent. For Lawson, it was this Jewish relationship which gave him an objective to attack. Despite his legitimate complaints about terms of the contract and the awarding of such a monopoly, the most important factor in the Scandal, as far as Lawson was concerned, was the fact that Samuel, Godfrey and Rufus Isaacs were Jews.

Maxse supported Lawson, even when the more wild claims that he made were destroyed by the Select Committee. On behalf of the Review, Maxse wrote 'We have never pretended to be pioneers in this business but followed the Outlook and Mr W.R. Lawson, who has made the subject his own.'⁶⁶ He referred to 'the admirable and well-informed pen of Mr Lawson'⁶⁷ and continued the defence long after Lawson had been discredited. Referring to the abuse that the journalist had been forced to endure in the Select Committee's cross-examination, Maxse excused Lawson's rather inept attempts at justifying his writing. 'Many men admirable with their pens do not shine in the war of words at which parliamentarians are adept, just as many men who are clever with their tongues are impotent with their pens.'⁶⁸

There was a certain ambiguity about Maxse's support for Lawson. At one point, he declared that the man should be judged solely on what he wrote in The Outlook and the Review. Lawson's 'sound instinct which prompted him to probe the Marconi mystery' and the 'remarkable flaire' with which he tackled the question would then be apparent.⁶⁹ Yet Maxse was clearly aware of the dangers of relying on such unsubstantiated statements as those produced by Lawson. He was warned about the problem by Austen Chamberlain.

'Lawson's evidence was very bad. I am told that the cross-examination was not very skillful (sic), but it was sufficient to entirely break him down.

If I may make a suggestion to you it is that in so far as relates to the personal position of Ministers it never can do any good to hint suspicions without definite proof or at least without clearly establishing facts which at any rate make a prima facie case for inquiry. I hope, therefore, that you will be very careful how you back Lawson's insinuations for which he clearly had no proper basis.'⁷⁰

Noticeably, Maxse's defence of Lawson begins to change. It rested not merely on the content of the articles but now stressed the service which they had performed in drawing attention to possible indiscretions. It was Lawson's 'instinct' and 'flaire' that were to be admired, not his accusations of corruption and conspiracy.

Lawson's motives for criticising the contract may also have rested on another factor. As well as having technical and racial objections, he was a staunch opponent of the Liberal government. A letter to Bonar Law revealed that there was a certain degree of political motivation in his opposition to the Marconi contract. He enclosed a copy of an article which was to appear in The Outlook on 12 October 1913 and stated that he had been asked to attend the House on the day of the debate, 11 October. If Law wished, he would be only too willing to give advice and information on the Scandal. As if to show his credentials, he added 'I have been a Conservative journalist for nearly half a century'.⁷¹ Whatever the reason for initiating the investigation into the Marconi affair, Lawson had no doubt as to how it could be used against the Liberals.

The same pattern of thought can be applied to the National Review and Leo Maxse. The Review was a Conservative journal of the 'old school', very critical of the lack of unity and direction of the current opposition party. Nevertheless, its dislike of the Liberals was even greater, and it is no surprise to find that the Marconi Scandal was used frequently as a political weapon. Maxse's correspondence with various Conservative politicians and sympathisers makes it very clear where these political feelings led him during the campaign. As already shown, he was eager to give space to Archer-Shee and Amery on the subject and letters received show that he was in correspondence with other Conservative politicians on the topic of Marconi. Austen Chamberlain, Stanley Baldwin ('what a story! There ought to be a pretty row at the shareholders' meeting⁷²), Walter Guinness, Rupert Gwynne, the man behind the disclosures in the Indian Silver affair,⁷³ Rowland Hunt, the 'rebel' Tory M.P. associated with the National League for Clean Government,⁷⁴ and the various editors of Conservative newspapers such as the Daily Mail, Daily Express and Morning Post; all these suggest that Maxse was part of a much broader and general Conservative attack although not necessarily instigated by the party itself. It was a similarity of thought that produced this opposition, not a determined party campaign.

The Review, however, consistently denied that its opposition was due to political feeling of any kind, organised or unorganised. As evidence for this claim, it pointed out that certain Radical M.Ps like Sir Henry Norman and Sir George Croydon-Marks had been amongst the first to oppose the contract. Because they had done so, then the general opposition must have been based purely on the technical merits of the contract, not a simple desire to make political capital out of the issue. This rather absurd reasoning completely ignored the fact that Tory journals did simply use the affair as a weapon against the government. When M.Ps of both sides were criticising the contract in the October debate, they all hastily declared that they did not subscribe

to the wilder allegations of ministerial corruption, Sir George Croydon-Marks was one who took this line, suggesting that the scandalous charges had their origins somewhere in the Conservative party and press. The Review felt this was very unfair.

'We would, however, remind Sir Croydon-Marks that these charges cannot be attributed to political prejudice, because they originated in a weekly paper, the Eye-Witness, which is understood to be edited by a Liberal ex-member of Parliament, and they have been echoed and re-echoed in Labour organs which presumably support the coalition.'⁷⁵

The Review was, in spite of this argument, equally guilty of distorting the evidence. No-one could realistically claim that Belloc and the Eye-Witness was on the side of the Liberal government. Indeed, the suggestion that the charges originated in the Witness ignores Lawson's earlier material in the Outlook. The charges, once formulated, or rather hinted at, were used by Conservative journals of lesser importance as an example of the Liberal abuse of power, something to be expected when the Conservative Party was out of office. Whilst the Review did not subscribe to the more obscure rumours, it nevertheless attempted to discredit the government.

Conservative politicians were regarded as treating the affair in a detached manner, whereas the Liberals were intent on preserving their positions of authority, treating any criticism as political smear tactics. Thus, Lord Robert Cecil's opposition to the contract was described as noble because he was a 'high-minded, honourable man of rare and refreshing independence and courage.'⁷⁶ He would not have been influenced by anything he had read; indeed, he was unlikely to have seen the Review articles on the topic of Marconi, since his political stance was 'poles apart' from that of the journal. Cecil was also described as 'impartial' because he had voted in favour of reporting Maxse to the Speaker of the House of Commons as a result of his refusal to reveal his sources of information to the Select Committee. However, Cecil may not have been as detached as Maxse tried to make out. In June 1913, he wrote to Maxse

asking for the original French text of the Le Matin article, which led to the ministerial revelations. He felt that it had been wrongly translated and that there was some debating point which could be used in the forthcoming confrontation in the Commons over the Select Committee's report.⁷⁷

A similar altruistic motive was attached to Bonar Law's desire for information from the Prime Minister after the Le Matin case.

'The leader of the opposition, Mr Bonar Law, in no party spirit but as one of the responsible custodians of parliamentary honour, at the earliest possible moment asked the callous cynic at the head of the Government whether he proposed to make any statement on Le Matin case, and doubtless encouraged by the attitude of the Hush-Up Press, Mr Asquith affected a surprise that any statement should be expected of him'⁷⁸

The scandal was also used by the Review to attack various individuals in the government. As well as Herbert Samuel, Rufus Isaacs and Lloyd George, the three most frequently rumoured to have been involved in conspiracy, Alec Murray, the former Chief Whip, and Asquith were frequent targets. Asquith was continually referred to as the 'callous cynic', because he appeared to be involved in a 'cover-up' of the affair, but protested his innocence. In an article entitled 'The End of the Asquith Legend', Maxse referred to this seeming lack of concern about the morality of the situation.

'... the administration of the callous cynic now at the head of affairs in this unfortunate country has not only lowered the whole tone of our public life, but is visibly relaxing the standards which were assumed, as a matter of course, to regulate the conduct of persons in high places. With a few more years of Asquithism the British Government will in many respects be indistinguishable from Tammany Hall. The energies of statesmen will be divided between Stock Exchange speculations and concealing these operations from the public.'⁷⁹

The fact that Asquith knew of the American Marconis share dealings before they were generally made available as a result of the Le Matin trial, and that he allowed his Ministers to make their limited denials of involvement in October 1912, was used to condemn the man. According to Maxse, Asquith was 'officially and personally responsible for one of the worst gambles with the truth in the annals of the Mother of Parliaments.'⁸⁰ When it became known

that Murray had been investing Party funds in American Marconis, the condemnation of the Asquith government was even stronger.

'The name of Asquith will for all time be a byword in British history, unless as we may hope a merciful Providence buries itself in charitable oblivion. It is only under such as he that these things could happen. No one has lowered and dishonoured our public life like the present Prime Minister. If the worst example is set in the highest office what may we expect elsewhere. The unabashed bribery and corruption which is now becoming a part of our political system is the direct product of the Asquith regime. Bad as things may have been before his Premiership, they have been infinitely worse since. A man without conviction, or conscience, with nothing to commend him except the gift of educated gab is the right man to preside over the present cabal of needy, greedy, seedy adventurers, some of whom do the dirty work while the more respectable ones supply whatever reservoirs of whitewash may be required. There seems nothing of which an Asquith Government is incapable, for the simple reason that there is nothing which an Asquith is not prepared to countenance.'⁸¹

The basis of this attack was the events of the Scandal, yet the Review could insist at the same time that no political point was being sought in the affair. This intrigue of Asquith was a blatant use of events for this very purpose.

Lloyd George was also a favourite target of the Review. It was a fairly simple matter to score political points against a man who had denounced unearned income, and then been shown to be dabbling in share dealings of a dubious nature. Maxse took full advantage of the situation. Lloyd George's policies were unpalatable to many Tories, and Maxse was simply one of many who took every possible opportunity of discrediting the 'Welsh Wizard'. In this particular case, it took the form of 'Destroying a Legend', or as Maxse preferred it, "Revealing the Myth'. He maintained that Lloyd George could no longer talk about unearned increment, the basis of his famous Limehouse speech, without being interrupted by cries of 'What about Marconis?'⁸² In addition, Maxse was outraged by Lloyd George's protests about the criticisms he had had to suffer throughout the Scandal. Apart from the fact that the ordeal was self-inflicted, Maxse considered that the Chancellor had actually survived the affair quite well.

'What Mr Lloyd George is really suffering from is that he has been let off much too cheaply. In no civilised country in the world except Great Britain could he have remained Minister of Finance. However he continues to whine and snarl amidst the uproarious enthusiasm of the Cocoa Brigade, and the cartoonist of the Westminster Gazette has depicted him as a martyr.'⁸³

Yet as far as Maxse was concerned, Lloyd George was guilty of using inside knowledge to benefit his own pocket, he had been 'unable to resist the temptation of speculating in Marconi shares and snatching an unearned increment of several hundred pounds per day between April 17 and April 20 without having to put up a single shilling.'⁸⁴ So great was the dislike of Lloyd George and his role in the Scandal that Maxse singled him out for special attention. He addressed an anti-Lloyd George meeting shortly before Lloyd George was due to speak at Bedford, had copies of the Review distributed, and sent telegrams with some embarrassing questions on the eve of Lloyd George's appearance.

The anniversary of the October debate, when Lloyd George had so vehemently denounced the rumours of ministerial speculation in Marconi shares, was the spur for Maxse, who was determined to continue the publicity of the Scandal. Lloyd George was to speak at Bedford on 11 October 1913 and Maxse wrote to Lord Ampthill⁸⁵ about the possibilities of a counter-meeting at Bedford. His idea was well received.

'I heartily agree with your suggestion that we ought to take the wind out of Lloyd George's sails by holding a Marconi meeting at Bedford just before he comes there. I had indeed thought of similar measures myself and I have been instructing the Junior Unionist Association of which I am President to hold meetings all over the country between the present time and the 11th October.'⁸⁶

The chairman of the local Unionist Association, N.E. Prothero, welcomed Maxse's visit as an opportunity to 'slash the great imposter'⁸⁷ and finally the date of 9 October was selected, with Robert Cecil or George Cave as additional speaker.⁸⁸ Propaganda was to be distributed in the form of the October edition of the Review, provided free by Maxse and delivered by members

of Ampthill's Junior Unionist Association⁸⁹. In this edition, Maxse had written an article entitled 'From Bogota to Bedford', (Bogata being a reference to Lord Murray's departure for South America on business during the period of the Marconi revelations), which began -

'Mr Lloyd George's public services have been few and far between during the last year, and even his warmest admirers are somewhat perturbed by the spirit of procrastination and hesitancy which marks his movements. He was billed to burst the feudal system year ago, but on one pretext or another he has continually postponed this beneficent operation, though it is now positively asserted - unless of course, another war in the Balkans should intervene - that the great man will commence his great work at Bedford on October 11, a day redolent of sinister memories, being the anniversary of that fatal Friday afternoon in the House of Commons when time alone compelled Messrs Lloyd George and Co. to economise the truth about their Marconi ventures.'⁹⁰

The article asked several questions of Lloyd George. The two main points were first, whether Lloyd George was aware of Lord Murray's investment of Liberal Party funds in American Marconis 'during the negotiation of the Marconi contract with the Parent Company, which would subsequently require Parliamentary ratification,'⁹¹ and second, whether he knew of the Party investment in Home Railway shares during the coal strike of March 1912, a recent discovery by the journal. This second point was important, since railway shares had dropped in value during the strike and, as ministers had been involved in the negotiations, they would have had some knowledge of how soon it was likely to be before the strike ended and the share value rise again. Maxse was able to give details of contract notes for this order, a total of over twenty one thousand pounds of stock, although he could not say with certainty that the deal had been completed. To all appearances, cheques had been delivered to cover the costs, but there was a slight doubt. Nevertheless, the party's intentions were clear and this was sufficient to reveal the amoral objectives of the ex-Chief Whip, Lord Murray.

In fact, such a deal had been concluded. Murray had purchases, in March 1912, through his broker Fenner, about £21,000 of British railway shares for Liberal Party funds. This investment was used by Maxse during the House of

Lords Select Committee investigation into Lord Murray's activities during the Marconi Scandal, although the editor did back down somewhat, refusing to say that the sinister motives outlined above were his. The Committee felt this a somewhat abject withdrawal; 'no other intelligible interpretation of the charge was offered,' Maxse's criticism was rejected outright. 'In fact, Lord Murray knew no more than the public knew about these negotiations, (between government, owners and miners K.L.) and bought in the ordinary way. There is no ground for any accusation on this head.'⁹²

Little notice seems to have been taken of Maxse's charges at the time. The New Witness noted his comments but added that few other newspapers had done so.⁹³ In spite of this, Maxse continued to use the purchase of these shares in his campaign against Lloyd George. During his Bedford speech on 9 October, he posed the two questions about Murray's activities again. These were repeated in a letter to Lloyd George⁹⁴ and also in a telegram on 11 October, when Lloyd George was to speak in Bedford.⁹⁵ All these items were reproduced in the November edition of the Review, with Maxse's expression of regret that Lloyd George had not answered the questions, although answers had not been expected.

'It would not have mattered much what Mr Lloyd George replied because his memory is painfully defective, while his inaccuracy almost amounts to mental deficiency. He is terrified of plunging further into the morass, as well he may be. Perhaps he is silent because he is conscious of the worthlessness of his own testimony.'⁹⁶

Nor did Maxse's pursuit of Lloyd George end at Bedford. Indeed, as memories of the Scandal began to fade, so Maxse became more violent in his abuse of Lloyd George. Referring to the alleged decline in the popularity of the Chancellor, he claimed that the Scandal would be a real barrier in his future career. His involvement in the affair had shown him to have 'the intellect of a rabbit.'⁹⁷ One writer, calling himself 'A Simple Tory', used

the Scandal as the focal point of a really bitter attack on Lloyd George entitled 'The Eclipse of Ananias'. 'His mental tortures were as truly self-inflicted as the sufferings of the female lunatics who go on hunger-strike. His real misfortune was that he had been found out.'⁹⁸ No amount of posturing by Maxse could justify the claim that the Review did not use the affair in a party sense. Lloyd George certainly felt the impact of such an intensive campaign. In 1932, on hearing of the death of Maxse, he wrote to Frances Stevenson - 'You remember he was responsible for all that trouble about Marconi. If he suffered half as much pain as he then inflicted out of sheer partisan spite - then I am sorry for him.'⁹⁹

Other Liberal politicians were also pursued for the contribution to the Scandal. Rufus Isaacs and Herbert Samuel were frequent targets, Isaacs for his share dealings and the disgrace which he subsequently brought to the office of Lord Chief Justice and Samuel, because it was his department, the Post Office, that had given the contract to the Marconi Company. The ex-Chief Whip, Lord Murray, as has already been shown, displeased Maxse because of his dealings in American Marconi shares, on his own behalf and with Liberal Party funds. There seemed to be something sinister about his resignation in August 1912, and his departure on business to South America. Whilst the other ministers were giving evidence to the Select Committee, Murray was in Bogota, Columbia and unable to answer questions. The Review, along with the Morning Post, brought various charges about Murray's activities during the affair to the House of Lords Select Committee, which Murray had to face on his return. He was deemed by that body to have made several serious errors of judgement in relation to the purchase of Marconi shares for himself and for the Liberal Party but it was decided that his personal honour had not been impugned. As already described, Maxse's allegations about dealings in railway shares were dismissed, an action described in the Review as 'a regrettable precedent.'

'In this case the amount was trifling, and it would be absurd to suggest that under any circumstances Ministers would allow such an investment to colour their conduct. At the same time we venture to think it would be a sound and salutary rule that under no circumstances should Party funds be invested by any member of the Government in stocks or shares likely to be affected by negotiations in which the Government were engaged.'¹⁰⁰

The dismissal of the railway shares question by the Select Committee appears to have marked the end of Maxse's campaign on this issue. It seems to have had little support, even on its initial publication, and only The New Witness consistently reported his remarks on the topic. The most likely explanation for this is that the public, tired of the Marconi affair, had little energy or enthusiasm for another share scandal. The response to Murray and railway stock, or rather the lack of response, indicates a decided disinterest.

However, the seemingly tireless Maxse had yet more targets to aim at, using the Scandal as ammunition. The parliamentary Labour party found itself under siege for siding with the government during the affair. Speaking of the loss of public respect for parliament which had resulted from the Scandal, Maxse warned that the Labour Party was not exempt from the opprobrium.

'But let no so-called "Labour" fondly imagine that it stands to gain through the loss of other parties, as no body of politicians have accumulated more discredit than the "tame cats" of the Coalition, who ostensibly follow the lofty and inspiring guidance of that single-minded man of the people, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, though most of them only ask to be allowed to do the needful required to keep Messrs Asquith and Co. in office.'¹⁰¹

Later on, he referred to the Parliamentary Labour Party as 'the bond slave of the Radical Plutocracy,¹⁰² and attributed their support of the corrupt Liberal government to the fact that M.Ps had recently been paid a salary of £8 per week. The insinuation was that Labour members existed only for the money that they could make out of office. 'We shall only destroy Panama when Members of Parliament cease to be paid, and the House of Commons regains some fraction of its former freedom.'¹⁰³

Thus, it can be said that many of the attacks in the Review on the contract and on those involved in the share dealings were based on political

grounds. There were, perhaps, genuine grievances about the details of the contract, but these became hidden in the myriad of political jibes and debating points which followed. But it must also be said that the welter of criticism directed against the Jewish officials, the two Isaacs brothers and Herbert Samuel, hardly ever descended to the petty anti-semitism, such as that produced in The Eye-Witness. However, having already described Maxse's attitude towards certain Jews, his arbitrary division into 'good' and 'bad', it is not surprising to find that a general anti-semitism crept into the journal's coverage of the affair.

The essential factor in much of the unsubstantiated rumour surrounding the Scandal came from the fact that Godfrey Isaacs was Jewish, that he had a brother in the Cabinet, and that the government minister in charge of negotiations with the Marconi Company was also Jewish. Hence, it was fertile ground for the development of a conspiracy theory, both in the narrowest sense of Isaacs and Samuel conniving together, and also in the wider context of 'the Jews' versus the British people. The constant harping on the theme of disloyal Jews, whilst conceding that some, perhaps most, were extremely patriotic, led Maxse to make some very inflammatory statements.

'What have we done that we should be persecuted by the Jews? Do we persecute them? On the contrary, we seem to be standing by and allowing them to capture power after power in this country. They would appear to aim at an Imperium in imperio. They are not content with capturing international finance, except as a lever for fresh intrigue in international relations, and they always give a casting vote for Germany.'¹⁰⁴

Lawson was also a protagonist of the conspiracy theory. In his article for The Outlook in July 1912, which was reproduced in the Review in September,¹⁰⁵ he referred to 'two financiers of the same nationality' i.e. Godfrey Isaacs and Herbert Samuel, pitted against each other 'with a Third in the background' (Rufus Isaacs), 'acting perhaps as mutual friend'. This relationship was always prominent in Lawson's campaign, and he was always careful to point out that Jews were involved. He used stereotyped language in referring to

these men; for example, in the quotation above, Godfrey Isaacs and Herbert Samuel are 'financiers', although 'company director' and 'Government Minister' would have been more accurate labels. In a later article, when referring to Godfrey Isaacs' persistence in demanding substantial royalties for the use of Marconi equipment, he wrote 'Mr Isaacs, rather than forgo his pound of flesh on the royalties ...'.¹⁰⁶ Whilst this may have been simply a thoughtless use of metaphor, it was a rather unfortunate choice of words. It conjured up the Shylock image of the Jew and applied it to Godfrey Isaacs as part of the attack on the man.

These hostile images were also used by Maxse. When Samuel decried the scandal mongers and those who believed the rumours about ministerial involvement in corrupt dealings over the contract, Maxse challenged the attack. 'It is common form on the part of members of the present Government, who themselves live on poisoning the wells of public opinion and on fermenting class-hatreds, to attribute every attack on themselves to political malice.'¹⁰⁷

The use of the phrase 'poisoning the wells of public opinion' is an interesting one. The myth of the Jews as poisoners goes back to the twelfth century, when eighty six Jews were burned for allegedly plotting to poison Christians.¹⁰⁸ In 1321, in France, it was rumoured that

'... Jews, in league with the king of Tunis and other infidel rulers, had conspired with the lepers to exterminate Christianity by poisoning wells with a secret formula (reported to be composed of urine, herbs, human blood, and a sacred host!) revealed by the lepers under torture. The theme of a Jewish world conspiracy is born - six hundred years before the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.'¹⁰⁹

Similarly, the Black Death led to rumours of a similar nature.

'The story that Jews in Spain had circulated the death-dealing drug to poison the wells of all Christendom spread like wildfire. It was first believed in Southern France, where the entire Jewish population of a town was burned. From there the deathly trail led into Northern Spain, then to Switzerland, into Bavaria, up the Rhine, into Eastern Germany, and to Belgium, Poland and Austria.'¹¹⁰

Rosenberg's study of the Jew in fiction shows how this traditional image was

passed on from one generation to another,

'When the medieval and Renaissance Jew does not pose as a crucifier or mutilator, he frequently appears as poisoner. The whole of Marlowe's Jew of Malta is presumably an echo of the accusation, widely circulated in the fourteenth century, that the Jews had caused the Black Plague by poisoning the wells, though doubtless the old superstition of the Jewish witch-doctor contributed to his being cast in this role.'¹¹¹

Norman Cohn has shown that this fantasy originated at the same time as the accusations of ritual murder began to develop and thus this accusation of poisoning the wells is solidly entrenched in the language of anti-semitism¹¹². Maxse's use of the metaphor is therefore blatantly anti-semitic, if the phrase was used deliberately to discredit the Jewish influences in the Liberal party. If it was simply a thoughtless use of a particular figure of speech, it gives some indication of how deeply these anti-semitic legends had become entrenched in everyday language.

It has been shown that Maxse was making clear his dislike of the Jews in the Liberal government and elsewhere long before the Marconi Scandal erupted, but he continually insisted that his opposition was not due to any kind of anti-semitic feeling.

'Lest we be thought to write with prejudice on such matters - and we frankly confess to profoundly distrusting government by Isaacs, by Samuel, and by Montagu, not because they are Jews - for many Jews we have the greatest respect - but because they are bringing discredit on this country, which is falling more and more into the hands, not of the best Jews, who make admirable citizens, but of the type of Jew who regards the whole duty of man as consisting in scoring some material advantage...'¹¹³

He was able to write a month later that 'with every week that passes Mr Samuel's ineptitude becomes more conspicuous, and, taken in conjunction with contemporary episodes, it is safe to say that government by Samuel, Isaacs and Montague is scotched, if not killed.'¹¹⁴ The conclusion must be that Isaacs, Samuel and Montagu were regarded as 'bad' Jews and so the general abuse directed at these so-called unpatriotic Jews applied to the three named above. Maxse

could describe certain behaviour as 'a stroke of Semitic slimness . beyond praise',¹¹⁵ a reference to the use of F.E. Smith and Edward Carson as prosecuting counsel in the Le Matin case. This had meant that two of the most formidable political opponents of Isaacs and Samuel would be effectively silenced in any consequent parliamentary discussion of the affair, since it would have been 'contrary to the etiquette of the all-powerful Trade Union of the Law'.¹¹⁶ Thus behaviour that Maxse found objectionable was attributed to the Jewishness of those who had carried out the action.

One fact of the imagined Jewish conspiracy was the control of the media. Maxse was proud of the publicity that he gave to the scandal, because he felt it was important to provide people with the information. It was especially vital that the Review should carry out the task, because he believed that the traditional Tory press were incapable or unwilling to do so. In addition to this feebleness, he felt that there was a general press boycott of the subject. This sentiment was frequently expressed in the Witness, and there is some evidence to show that there was a basis for this supposition.¹¹⁷ Maxse began to refer to this section of the journals as 'The Hush-Up Press'. However, he saw more sinister implications in the boycott.

'The policy of the Hush-Up Press, which is largely in the hands of Hebrews who are laying the foundations of an anti-Semitic movement, sought to divert attention from the delinquencies of Ministers to "the exhumation of a country gentleman" and other kindred topics; great credit is due to the Morning Post, the Daily Express, the Globe, and the Financial News, to mention only London papers, for their determined stand against the boycott.'¹¹⁸

Why so many journals took part in this boycott, Maxse was at a loss to say. He could not understand their attitude, but attempted to find some rational explanation.

'In some cases no doubt personal friendship is a factor, and having been misled at the outset by some "friend at Court", who pledged himself that there was nothing whatsoever in these "Marconi rumours", amour propre prevented newspapers, which to some extent live on infallibility, from admitting having been misled. In other cases every public interest may be sacrificed to racial affinity.'¹¹⁹

This emphasised the control of the media that Jews held, and substantiated the 'Potsdam Press' remarks cited earlier in this chapter. Thus the Marconi Scandal dovetailed neatly, or could be squeezed to fit, into a general theory of the Jewish domination of the English press.

In more general terms, the Marconi Scandal fitted into Maxse's concept of a Jewish conspiracy and this would explain why he gave the matter so much publicity. To him, it symbolised so many of the things that were wrong with Britain - moral decay, political pragmatism and social corruption. Maxse seems to have seized on a conspiracy theory as a way of explaining this decline. By suggesting that a combination of radicals and Jews had brought about revolutionary and retrograde changes in Britain, he had an acceptable explanation of the causes of such change. In an impressionistic way, we can say that Maxse, in common with O'Donnell, the Chestertons and Belloc, saw the remedy of present evils as a return to the past. The late nineteenth century was conceived of as a kind of 'Golden Age' and they can hardly be described as optimistic about the potential of the twentieth century, at least on the evidence of its first few years. The decline of the present age was attributed to the sinister influences of some outside agency, in this case, as in many others throughout history, the Jews. It would seem that this explanation was accepted rather than attempt an analysis in a meaningful sense of the forces involved in the kind of social upheaval being experienced. To this extent, much of their anti-semitism can be explained in terms of a scapegoat theory.

This suggestion, however, does not constitute a totally satisfactory study of the nature of anti-semitism in this period. It deals with hostility as a response to certain individual psychological needs. This is obviously an important element in any explanation but we need to know what forces help to shape those psychological needs. In short, we must be aware of the social, economic and political context within which individuals like Maxse developed.

More specifically, we have to look at general attitudes to Jews and other minority groups in this period, with regard for any sub-cultures which exhibit views opposed to the dominant patterns of thought. Only then can we begin to produce an overall view of British anti-semitism in this period and make conclusions about its origins and nature. It is to this wider study that we now turn.

CHAPTER 8 : FOOTNOTES

1. b. 1864, d. 1932, son of Admiral Frederick Maxse, educated Harrow, King's College, Cambridge.
2. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 88
3. This theme was developed even further in June 1913.
'It is the business of the Opposition to turn out the Government, and they would probably succeed before the end of the year if they gave their whole mind to the task, though we recognise the difficulty confronting the leaders through the crankiness of some of their followers and the miserable mugwumpery of many Unionist newspapers so-called, whose main object would appear to be to let off the Government whenever there is a legitimate chance of hitting them hard.'
National Review, June 1913, p. 614
4. See, for instance, his lengthy pursuit of Sir John Brunner, a Liberal industrialist of Swiss origin, who urged friendly relations with Germany mainly because of his pacifist beliefs and whom Maxse accused of 'simply paving the way for a German invasion of your adopted country', in Stephen Koss, Sir John Brunner : Radical Plutocrat, 1842-1919, (London, 1970).
5. Quoted in Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-1940, (London, 1949)
6. National Review, December 1911, p. 501
7. Ibid., p. 499
8. See National Review, September 1914, p. 47
9. One concrete example of a 'bad' Jew was Lucien Wolf, champion of Jewish rights in Russia and hence critic of the Anglo-Russian entente. Maxse mounted a campaign against him, because by stirring up anti-Russian feeling, it was felt he was working for Germany. For details, see Max Beloff, 'Lucien Wolf and the Anglo-Russian Entente, 1907-1914', in The Intellectual in Politics and Other Essays, (London, 1970)
10. National Review, January 1912, p. 679
11. Ibid., p. 688
12. Ibid., March 1912, p. 15
13. Ibid., April 1912, p. 189
14. Arnold White, English Democracy : Its Promises and Perils, (London, 1894), p. 151
15. Quoted in Martin Walker, The National Front, (London, 1977), p. 185
16. National Review, January 1913, pp. 723-4
17. Ibid., March 1913, p. 6

18. Ibid., October 1914, p. 250
19. Ibid., March 1912, p. 18
20. Ibid., February 1913, pp. 909-910
21. Ibid., April 1913, p. 189
22. Ibid., September 1914, p. 47
23. Ibid., April 1913, p. 357
24. Ibid., February 1914, pp. 1044-5
25. Garrard, op. cit., pp. 62-5. Note, however, the point made by Robb, op. cit., p. 3 on the various sub-cultures which exist within a society and which exhibit views different from the norm or majority attitude. Belloc, the Chestertons, O'Donnell and Maxse may be deemed to hold values which differed from the 'official' or national viewpoint.
26. National Review, October 1914, p. 230
27. Ibid., July 1912, p. 750
28. Ibid., December 1912, p. 558
29. Ibid., October 1914, p. 163
30. Ibid., p. 231
31. For further details, and a defence of Speyer's activities and loyalty (Speyer was deprived of his British citizenship in 1921), see C.C. Aronsfeld, 'Jewish Enemy Aliens in England during the First World War', Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 18 (1956), pp. 281-3
32. National Review, February 1912, p. 184
33. Jewish Chronicle, 15 March 1912
34. National Review, September 1914, p. 47
35. Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940, op. cit.
36. See p. 274
37. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 89
38. Nation, 15 February 1913
39. Advertisements in The Outlook show that the first May 1913 edition of 10,000 had sold out and a further 5,000 were being printed (10 May 1913) and that the November 1913 first edition was of 20,000 (1 November 1913)
40. See Chapter 5 for details of circulation figures with reference to the Witness.
41. See Chapters 9 and 10.

42. Theodore Rich to Leo Maxse, 6 March 1911, Maxse Papers, Vol. 463, T25-7
43. For details, see Alfred M. Gollin, The Observer and J.L. Garvin, 1908-1914: A Study in Great Editorship, (London, 1960); Katharine Garvin, J.L. Garvin: A Memoir, (London, 1948)
44. Garvin to Maxse, 12 June 1912, Maxse Papers, Vol. 466, p. 95
45. 'A Man in the Street' to Maxse, 13 December 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 462
46. See pp. 126-8
47. Archer-Shee to Maxse, 20 October 1912, Maxse Papers, Vol. 467, p. 925
48. Amery to Maxse, 11 July 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 359
49. Ibid., 15 July 1913, p. 361
50. National Review, August 1913, pp. 1046-55
51. Wilson to Maxse, 12 February 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 276, p. 281
52. Guinness to Maxse, 12 February 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 277-8
53. J.P. Holland to Maxse, 12 February 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 280
54. R.D. Blumenfeld (editor of Daily Express) to Maxse, 13 February 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 285
55. Gwynne to Maxse, 2 April 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 316
56. Scarlett to Maxse, 21 February 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 299
57. W. Gower Andrews to Maxse, 2 April 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 315
58. The Outlook, 20 July 1912, quoted in National Review, September 1912, p. 30
59. National Review, November 1912, p. 415
60. Ibid., April 1913, p. 312
61. Ibid., February 1913, p. 1035
62. This analogy was used in later articles in the Review by Ian Colvin (see correspondence on the topic between Maxse and Colvin, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 420-1).

Colvin later became a leader writer on the Morning Post and was active in the Boswell Printing and Publishing Company, founded by the Duke of Northumberland in 1921, for the declared purpose of combating socialism. However, the company also produced a great deal of anti-semitic material, largely through its journal, The Patriot. (see Benewick, op. cit., p. 47n) Blume identifies Colvin as an anti-semite, both in his writings for the Post and for the Boswell Company. (op. cit., pp 49, 88-97). The works which she points to as being anti-semitic include A Wreath of Immortelles, (1924), and India under the Jews, (1923 - published by The Britons). She also suggests that Colvin was the author of The Cause of World Unrest,

the collected version of the eighteen articles published in the Morning Post in 1920 'expounding the full myth of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, with of course due reference to the Protocols.' (Cohn, op. cit., p. 169) (Note: for confirmation of Colvin's part-authorship, see Colin Holmes, 'New Light on the "Protocols of Zion",' Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 11, no. 6 (Nov-Dec. 1977), pp. 15-61)

Colvin also wrote some material in 1917 and 1918, published by the National Review office, on the 'Unseen Hand' - a theme used by the Financial News in that period (see Chapter 2). Thus, the links between Colvin and Maxse indicate further the part played by the Review in the general hostility to Jews in this period.

63. National Review, October 1912, p. 212
64. Ibid., November 1912, p. 402
65. Ibid., p. 414
66. Ibid., February 1913, p. 901
67. Ibid., p. 1031
68. Ibid., March 1913, p. 31
69. Ibid.
70. Chamberlain to Maxse, 8 February 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 466, p. 275
71. Lawson to Bonar Law, 11 October 1913, Bonar Law Papers, 27/3/30
72. Baldwin to Maxse, 6 May 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 328
73. See Chapter 9
74. See Chapter 7
75. National Review, November 1912, pp. 360-1
76. Ibid., March 1913, p. 80. Note that Maxse's sister had married into the Cecil family (Donaldson, op. cit., p. 88)
77. Cecil to Maxse, 17 June 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 356
78. National Review, April 1913, p. 215
79. Ibid., June 1913, p. 675
80. Ibid., p. 700
81. Ibid., January 1914, pp. 779-80
82. See Ibid., November 1913, for details of Maxse's criticism
83. National Review, August 1913, p. 1027

84. Ibid., July 1913, p. 833
85. Arthur Oliver Villiers Russell, 2nd Baron Ampthill, b. 1869, d. 1935. His county seat was in Bedford, hence Maxse's contact with him. Highlights of his career included contesting a L.C.C. election at Fulham in 1895, being private secretary to Joseph Chamberlain from 1895 to 1900, Governor of Madras from 1899 to 1906, including a spell as pro tem Viceroy of India in 1904. He was later active in the House of Lords.
In 1917, he was one of the founders of the National Party, which 'attacked the close links alleged to exist between heads of firms and government departments which gave them contracts' (Maurice Cowling, The Impact of Labour, 1920-1924 : The beginning of modern British politics, (Cambridge, 1971), p. 77). The movement also had tinges of anti-socialism and anti-semitism, as Cowling points out.
86. Ampthill to Maxse, 20 August 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 380
87. Prothero to Maxse, 21 August 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 381
88. Ibid., p. 390
89. Ampthill to Maxse, 30 September 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 414-5. A similar arrangement was made with Lord Charles Beresford for free copies of the Review to be distributed in Portsmouth (see Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 417, 427). Beresford was Conservative M.P. for Portsmouth and was a leading agitator in the attempt to continue publicity of the Marconi Scandal (see his speech to the Portsmouth Unionist Association, reported in The Outlook, 28 February 1914, where he stated that the Unionists could have been in power had they not been so willing to accept the Ministers' apologies). It is also interesting to note that Beresford played a significant part in the anti-alien campaigns of the 1880s (see William J. Fishman, East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914, (London, 1975), p. 71, Carrard, op. cit., p. 26, Gainer, op. cit., pp. 61, 102, 108)
90. National Review, October 1913, p. 330
91. Ibid., p. 347
92. Details from Report from Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Charges against Lord Murray of Elibank, House of Lords Sessional Papers, (1914), no. 66, p. vii
93. 2 October 1913. It listed the others as the Globe, Daily Express, Morning Post and Daily Mail
94. Maxse to Lloyd George (copy), 10 October 1913, Maxse Papers, Vol. 468, p. 424
95. Ibid., 11 October 1913, p. 425
96. National Review, November 1913, p. 415
97. Ibid., July 1914, p. 722
98. Ibid., April 1914, p. 252
99. 26 January 1932, quoted in Taylor (ed.), op. cit., p. 175

100. National Review, June 1914, p. 542
101. Ibid., August 1913, p. 1056
102. Ibid., p. 1058
103. Ibid., p. 1060
104. Ibid., March 1913, p. 7
105. See above, note 58
106. National Review, December 1912, p. 666
107. Ibid., November 1912, p. 369
108. Cohn, op. cit., pp. 291-2
109. Flannery, op. cit., pp. 107-8
110. Ibid., p. 109. See also Louis Golding, The Jewish Problem, (London, 1938), p. 67
111. Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 26
112. Cohn, op. cit., p. 291
113. National Review, December 1912, p. 553
114. Ibid., January 1913, p. 733
115. Ibid., April 1913, p. 302
116. Ibid.
117. See Chapters 5 and 6
118. National Review, April 1913, pp 215-6
119. Ibid., January 1914, p. 766

CHAPTER 9

A BACKGROUND OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND RACIAL STEREOTYPES

Having established that the Marconi Scandal contains several elements of anti-semitism, it is vital to place this particular affair within a more general framework of attitudes towards Jews in this period, both in Britain and elsewhere. In order to produce any valid theory or explanation of the phenomenon of British anti-semitism, we must also make some comparative study of attitudes towards other minority groups.

First of all, it should be established that the Marconi affair was not a single, isolated incident. Indeed, it was not even the only 'Jewish financial scandal' identified at this time by various critics. The fact that several politicians in high office were Jewish and that several national and international firms, particularly in the banking/Stock Exchange field had Jews at the highest managerial level meant that criticism of government contracts, negotiations or any other dealings with such firms exposed both politicians and company officials to charges of conspiracy similar to those put forward during the Scandal. Of course, this does present certain problems in deciding whether criticism was 'objective' or merely anti-semitic. However, the working definition used in this study, as outlined in the introduction, refers to anti-semitism as the hostility associated with the quality of being a Jew¹ and careful examination of the context of remarks should allow the reasonable application of such a definition.

The most significant and comprehensive scandal, comparable to Marconi, was the Indian Silver affair.² It concerned the purchase of silver on behalf of the Indian Government, a task usually undertaken by the India Office in consultation with the Bank of England. The main problem about this situation was the fact that this had become an expensive procedure, as J.M. Keynes explained in 1913.

'The silver market is a very narrow one and can only be dealt in through the agency of one or other of a very small number of brokers. A ring of speculators lay waiting to force prices up as soon as the government should appear as a buyer. Apart from the brokers who acted for the ring, there was only one firm in a position to buy large quantities of silver with the secrecy which was necessary if the speculators were to be defeated.'³

That firm was Samuel Montagu and Company, and the stated reason for its involvement in purchasing silver without prior consultation with the Bank of England was simply to attempt to prevent the kind of situation Keynes described above. Whilst it was generally conceded that such an agreement did save the government money, it also provided the firm of Samuel Montagu with a handsome profit in the form of brokerage fees (the National Review put the figure at £7000). This was unfortunate, in that there were certain personal relationships which cast some doubts on the motivation of the arrangement.

Samuel Montagu and Company was headed by Lord Swaythling, who was father to Edwin Montagu, the Under-Secretary of State for India. Montagu's cousin, Sir Stuart Samuel, was Liberal M.P. for Whitechapel and a senior partner in the firm, as well as being the brother of Herbert Samuel, the Postmaster-General. In addition, other Jews were involved in the negotiations. The idea of the arrangement was proposed by the company to Sir Felix Schuster, chairman of the Finance Committee of the Council for India but also chairman of the Montagu's leading bankers, the National Provincial. Finally, negotiations on behalf of the India Office were conducted by the Assistant Under-Secretary, Lionel Abrahams, who was also Jewish. It was an extremely complicated pattern of relationships, involving both family ties and a common Jewish link, which provoked a predictable reaction.⁴

The main opposition to the contract came from a Conservative M.P., Rupert Gwynne, who represented Eastbourne. In October 1912, he began to ask questions in the Commons about the nature of the agreement and he was supported in this by the Morning Post, with which he had close contact.⁵ The parliamentary

questions came thick and fast, mostly from Gwynne, but other Conservative M.P.s also joined in the quest for details. As information slowly became available, the press began to add its comments. Most of the leading Conservative journals noted the close relationship between members of Samuel Montagu and the India Office and expressed their dismay. In particular, The Outlook dwelt on the similarities between this matter and the Marconi Scandal.

'... the dealings of the present Ministry with the financial interests of India and their apparent subordination to racial and family considerations form a disquieting, a most disquieting, appendix to the peculiar features so widely discussed in connection with the attempted Marconi monopoly.'⁶

Whilst avoiding the formulation of any specific charges, the journals referred to the 'unfortunate coincidence' of the relationships⁷, and to a lack of delicacy, rather than deliberate corruption.⁸ The Spectator went so far as to suggest that Samuel Montagu and Company give up its commission on the deal. 'By such an act of renunciation they would go far to rebut the accusation that members of the Jewish race are not sensitive upon the point of personal honour in public affairs.'⁹ The same stereotype of Jewish clannishness and conspiracy that had been applied during the Marconi Scandal thus came into play in Indian Silver. Even John Bull, a journal which was usually sympathetic to the Liberals, criticised the government's approach. The use of the company had been unjustified and the lack of tact shown had meant loss of prestige.¹⁰

Bottomley's judgement, in this case, was quite sound. The decision to use the company may technically have been the right one, but it left the government's critics a great deal of scope for attack. The Spectator summed it up precisely: the agreement probably saved money but at the expense of the government's reputation.¹¹ Keynes felt that the India Office officials had a choice, to buy openly and pay the inflated price or to risk 'charges of venality from anyone who might have an interest in discrediting the government' by using Samuel Montagu and saving money. The decision to opt for the second alternative was, Keynes felt, made in a spirit of 'too great innocence, bred of long immunity

from charges of personal scandal.'¹² The Royal Commission looking at the general question of Indian finance¹³ found no technical offence involved but suggested that the action had been politically naive. '... We think it advisable to call the attention of the Secretary of State to the importance of avoiding as far as possible all occasion for criticism of this nature, though it may be founded on prejudice and ignorance of the facts.'¹⁴

It was certainly true that the affair produced the expression of a stereotype of Jewish conspiracy, which was the basis of the assumption that the British people were being done a disservice by this secret arrangement. However, it was not a totally hostile image. One journal, Truth, suggested that such a conspiracy could work in favour of the public.

'Anti-Semites of the Bellocian school, seeing names like Samuel, Montagu, and Schuster in print, conclude at once that here must be a foul conspiracy against the State. It seemed so obvious - a great contract for silver placed by India not with the good old British Bank of England as heretofore, but with the firm of Montagu; the Under-Secretary for India himself a Montagu; a partner in the firm having a seat in the House, and his brother a seat in the Cabinet; the financial adviser to the India Office was, by a coincidence, the firm's banker and another scion of an ancient stock. The whole affair was kept secret as the grave until it was exposed by a patriotic Conservative member. Was there ever a clearer case prima facie? Gentlemen, your verdict.

It did not occur to the Anti-Semites that men can conspire not only against the State but also in favour of it. A family which has given three hostages to politics in the persons of a Cabinet Minister, an Under-Secretary, and a private member with a safe constituency would scarcely be so fatuous as to indulge in a vulgar intrigue to diddle the India Office. However easy might be that inviting enterprise, exposure would be certain and its consequences disastrous. It was a much shrewder notion to step in and prevent the poor old India Office being diddled by somebody else.'¹⁵

But in spite of what may have been a very valid argument, the situation did create an impression of insensitivity. As the Spectator put it, there was 'An Appearance of Evil.'¹⁶ For those with certain preconceptions about Jews and finance, the facts of the agreement were sufficient proof of corruption, just as they had been in Marconi.

There was an added dimension to the Indian Silver affair. Sir Stuart Samuel found that, as a member of a firm which was under government contract

(although it was claimed this had been merely an informal arrangement), he was liable to severe penalties for voting in the House whilst under such obligation. According to the constitutional procedure at that time, being a government contractor was a disqualification from being an M.P. There were complicated legal and procedural questions to be decided and, on 22 November 1912, after a Commons debate, a Select Committee was established to investigate the question of Sir Stuart Samuel's resignation and/or disqualification.¹⁷ The recommendation of the Committee was that the matter should be decided by a Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.¹⁸ Eventually, the findings of this committee, which were published in April 1913, decided that ' "though no suggestion has been made of improper motive, the said Sir Stuart Samuel was disabled from sitting and voting in the House." '¹⁹ However, a by-election was hastily arranged, and on 30 April, Samuel was returned with a reduced majority to his old seat. There was a great deal of debate about the financial penalties which he might be subject to, as a result of his voting whilst under government contract, and an Indemnity Bill, which would have absolved him from such payment, met fierce Conservative opposition.²⁰

One final element in the scandal was a debate on Indian finance on 13 February 1913. This took place as a result of a motion by Gwynne, who was demanding that a Select Committee investigate the affair and who used the debate to challenge the financial arrangement with the Company. He again described in detail the family relationships, as he had done earlier that month in an edition of Our Flag.²¹ The essence of the debate was the Liberal contention that commercial interests were the sole criteria for the arrangement; the Conservative criticism was that the matter looked very like '... using patronage in order to help your political party, and to strengthen the political machine,'²² as Bonar Law put it, and so opened the way for real corruption. Asquith accepted that some general investigation should take place, suggested a Royal Commission, and this was sufficient to defeat Gwynne's motion, despite some

murmurings from the Tory back benches, led by Sir Hugh Cecil. In the press post-mortems, these party differences were rammed home. The Westminster Gazette, complaining about the suggestions of corruption, pointed to what it considered even worse developments: '... these occasions have been used to beat up - what happily has been unknown in this country till now - a purely racial prejudice against certain firms and individuals of untarnished character.'²³ Conservative journals noted the secrecy of the transactions, particularly the lack of information which both Sir Stuart Samuel and Edwin Montagu claimed. 'Better that a thousand "silver rings" should triumph than that these transactions, with their secrecy and concealment from this person and the other, should be conducted under the benevolent auspices of the Secretary of State for India.'²⁴ The Throne saw links between this affair and Marconi. 'What does strike us in the whole matter, however, is the extraordinary mixture of secrecy and confidence with which these Radical Semitic plutocrats treat their friends and relations and co-religionists'. Having detailed the various 'secrets', the writer concluded 'Why not? It is a phase of Orientalism which we must confess is quite beyond our somewhat crude Anglo-Saxon understanding.'²⁵

Political attacks continued long after this debate, just as they did in the Marconi Scandal. The protagonists were often the same people. G.K. Chesterton savagely berated Rufus Isaacs and Stuart Samuel over the Indemnity Bill, which he felt allowed Samuel to escape his just deserts. The two were called aliens and anarchists, far more effective than the indiscriminate bomber, because they were destroying the essential framework of the country, the law, by their manipulation and corruption.²⁶ William Ramage Lawson also added his keen eye for a Jewish 'ramp' to the debate, describing Indian Silver as yet another reason for dismissing 'our Jewish Methodist Cabinet.' Having established the 'Semitic bond of unity ... which doubtless stimulated their cooperation', Lawson then appealed to the patriotism of his readers.

'Visible or invisible, the Semitic character of the coterie cannot very well be ignored. It need not however have excited a particle of Gentile resentment had it restricted itself to fair legitimate competition with Gentile rivals in business. Unfortunately for itself and the India Office, it did not do that. In its commercial zeal it poached on a very sacred preserve of British finance - to wit, the Bank of England.'²⁷

That Indian Silver added to the anti-Jewish feeling, or rather helped to rekindle it, cannot be doubted. The Investors' Review was certain of its contribution.

'Coupled with the prominence given to Sir Rufus Isaacs' congratulations by cable to his brother, the manager of the Marconi Co., the Samuel Montagu and Co. incident has strengthened much of the anti-Semitic prejudices with which the country is in danger of being over-charged. "There is far too much Jew in the Government", says the discontented Anglo-Saxon, and he says it more and more openly and with more and more support and sympathy in consequence of such incidents as the secret employment of Messrs. Samuel Montagu and Co. - a most respectable and reputable Jewish firm, but nevertheless an intimate connection of the Under-Secretary of State for India ...'²⁸

The article concluded with a further claim that 'race prejudice' was 'finding expression in political circles of all colonies. Our good Jewish citizens should take note. They are in a minority still.'

How valid was this claim? Was anti-semitism as widespread as this financial journal suggested, at least in its particular area of specialisation? Indian Silver and Marconi had elements on which anti-semites could draw and, using written sources as a guideline, it would certainly seem that attention was being continually directed upon the 'Jewish Question'. If the Witness could boast in 1912 of being the only journal to discuss the matter, then, by the following year, it had no justification for a similar claim. The examples cited in this study have shown the increasing discussion of the 'Jewish Question' and the journals show growing hostility towards Jews in these years before 1914.

Explanation for the increasing hostility began to stress certain factors, particularly the political involvement of some Jews. Thus, a South African

correspondent, in discussing Zionism as a possible solution to the Jewish problem, wrote:

'There can be no manner of doubt that far more feeling exists and far stronger criticism is being expressed in England today against the Jew than has been the case for the last fifty years. This is probably due to two leading causes - namely, (1) the active part being taken in Party politics by scions of the race, and (2) the constant influx and spread throughout Anglo-Saxondom of poor alien Jews from Eastern Europe.'²⁹

Even a friendly writer in the Financial News, in a profile of Rufus Isaacs, acknowledged that his career had an additional hurdle - 'He has always realised that he was in one respect handicapped for political success - that is to say, he had to fight the anti-Semitic prejudice which undoubtedly exists among us, though we may try to persuade ourselves that it is not there.'³⁰

This growing reaction was recognised by a large section of the Jewish community. During the 1912 coal strike, the Jewish Chronicle warned Jews in South Wales that they especially 'have to put a special guard upon their actions when carrying on business in a centre of grave social turmoil, even though that business is of the most honourable character, and those who transact it remain strictly within their undoubted rights.'³¹ Obviously, the riots of the previous summer had had a profound impact.³² In the same edition, 'Mentor', a regular columnist, referred to the recent upsurge in anti-Jewish feeling. 'As Englishmen equally as Jews, we may resent those modern abnormalities - Arnold White, Hilaire Belloc, Chesterton, and Barr are ready examples - who, in the name of England, preach retrograde doctrine on race approximation.'³³

The same writer, referring to the agitation surrounding the Marconi and Indian Silver affairs, had no doubt that anti-semitism played a considerable part in the publicity.

'The prejudice which is imparted by the constant iteration of the fact that these men are Jews it were absurd to suppose is to be obliterated by a fulsome declaration of love for Jews in general or this or that Jew in particular ... This attempt to win favour in this country for anti-semitic prejudice by "hooding" it, must be exposed as a device worthy of no-one above the moral level of the perverters of our people. We resent it as a mani-

festation of anti-semitism in which Englishmen should be ashamed to indulge ... We know, we Jews, but too well - how a spark of anti-Semitism, dropped in the lumber-room of literary dilettantism is likely quickly to find material inflammable as tinder, which, burning slowly yet surely, will suddenly, when we are least prepared, burst into fiery flame.'³⁴

In short, the pages of the Jewish Chronicle for the years 1912-14 contain a great many statements of this kind, which reflect the community's growing fear of anti-Jewish feeling. There was some justification for this apprehension, since overt violence against Jews had occurred in 1911. Riots, directly mainly against Jewish shopkeepers and landlords, broke out in South Wales in August of that year. As Alderman has pointed out, anti-semitic violence was a very infrequent occurrence, at least on a large scale,³⁵ and he has suggested that these riots were 'a graphic illustration of the role which Jewish communities traditionally play as scapegoats for economic ills and industrial unrest.'³⁶ Alderman's attempts to explain why violence occurred and why the Jews were the object of attack fall short in that he simply catalogues possibilities. Religious bigotry, particularly of the Welsh Baptists, is said to have had some part to play in the general hostility towards Jews, and he gives other examples of such outbursts.³⁷ Similarly, drawing on other examples of racial animosity such as the anti-Irish feeling in South Wales in the nineteenth century and attacks on the Chinese in Cardiff in July 1911, he proposes a theory of 'contempt for things alien', an attitude which arose largely as a result of industrialisation and subsequent immigration into the area.³⁸ This latter explanation is impressionistic and, in the case of the hostility towards the Chinese, far more complex, as we shall see later in this chapter. However, Alderman's work is a pioneer study and one of his suggestions, that there was a concept of the Jew which could be drawn upon in times of economic distress, is certainly worth pursuing. Obviously, if the Jew was to serve as a scapegoat during such periods, there must be an image which was identifiable and usable. In the absence of oral evidence, we look to the media for evidence of such an image.

There appears to have been two consistent types of Jew represented in the pages of the Edwardian press, the financier and the alien, although these concepts could and did overlap. The stereotype of Jews and financial involvement ranged from a crude presentation of a Shylock to a far more sophisticated view of their alleged business acumen. Clearly the historical relationship between Jews and profit played an important part in creating such an image, but financial scandals also served to enhance the less savoury aspects of the stereotype. Indeed, it might be argued that the concept helped to create the Marconi Scandal, as was suggested earlier in this chapter. Scandal and stereotype were reinforcing agents for a fairly widespread attitude.

Nearly all the imagery was derogatory, proclaiming or suggesting that unethical behaviour was involved. The traditional money-lender, a constant image in English literature,³⁹ was usually depicted as exploiting the native population by extortionate rates of interest and by deceit. Moneylenders of this kind are almost always Jews, and the pages of Truth, a journal which we have already noted was friendly towards the Liberals and pointed out racial attacks by Conservatives during the Marconi and Indian Silver Scandals, contained many such examples. A short story, entitled 'Mrs Meredith's Flutter',⁴⁰ contained the basic elements of the stereotype.

Mrs Meredith, wife of a major in the Green Hussars, found that her addiction to bridge had led her into a debt of £100. Her husband detested gambling and so the lady was forced to seek an alternative method of repayment. An advertisement by Solomon Isaacson, a money-lender, caught her eye and she wrote, enquiring how and on what terms she might obtain a loan of £100. The reply from Isaacson was simply a £100 note. The terms were repayment of £160 within three months. On a trip to the races that day, Mrs Meredith backed a winner with the £100 at odds of three to one, and so returned the note, saying that she had not asked for a loan, merely made inquiries.

However, she had signed her letters to Isaacson 'G. Meredith' in order not to prejudice her chances of obtaining a loan. Consequently the money-lender, on receiving back the £100, set off for Major Meredith's quarters at the barracks. The picture of Isaacson showed how unsavoury a character he was. First, he was described as having an 'oily smile'. When he mentioned to the major that he had received his letter, the author added 'Twisting his fat fingers in his watch-chain, he smiled deprecatingly.' When Major Meredith questioned him, 'Solomon wiped his perspiring brow with a voluminous silk handkerchief.' When he explained to the major that the original note had been marked and so it was clear that it had been used and another substituted, the writer was at pains to point out the Jew's repulsiveness. 'Bending nearer, his fleshy lips almost reached the major's ear.' The sum total of the image was a Shylock seeking his proverbial pound of flesh, and contrived to look and seem as unpleasant as possible.

Truth had a particular dislike for money-lenders, conducting a campaign against those whom it was felt manipulated or tricked borrowers. An article entitled 'The Benevolent Shylock'⁴¹ referred to Jewish money-lenders using aliases or trading under Anglo-Saxon names and all offering severe terms for repayment. There was obviously a serious objection to the use of aliases, for it led to proposed legislation. Lord Newton, a Conservative peer,⁴² had similar strong views on this topic. He brought an action against Lewis Levene, who had sent a money-lending circular to his daughter, a minor, and made great play of the fact that Levene traded as J. Harmsworth Ltd.⁴³ Giving Newton its full support, Truth went on to expose other Jews who used similar devices.

Newton introduced a Moneylenders Bill in the Lords in June 1913. In moving a second reading, he paid tribute to Truth's campaign and went on to note 'the tribe of usurers' and their use of aliases. All the examples he gave were of Jews changing their names. The object of the Bill was to ensure that money-lenders revealed their true identity, as well as the trade name, on any adver-

tising material. As he put it, 'Moses and Aaron, trading as "Crewe and Landsdowne" (laughter), would be obliged to disclose their identity.'⁴⁴ Consequently, '... it might possibly be of some small consolation to some unfortunate young man paying 150 per cent, to discover that instead of paying it to a semitic plebeian his debt was to some patrician of distinguished native lineage. (Laughter).'⁴⁵ There is no doubt that it was the Jewish moneylender who was objected to, and that the trade was seen as a virtual Jewish monopoly.

The significance of identifying Jews in this particular way was recognised by Halévy, who suggested that the 1900 Moneylenders Act, which imposed stricter controls over the trade, was the first symptom of what he describes as 'modern' anti-semitism.⁴⁶ The implication was that this legislation was designed specifically to deal with the excesses of the Jews, or what was seen as a Jewish monopoly.⁴⁷ On the evidence of the motivation behind the 1913 bill, Halévy's theory about controls on moneylending being conceived in terms of controls on the Jews may have some validity. The fact that other speakers in the 1913 debate, the Earl of Meath⁴⁸ and the Marquess of Landsdowne, referred to moneylenders in similar fashion to Lord Newton, using the term 'tribe' as a collective noun,⁴⁹ indicates that 'moneylender' and 'Jew' were seen to be practically synonymous.

The Bill was passed in the Lords in July but was received unsympathetically in the Commons, no doubt due to the pressure on parliamentary time. Truth bemoaned its demise.

'It is very lamentable that when hereditary legislators, in their position of greater freedom and less responsibility, evolve valuable non-contentious measures of this character, their labour should be in ruin. What is wanted is clearly another Parliament Act, under which Bills sent down by the Lords in two successive sessions, and not passed by the Commons, would receive the Royal Assent without further formality. I make a present of this suggestion to Lord Newton.'⁵⁰

However, it would seem that it was the particular issue, rather than reform of the constitution, which prompted this suggestion.

Truth continued its campaign, despite this setback. Its Christmas 1913 edition featured an item called 'Birds, Beasts and Fishes' - a children's first lesson in natural history.⁵¹ Most of the references were harmless puns; several had rather less innocent motives. The illustration of the Monkey was a young dandy signing a loan application for a moneylender with obvious Jewish caricatured features. The Shark was even more explicit.

'The SHARK for prey prospecting goes,
And flat fish are his game;
He sports a good old Hebrew nose,
A good old English name;

Again, the illustration was of a cartoon Jew.

The journal was not alone in its campaign. The Outlook praised Lord Newton's Bill and supported his particular predilection. 'We especially commend the clause that will put a stop to the masquerading of Moses as Montmorency.'⁵² The obsession with this particular aspect of moneylending led Punch to satirise its more ridiculous adherents. Lord Newton had given the impression that all moneylenders had Christian names, whatever their religion, and so the story's writer was surprised to find an Aaron Breitstein in the trade. He was even more surprised to discover that his real name was John George Albion. ' "But if that's your real name, " I replied, "you must be English, and indeed you look it; but how can an Englishman be a moneylender.' It's not done." ' The moneylender then explained that the change of name was to be one step ahead of the 'Scotchmen' when Newton's Bill forced them to change back.⁵³

This association of Jews with money was (and still is) deep-rooted in traditional values, as a writer in the New Statesman pointed out.

'The legend of the wealth of the Jews has persisted so obstinately for centuries that there is little wonder that it is still accepted as a fact. It owes its origin to the prominent part they have played as traders in money in the past, whether as money-lenders,

money-changers or financiers; and it has been strengthened in modern times by their predominance in commercial pursuits in Western Europe, and their somewhat abnormal representation on the Stock Exchanges. Two other phenomena have contributed to the popular delusion : the fabulous millions of the Rothschilds, which are made to cast a reflected splendour upon the entire race, and the frequent occurrence of moneyed Jews in the plays and novels of nearly every European literature, particularly English literature, whose pages have been lavishly strewn with Jewish gold from Shakespeare to Hilaire Belloc. It is probably this literary factor that is responsible for the first impression of Jewish wealth received in the Christian world. The mischief begins with the reading of The Merchant of Venice at school, where the plastic minds of young children are impressed with the misunderstood figure of Shylock crouching over his ducats. This impression grows into an obsession or prejudice which is difficult to eradicate, and its widespread currency is one of the prime causes of the envy and hostility to which the Jewish people is exposed.⁵⁴

Significantly, this quotation points out that the stereotype which is dominant in the British cultural tradition has a realistic basis in the economic role which the Jew fulfils. In other words, it is suggested that the Jew has a special relationship with finance and commerce, an historical association, which has lent itself to the perpetuation of the stereotype. This argument has recently been taken up by Edna Bonacich, who sees the Jews in Europe as simply one example of an ethnic or racial group acting out this role of 'middleman minority.'⁵⁵ Briefly, Bonacich's model stresses the sociologically important aspects of such a minority, especially the tendency towards liquidity occupations, and, as a result, the heavy concentration of these groups in areas like banking, credit and commerce. The particular hostility of the 'host' community is directed particularly against this monopoly aspect of the minority and the implied threats which these often strongly entrenched monopolies seem to pose to the majority society. What the New Statesman writer has done is express rather well the way that such hostility becomes incorporated into the culture of the host society.

Other aspects of the Jews' relationship with money were also emphasised and could be used to express distaste. Truth referred to the 'prevalence of the gambling evil in Jewry' and took note of a report in the Jewish Chronicle, which

called for an end to gambling dens in Jewish communities, threatening to expose details if these were not voluntarily disbanded.⁵⁶ Sharp financial practice was associated with Jews. In a description of an ice-cream vendor, the Daily Citizen described the custom of giving short measures as the 'Hebraic tendency'.⁵⁷

John Bull, a journal which championed the Jew on many occasions, found itself, perhaps unwittingly, in league with the Witness in certain of its jokes. Why did Isaac and Rebecca lose on the horses but not at cards? Answer - because they weren't able to shuffle horses.⁵⁸ The assumption was that shuffling the cards allowed them to cheat and that this was a particularly Jewish trait (The Witness would not have entirely approved of this joke, for its sports editor maintained that Jews could manipulate horses as easily as cards). In addition, John Bull made fun of Jewish business dealings

'Ikey to Moses : I hear your varehouse vas burnt down last Vensday
Moses (in a whisper) : No, Ikey, not last Vensday - next Vensday.'⁵⁹

The essential ingredient for the humour is that the two are Jewish - substitute Tom and Bill, change the language and it makes little sense.⁶⁰

The Jewish joke brings the question of the Jewish caricature into the realms of popular culture, something not easily discovered from the more elitist journalistic sources. One particular medium which gives an indication of the extent of this Jewish image is the music-hall.

'Sir - There has been of late a growing tendency to caricature the Jew and to show him off in a most obnoxious light to his Gentile neighbours. The principal agents in this nefarious work have been, undoubtedly, the self-styled "Hebrew" character comedians.'⁶¹

Particular emphasis on the Marconi Scandal's role in developing a stereotype is revealed in the autobiography of Rufus Isaacs' daughter-in-law, Eva. She tells of her reaction to the caricatures portrayed in a music-hall performance which she attended, and of the reply to this reaction by her future husband, Gerald Isaacs. He wrote:

' "It makes me perfectly cold with anger to see the caricatures that are supposed to be everyday Jews, and the mere fact that no one has ever met such preposterous creatures among all the Jews that, knowingly or otherwise, one meets, seems to influence neither author, actor nor public with any sense of exaggeration or vulgarity ... I wonder if I am particularly sensitive - or is it self-conscious? - before such attacks; at least I know that ever since this Marconi affair commenced I have been neither to Music Hall nor to Musical Comedy, nor to any other place where Topical 'gags' are introduced, because I could not endure the crass brutality of the humour that dabbled light-heartedly in the struggles and sufferings of those who were nearest and dearest to me." '62

There are many more examples which could be given. The importance is that there was a well-known background of Jewish financial stereotypes on which to build rumours of financial scandal,⁶³ and by making out that Jews were involved in these affairs, preconceptions appeared to be justified and legitimised. Of course, there were elements of truth in the stereotypes, as in most stereotypes, but this merely served to add to the legitimisation process.

The other most influential image of the Jew was the alien. As with the Shylock stereotype, this had many aspects. The most obvious targets were those Jews who were aliens in the technical sense of the word - either recent arrivals or those who had chosen not to take on British citizenship although they were eligible to do so. However, the implications of the Jew as alien go beyond this immediate definition. It was used to illustrate the belief that the Jew was an alien even if he was a British subject. In other words, there were vast cultural (and, it was sometimes argued, racial/biological) differences which prevented the Jew from becoming integrated into the 'British way of life.' Again, there is some basis for such a theory. The Jewish community did have a strong sense of separateness; it had its own identity, religion and culture which it sought to preserve. However, the stereotype became exaggerated to a far greater extent than the evidence warranted, as we have already seen in the chapters on the Witness and the National Review.

First evidence of the difference between Jew and Englishman (as it was put)

was usually noted in physical features. Although there is no evidence of a single Jewish type, the popular image was well-established. From appearance, it was deemed possible to deduce personality, as the Daily Citizen's description of Herbert Samuel showed.

'He will go far undoubtedly, in spite of the prejudice that still exists against the race to which he very evidently belongs. But there is no man of that race who executes the prejudice less. The glossy black hair, the sallow oval face, the full lips, and the rather heavy but sensitive eyes suggest a personality such as Disraeli's in youth, but divorced from all the accessories of dandified extravagance.'⁶⁴

In a similar way, Truth commented on Sir Stuart Samuel.

'A typical son of his inscrutable race, Sir Stuart Samuel is swarthy of complexion, dark and lustrous of eye, and placid of mien, as if heavy-laden with the age-long patience of the East. He has the massive head and lofty brow, though not the beard, of his patriarchal uncle, the first Swaythling, and anyone could detect their kinship, for the Montagu and Samuels are a single family, allied as closely as Quakers or the Rothschilds ... They know the value of acting together as one class, however small its numbers ... This is the impenetrable freemasonry which binds them together more compactly even than the class meeting of the Wesleyan Methodists. They confront the world with an impassive countenance and a smile, which is genial, without revealing anything.'⁶⁵

Behind this 'foreign' image lay the implicit assumption that the Jew would always be different from the Briton.⁶⁶ St Loe Strachey, writing in the Spectator, made this clear. A letter from C.T.B. Moss referred to a recent article by Lord Cromer on Disraeli.

'What I cannot understand is why Lord Cromer should call him "This nimble-witted alien adventurer." Am I to understand thereby that every English Jew is "an alien" and "an adventurer"? Although Disraeli did not call himself a Jew he was as much a Jew as any of the most orthodox Jews. He was born in England of parents who had resided in England. If I have not misunderstood Lord Cromer's meaning, the question I would like to ask you is, when is a Jew not an alien?'

Strachey's reply was short but significant. 'It is clear from the context that what Lord Cromer meant was an adventurer of "alien" race, i.e. a man not of English blood. A Jew of British birth is of course no alien.'⁶⁷ A Jew could be British but would always be of alien race.

Similarly, the New Age, referring to the three ministers involved in the Marconi affair, Isaacs, Samuel and Lloyd George, complained that they had needlessly prolonged the Scandal. 'An Englishman among them (and note that none of the three is English) would have explained and bedammed the matter forthwith in October last.'⁶⁸ The Outlook explained the reasoning behind this identification of the Jew as alien, in a discussion on the merits of Zionism, provoked by Israel Cohen's Jewish Life in Modern Times.

'Mr Cohen refers to anti-semitism as if it were something unnatural, of either an inexplicable or basely mean origin; whereas it is a perfectly natural phenomenon arising from perfectly obvious causes, though it is often exploited for the vilest ends.'

Referring to the strength of the Jewish faith, the reviewer claimed.

'Unfortunately it is that very attachment to racial traditions that makes the Jews permanent aliens in the lands where they sojourn, and it is, we are convinced, to this racial exclusiveness that anti-Semitism is always and has always been primarily due.'

The only solution was, therefore, miscegenation, if Jews wished to become truly accepted.

'They make good citizens in all but that essential of true patriotism - the tie of blood. They are good parents and children. They have fine abilities. They are a charitable, a friendly, and a cheerful people. But until they realise that all that they give to the world is as nothing until they fearlessly give themselves, they will have watchful and suspicious enemies and will always be at the mercy of waves of actual dislike.'

Only in a state of their own would their separatist nature be finally acceptable.

'As it is, to speak of English Jews or French Jews is to our minds as explanatory as to speak of an English Frenchman or a French Englishman. They are with us, but not of us, and must always be suspect.'⁶⁹

One particular aspect of the alien Jew in Britain which could be played upon was the fact that many of the wealthier Anglo-Jewry had their origins in Germany (the Montagu family was one example). Given the national tensions between various European states at the time, and the resultant xenophobia of

the war, it is hardly surprising to find that things German were under suspicion. We have already seen that Jews were frequently labelled as supra-national and their commitment to Britain questioned. German origin was therefore an obvious manifestation of this view.

Leo Maxse was probably the arch exponent of this philosophy, as the pages of the National Review have shown. He was not alone in his obsession.

Christopher Hollis described the approach of G.K. Chesterton in these terms.

'From the time of the Boer War onwards he and Belloc hardly ever mention a Jew in fact or fiction who is not described as a German Jew, and during the World War and after that war it is always spoken of as a Jewish interest to save Germany from final defeat or to put her back on her legs after her defeat.'⁷⁰

Thus, to be German or Jewish was to be a target; to be labelled a German Jew, even if a naturalised British subject, fulfilled completely the image of the cosmopolitan alien, who would never have the same loyalties as the 'Englishman'.⁷¹

This link between Jews and Germans was not confined to Britain. European anti-semitic movements also used the imagery. Action Française, the French reactionary group, blamed both Jew and German for its country's decline.

'The Jews are shown to be responsible for every political and social evil that exists in France. Even the declining birthrate is the work of a "traître Juif", because Vagnet's divorce law was introduced by a Jew! ... whatever crimes the Jews have left undone have been perpetrated by the Germans instead! Germany, it appears, is buying up all the mines of France, displacing French workmen and occupying all the points of strategic importance in the country. A short while ago a culminating horror was revealed in the shape of a girls' school where German engravings were given as prizes.'⁷²

In an era of intense nationalism and xenophobia, anything less than enthusiasm for war was regarded with some suspicion. In Britain, Jews were prominent in the movement to preserve peace and cooperation with Germany,⁷³ for reasons explained in Aronsfeld's article. Some argued because of the affection they still held for the land of their birth. Far more sought peace on the grounds that war would bring economic dislocation, since trade between the two countries was vital for their material well-being. There was also a moral argument, that,

for two countries seen as leading the march of progress, war was a threat to civilisation.⁷⁴ By adopting these attitudes, certain Jews laid themselves open to the charge of being at odds with British public opinion, or at least what was felt to be the 'man in the street's view'. The charge was certainly frequently used by Maxse and other journalists.

The most obvious portrayal of the Jew as a foreigner was in the cartoon depictions. In order to show the Jew as different, the cartoonist can emphasise the distinctive and different physical features. Hence the hooked nose, the deep set eyes, the thick lips of the caricature which, in certain cases, corresponded to reality. A study of cartoons of Irishmen has suggested that physical appearance is a vital part of every stereotype and that physiognomy - 'The art cum science of judging character and temperament from the features of the head and face, the body, and the extremities' - was still common in the Victorian and Edwardian era.⁷⁵ The evidence indicates that this process was being applied to Jews at the time of the Marconi Scandal.

From the fact of Jewishness could be determined characteristics, usually described as typical of the race. However, since it was not a systematic process of categorisation, it was frequently contradictory, since vastly differing individuals were described as 'typical'. A.G. Gardiner, editor of the Daily News, was one of many who revealed this tendency. Of Rufus Isaacs, he wrote

'He has the intellectual suppleness of the East, and something of the mystery of his race. The Jewish mind at its best has an orbit outside the Western range, at its worst a depth below our lowest deep; the Jewish temperament is for us inscrutable. We are at home with all other minds, whether they be clothed in black skins or white, but the Jew, like the Japanese, is eternally alien to us. He moves in other spheres; he is motivated by springs to which we have no access. The soul of Spinoza, as he bends over his humble task of glass-cutting at the Hague, "sails beyond the baths of all the Western stars." Lasker, sitting over the chessboard, seems to dwell in the unexplored vastness outside our intellectual range. Shakespeare we grasp; but Isaiah has a vision that is not ours. Gladstone we understand, but who has fathomed the dark mystery that was called Disraeli?'⁷⁶

In the same volume, he wrote of Herbert Samuel:

'There is nothing of the Oriental man of mystery about Mr Samuel; ... He is the type of efficiency. There is no more industrious man in the Ministry, none whom you find more completely equipped in knowledge or in clear-cut, decisive opinion ...

In this enormous capacity for mastering the details of a subject, this enthusiasm for the letter, as it were, he is typical of his race. The genius of the Jew is the genius for taking infinite pains. He may lack inspiration, but his power of application, his mastery of the letter, gives him a knowledge that is more potent than inspiration.'⁷⁷

Gardiner perceived these two men as vastly different in personality and character, if not complete opposites, yet both derived their qualities from their Jewishness. Arguably, this may have been the case, but to present them both as 'typical of the race' made nonsense of any consistent stereotype, which was, in effect, what Gardiner was attempting, possibly unconsciously, to apply.

Another particular aspect of the alien image was the emphasis placed on the Asiatic origin of the Jews. Thus, the Witness, stressing Herbert Samuel's inability to comprehend the Englishman's mind, would call him the 'Oriental Postmaster.' With a less offensive intention, Gardiner stressed the Oriental or Asiatic element of the Jewish make-up. However, in the main, this identification of the Jew with the East was used as an insult and to express the essential and irreconcilable difference felt to exist between Briton and Jew. To some extent, it was also used to indicate the moral superiority of Britain and the British over other countries and peoples, a feeling which we shall see was prevalent in the Edwardian era.

As an example of the use of this Asiatic typing, we can cite the case of Amy Strachey, wife of St Loe, who was of Jewish origin. This allegedly gave her an 'un-English' appearance and she was mockingly called 'Oriental Amy' by Lytton Strachey and his brothers.⁷⁸ Similarly, in Mr Fleight, a novel by Ford Maddox Hueffer, published in 1913, one of the characters was called Mr Bleischroeder⁷⁹ and was Jewish. His manner and appearance were made to be as disreputable as possible and his rise to the House of Commons was by corrupt

means. He spoke with such a strong German accent that '... once that rude man, Mr de Soissons, had interrupted one of Mr Bleischroeder's speeches to ask the Speaker whether the hon. member was in order in addressing the House in an unknown Oriental dialect.'⁸⁰ That such a categorisation of the Jew as Asiatic was meant to be derogatory cannot be doubted. Later in this chapter, we shall consider attitudes to other racial minorities and a more detailed comparison can be made.

What was seemingly a predominance of Jews in the Indian administration, a factor which helped create the Silver Scandal, was frequently attributed to the Jew's Asiatic origins. Edwin Montagu found himself the object of such thinking. Waley noted that frequently it was claimed Montagu's Jewish descent 'made him, as an Oriental, fascinated by India.'⁸¹ John Maynard Keynes was one who felt this way. 'That he was an Oriental, equipped nevertheless, with the intellectual technique and atmosphere of the West, drew him naturally to the political problems of India, and allowed an instinctive, mutual sympathy between him and its peoples.'⁸² Montagu himself appears to have justified this belief to some extent by his own words and feelings. On offering himself to Asquith as the next Viceroy of India in 1915, he spoke of possible objections to his appointment.

'Then there is the question of my race. That is the serious obstacle and it is one which you must balance against other considerations. It is an objection from the point of view of civil servants and perhaps of soldiers. But their training teaches them to accept what comes and I have many friends among them. As regards the Indians I do not believe it to be an objection.'⁸³

Yet six months later, on being offered the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland, Montagu rejected the office, saying that his race was a disqualifying factor for the position; he would have to deal with religious problems of a creed in which he did not believe.⁸⁴ The fact that he would have to deal with similar situations in India was apparently not a disqualifying factor for positions associated with that country.

Thus, again, the stereotype appears to coincide to some degree with actual beliefs. But it is also indicative of the extent to which those anxious to press the categorisation had to go in order to justify their attitude. To describe Montagu, of all leading Jews of the period, as an Oriental was to stretch credibility. Montagu's family came to Britain from Germany in the mid-eighteenth century. Montagu himself always felt he was English and rejected the rigid Jewishness of his father, Lord Swaythling.⁸⁵ His total opposition to Zionism was because he felt the Jews were a religious community, not a nation, hence his own identity of a Jewish Englishman.⁸⁶ Thus it would seem that Montagu fits uneasily into the rigid stereotype, although conforming to some of its conditions. An attitude which regarded Montagu as a perpetual alien thus rejects certain contradictory evidence and would indicate not mere hostility towards the man himself but a degree of prejudice, based on certain racial assumptions about Jews.

Undoubtedly, when a Jew was seen to be pursuing his religious and cultural beliefs, it offered scope for his critics. In the period under consideration, the wills of three prominent Jews provoked just such a reaction. The first, that of Lord Swaythling, father of Edwin Montagu, declared that his heirs would be disinherited if they married non-Jews, which followed the orthodox Jewish teaching. The Nation criticised these provisions as an example of the dead trying to direct the lives of the living.⁸⁷ This led G.K. Chesterton to make a typically double-edged reply.

'Many Englishmen, and I am one of them, do seriously think that the international and largely secret powers of the great Jewish houses is a problem and a peril. To this, however, you are indifferent. You allow Jews to be monopolists and wire-pullers, war-makers and strife-breakers, buyers of national honours and sellers of national honour. The only thing you won't allow Jews to be is Jews.'⁸⁸

A similar case was that of Sir Adolph Tuck, who died in 1912. A trust fund was established for his successors to the baronetcy, provided they were of the Jewish faith and married to 'approved' wives, any dispute to be settled

by the Chief Rabbi.⁸⁹

The third will was left by Sir Edward Sassoon. Again, the debate began in the pages of the Nation. 'An Old Liberal' complained about the lack of gifts to British charities 'away from his Jewish connections' because of death duties. It is fair to point out that Sassoon left very little directly to any charities in his will, for two expressed reasons. First, he claimed that he had given a great deal to both Jewish and Gentile charities during his lifetime and second, he was making a protest against legacy duties, which he considered to be excessive. Yet the Nation's correspondent felt greatly upset by such a protest. 'If anything were calculated to arouse an anti-Semitic feeling in England, it is the published will of Sir Edward Sassoon'. The writer mentioned Sassoon's Asiatic origins, his association with the opium trade in India and the fact that only the tolerance of the Liberal Party had allowed him to become a free British citizen with full rights. He listed the benefits which had accrued from this.

- 1) Jews in England owed everything they had to the Liberal Party
- 2) The Liberals had put many Jews in high office
- 3) Jews in England suffered less from taxation than in any other country
- 4) They benefitted from the Insurance Act, being large shareholders in the insurance companies.

'When cosmopolitan aliens enjoy the privileges of British hospitality, such as they find in no other land, their first duty is to accept cheerfully the laws under which their property increases, and their persons are protected.'⁹⁰

The labour Daily Herald also used the issue.

'We have absolutely no anti-semitic feeling. We do not care two straws what a man's nationality may be when we are discussing public, or even private affairs. But, nevertheless, it is a fact that wealthy Jews dominate this and practically every other European country which has any claim to commercial eminence. And it is also a fact that these same Jews frequently use their wealth in ways which are not conducive to the happiness and well-being of the working-classes.'

The article then referred to the letter in the Nation and mentioned Sassoon's profiting from the opium trade, which had been supported by British troops. Therefore, the will was seen as a slap in the face for the Liberal Party.

'But what can the Liberals expect? They know that their party is run by funds subscribed by just such men as Sir Edward Sassoon and the Rothschilds and other cosmopolitan financiers who will pay both Liberals and Tories to pass laws which will insure the success of their financial operations.'⁹¹

Thus, criticism of what was described as ungrateful and un-English behaviour was quickly turned into a political weapon, a lesson which was also put into practice during the Marconi Scandal.

To gain a better understanding of the significance of such stereotyped attitudes towards the Jews in Edwardian Britain, it is important to examine the views on other minority groups at this time. Since a full comparative study would be deserving of another thesis, most of the detail in the following section is from secondary sources. One other proviso is that, so far, little work has been carried out in this field and therefore any conclusions must, by necessity, be tentative ones. These facts, however, do not mean that the exercise is a meaningless one and it does indicate the directions which future research should take. The wider spectrum of ideas concerning other minority groups also gives a much broader indication of Edwardian racial thought.

Reference had already been made to the hostile imagery used against the Irish. Curtis's study of Victorian caricatures has shown that the simianised version of Paddy lasted well into the twentieth century⁹² and Jackson's general work also points to the existence of the stage Irishman as a twentieth century stereotype, although perhaps not to the same degree as in earlier years.⁹³ He describes cartoons depicting Irishmen as 'sly, simple, wild and reckless' and reports of court cases involving Irishmen which mocked their brogue and the

humour of their remarks, but sees these as outlets for friction which were far less harmful than violence.⁹⁴ Jackson maintains that these were factors which lessened the impact of the Irish on the 'host community' by the turn of the century.

'Whatever differences still remained the fact that the Irish were British subjects assumed an increasing importance. The Irish, unlike the growing number of alien arrivals, had, after all, never been "foreigners" and this fact, together with the relative lack of language differences, obviated some of the major difficulties of settlement.'⁹⁵

Similarly, Kevin O'Connor claims that the hostility of the 1840s and 50s had abated by the early years of the twentieth century⁹⁶ but neither writer produces any real evidence to justify his statements. Indeed, both point to the continued manifestations of hostility in the 1920s. This was particularly strong in certain areas. In Scotland, Irish Catholics still faced bitter opposition. In 1923, a pamphlet entitled 'The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scottish Nationality' referred to Irish Catholics in much the same ways as we have seen Jews described in the pre-1914 period. It was claimed that the Catholics 'cannot be assimilated and absorbed into the Scottish race. They remain a people by themselves, segregated by reason of their race, their customs, their traditions and above all, by their loyalty to their church.'⁹⁷ It is also clear that the stereotype Irishman was still a popular image. Jackson quotes from a children's book of verse published in 1925.

'The Irish child can dance a jig,
And share its pillow with a pig,
And when we ask for pie or meat
The "pratle" he is glad to eat.'⁹⁸

Thus, the stereotypes and the religious bigotry were still in existence in the 1920s, as, indeed, they are today.

The less obvious emphasis on the Irish in the period under consideration, as revealed from a study of written sources, is rather puzzling. Home Rule was an extremely important political issue at this time and it might be expected that the fierce debate between pro- and anti-Home Rule factions would have

produced some kind of reaction. Is a study of written sources completely misleading and an inadequate indication of attitudes? Can it be, as Jackson suggests, that for the time being, attention was directed, as a result of immigration from Europe, onto the Jews? The current state of research allows neither contradiction nor confirmation.

Attitudes towards blacks in the pre-war era were still largely dominated by the colonial experience rather than by the presence of blacks in Britain. Although there was a black population, it was 'miniscule and fragmented'⁹⁹ and consisted chiefly of two groups, West Indians who had emigrated to seek better conditions and unemployed sailors, the latter being the majority of the settled blacks. Settlement patterns were based around the dockland slum districts of ports such as London, Cardiff, Liverpool, Bristol and Tyneside. Discrimination undoubtedly played a part in creating the unemployment amongst sailors and others seeking shore jobs. One West Indian, employed at Tilbury, was forced to leave when white dockers went on strike rather than work with him.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, when war broke out, Walvin describes other examples of hostility and prejudice. The War Office resisted integration of blacks into white regiments, the Army Council opposed commissions for those 'who are not of unmixed European blood' and 2500 West Indians who volunteered for war service and specifically for combat duty, were formed into labour gangs. 'Even in war, the blacks were consigned to their age-old role of being the beast of burden for their white masters.'¹⁰¹

Kenneth Little has maintained that attitudes towards blacks were formulated by the particular colonial experiences of the British and that this led to the ascription of inferior status.¹⁰² One can see an illustration of this experience in the views of Lord Edward Cecil, whose spell of office in Egypt equipped him to declare that all Egyptians were stupid and unworthy of his friendship, a result, Rose tells us, of the 'thoughtless xenophobia of the

Edwardian age.'¹⁰³ Racial stereotypes were freely adopted and are particularly noticeable in a semi-serious work of his, The Leisure of an Egyptian Official. 'Egyptians were rogues or clowns, Frenchmen excitable and self-important, Germans arrogant and devious, Americans nasal and ponderous, Jews craven and mercenary.'¹⁰⁴

Even opponents of 'imperialism' had their own ideas of racial classification. J.A. Hobson's classic study, Imperialism, (1902), whilst claiming that Britain's colonial policy had been almost solely for quick profit with little regard for the well-being of the native population and little concern for their rights, did not oppose the white rule of coloured races and, stated in crude terms, there was still a 'general Edwardian assumption' that the white races were superior.¹⁰⁵

This was very clearly illustrated by the reaction of W.S. Blunt, a contemporary of Belloc and the Chestertons, to a prize fight between a black and a white.

'The result of this fight was a surprise to me. I had expected to see a gigantic black man subdued by the scientific persistence and higher morale of his smaller white opponent, a triumph of white mind over black matter, but it turned out absolutely the reverse. It was the black man who wore the white down.'¹⁰⁶

Whilst the outcome was something of a shock to Blunt, important enough to be recorded in his diary, it cannot be taken to indicate that the assumption of white superiority was seriously being questioned at this time. The problem of 'native rights' was, however, being taken rather more seriously, if only for pragmatic reasons. British whites did not outnumber the coloured populations of the Empire, nor indeed were the world proportions of white to coloured any different. The question of future black/white relations was under serious discussion. As G.P. Gooch, the Liberal historian wrote, 'The desire to preserve racial purity is common to the higher nations. Yet the wisdom of friendly co-operation between the higher and lower races becomes even more

apparent.¹⁰⁷ The Universal Races Congress of 1911, held in London, reflected a growing awareness of the need for world harmony.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the journals of the day illustrate the interest in racial problems. One example, the Contemporary Review, a Liberal monthly, showed particular concern, with articles like 'A New Colour Bar' (with vague references to 'Asiatic swarms') on the problems of India and the Straits colonies (August 1912), 'Black, Brown and White in South Africa' (March 1913) and 'Slavery in Anno Domini 1913' (August 1913).

Press coverage also gives some indication of the 'popular' image of the black and of black/white relations. Here the imagery was more fanciful and detached from the problems of Empire, although it emphasised the assumptions of inferiority and the racial tensions which lay behind the discussion of 'native rights'. The predominant theme was of sexual jealousy. Headlines tended to be of the provocative kind. 'Black Preacher and Brown Baby'¹⁰⁹ and 'Wakened by Black Man : Wife's Story of Unwelcome Bedroom Visitor : Thought it was Big Dog'¹¹⁰ were indicative of the only aspect of black/white relations given any degree of coverage. It was certainly an area of conflict. In a court case of alleged assault by two blacks on a white woman, when it was made known that she lived with one of the men, there were 'angry interruptions in court' and the Umpire described it as 'a case which revealed in a startling way an ugly aspect of the black peril.'¹¹¹

The suicide of the wife of Jack Johnson, the black American heavyweight boxer, was seen as a cautionary tale (and as good copy). Ignoring the fact that it appears to have been public outrage which caused her so much pressure that she took her own life, many journals sought to draw a moral from the sad event. The Throne was particularly racialist (and sexist) in its coverage. It noted that Johnson was black 'and as such should be beyond the pale of intimacy with a white woman.' Naturally, his wife was regarded as an 'outcast' by whites because of her descent into the 'lower stratum'. 'Every marriage

between a white woman and a coloured man, therefore, strikes a blow at the white rule of the world which has endured throughout the ages.'¹¹²

That this particular perspective of the problem should be to the fore is consistent with the history of black/white relations in Britain. Following the war, in the summer of 1919, there was a series of race riots in London, Liverpool, Cardiff, Manchester, Barry, Newton and Hull. In a detailed study of the Liverpool violence, May and Cohen list four causes or explanations.

'First a feeling of sexual competition ... second, the concentrated and exposed nature of Black settlement in Liverpool - Blacks being a readily identifiable minority; thirdly an explanation that saw the outbreak of the disturbances simply in terms of the exploitation by hooligan elements of the unsettled conditions of the times; finally competition for employment between the Black and white communities.'¹¹³

Dimmock also makes reference to the significance of sexual competition in the Liverpool riots and in those at Cardiff.¹¹⁴ Walvin, taking a broader but less well researched view of all the outbreaks of violence, concludes that sexual jealousy was 'an open element in the response of white mobs to the Negroes.'¹¹⁵ The Times reported that mixed marriages had provoked extremely hostile reactions and suggested that these provided provocation for attacks, particularly in times of economic distress. Indeed, a debate on the horrors of such intimacy took place in the paper as a result of the riots.¹¹⁶

Walvin draws the analogy between the fears of the eighteenth century planters and the rioters of 1919 and has suggested that sexual fears and resentment have been a constant factor in the development of white attitudes towards blacks.

'Although difficult to prove, it would seem that interracial sexual relations and the hostile response towards them constitute one of the most important ingredients in the slow germination of English racialism, from the sixteenth century to the twentieth. For long periods this sexual resentment remained inert and only came to the fore when economic and social distress projected the black community to the forefront of political controversy. This was particularly the case in the late eighteenth century. In 1919 on the other hand it was unemployment and postwar dislocation which brought about the revival of such resentment. Upon local Negroes a confused alliance of the unemployed, remnants from the armed forces

and the fringe of urban criminal groups heaped their collective frustrations and tensions. Oddly enough, the most commonly heard complaint - black relations with white women - had nothing to do with the economic situation of the rioters. This resentment was in fact not an articulated complaint but an inbred response.¹¹⁷

As Walvin maintains, it may have taken the particular conditions of 1919 to produce such a violent reaction, but the evidence of 1912-14 shows how near the surface such hostility was.

One further indication of the popular view of the black comes from the fiction of the period, which can provide useful evidence of contemporary racial attitudes. As Gina Mitchell suggests,

'The nature of the genre demands that an author must, to a large extent, reflect mass attitudes if he is to appeal to a mass audience. Therefore it seems likely that such material might provide valuable insights into widely shared but rarely expressed reactions to an issue such as race.'¹¹⁸

Whilst blacks featured very rarely in Victoria literature,¹¹⁹ by the First World War, a typology began to appear. John Buchan's treatment of blacks set them apart entirely from the white races. In Prester John, published in 1910, John Laputa is an 'educated Kaffir', who comes very close to hero qualities, but can never achieve them because, although intellectually equal, he is black. '... the genetic inferiority bestowed by Buchan is implicitly God-given and permanent in its effects.'¹²⁰

In the case of the black, similar processes were in action as those used against the Jews. There were stereotypes which existed on some quasi-biological and scientific arguments or assumptions, which assigned a degree of inevitability and permanence to the type. Jews would always be aliens and blacks would always be inferior.

Another minority group which attracted the attention of the majority in Edwardian Britain was the Chinese. Again, little work has been published but May's thesis¹²¹ gives some indication of the nature of the relationship. He refers to the 'Yellow Peril' as 'an inchoate concept capable of diverse inter-

pretation,¹²² but, more specifically, suggests that by 1900 it had two tangible strands.

'... first, the direct threat to jobs and living space (not to mention "customs and morality") posed by Chinese emigration; second, the indirect danger to Western jobs via the threat to Western markets, domestic as well as foreign, posed by the potential industrialisation of China.'¹²³

The direct threat after 1900 would seem to have been limited to one or two particular areas of employment. The settlement of Chinese in Britain was very similar to that of blacks, the original group being predominantly seamen.¹²⁴ May draws attention to what appeared to have been an increasing number of Chinese sailors in British-registered ships in the early years of the century and records the grievances expressed against this development by individuals and by the seamen's union, grievances mainly about undercutting of wages.¹²⁵ We have already noted that, at the time of the riots against Jews in South Wales, the Chinese community in Cardiff was under attack and Chinese laundries in the city damaged.¹²⁶ Alderman's brief reference to these incidents fails to point out that this violence occurred during the seamen's strike of 1911 and as May's work stresses, this was a key factor in the attacks. There had been growing resentment in South Wales against the use of Chinese seamen,¹²⁷ and during the strike, Chinese were predominant in the instances of strike-breaking. The destruction of the Chinese laundries was, therefore, closely linked with the strike and the economic competition posed by the Chinese.¹²⁸

Apart from this specific incident, May indicates that relationships between the host community and the Chinese were fairly peaceful, apart from a few sporadic expressions of hostility. In a study of Liverpool, which probably had the single largest Chinese community in these years, he found little economic competition, although the Trades Council in 1906-7 did express some fears of this possibility. Problems of opium consumption and gambling were not considered serious by the police but the liaisons between Chinese males and white women revealed 'latent sensitivity' on the part of the white

community.¹²⁹ Dimmock's thesis presents evidence to confirm that there was general disquiet about such relationships¹³⁰ in much the same way as there were objections to white women and black males.

May also refers to another aspect of the 'Yellow Peril' threat, the question of the employment of Chinese labour in South Africa.¹³¹ Other evidence would suggest that this issue was important in the creation of a stereotype which could be described as hostile. The extent to which the Chinese Labour question played a part in the Liberals' 1906 election success has been illustrated by Somervell¹³². Although Russell points out that it was by no means the issue most discussed by candidates,¹³³ it was a very popular theme for Liberals.

'By the New Year pigtailed and manacled Chinamen were already as familiar in the streets and at Liberal meetings as big and little loaves, and whilst Lloyd George conjured up the vision of coolies imported on to the Welsh hills, the London-based Chinese Labour National Protest Committee swamped the capital with leaflets indicating that a Tory vote would mean Chinese immigration into London. When in Bermondsey Lord Percy and H.J.C. Cust attempted to link the trade depression with alien immigration and to claim that the Aliens Act was a great piece of legislation against unemployment they were met with cries of "rot" and "what about the Chinese?"; and when Percy proceeded - reasonably - to say that the Aliens Act had been designed to keep the Chinese out, a brawl ensued'.¹³⁴

Whatever the exact reasons for the Liberal victory in 1906, J.L. Garvin, in The Outlook, referred to the win as 'the triumph of yellow politics.'¹³⁵

A brief glance at some of the journalistic comments for 1912-14 reveals the continued existence of the fears described by Russell, albeit in more abstract form. Since the immediate threat of a Chinese or Japanese invasion of Britain was no longer such an obvious danger (if it ever had been), it was mainly events in America which directed attention towards the 'Yellow Peril.' The implications of Chinese or Japanese immigration were spelt out: 'The yellow man can support life on a far smaller wage than a white man',¹³⁶ and the restrictive legislation against 'Japs in California' was described as

'the right - because the natural - thing. East cannot understand West.'¹³⁷

It was not only that the 'yellow man' was different, he was inferior.

From The Throne's analysis, it is apparent that the 'Yellow Peril' threat was regarded not so much as an armed invasion encouraged by some hostile foreign power but on similar lines to the Jewish immigration of the late nineteenth century. An influx of poor Chinese, who could live cheaply, undercut wages, encourage 'sweating' and pose an economic threat to the British working man, this was the perception of the problem. One finds the same kind of arguments voiced about Irish immigrants earlier in the nineteenth century.

There was also a belief that, culturally, the white and yellow races could not co-exist because there was no common ground between them. This seems to have arisen partly from economic competition and fear and lay behind the approach adopted by J.A. Hobson in 1913, when he described the Chinese rather than the Jews as 'more nearly approaching the hypothetical "economic man" than any other people in the world.'¹³⁸ The Jewish Chronicle drew attention to the more widespread nature of such ideas, quoting an article in the North American Review by William Trant on 'Jew and Chinaman : The Chinaman as "The Coming Jew".'¹³⁹ This referred to the similarity in make-up of the two races, claiming that both were good businessmen and accumulators of money and that they both held the philosophy of wealth equals power. It was also suggested that, just as the Jews had succeeded in seizing power in America, so too would the 'yellow man.'¹³⁹ Links between Jew and Oriental were stressed, both races being seen as a threat to the Western world.

The similarities between the abstract arguments used against both Jews and Chinese help to explain why anti-Jewish propagandists sought to label the 'difference' displayed by the Jew as 'Oriental'. If it was accepted that there was a clash of values, that East and West should never meet, then including the Jew in this Eastern category was an extremely useful illustration of his alien status.

Reaction to Germans in the years before 1914 was obviously influenced by the build-up to the war and by the commercial rivalry which existed between the two countries.¹⁴⁰ One specific area of direct competition in Britain was in employment as clerks. A recent study by Anderson shows that, from the 1870s onwards, the changing economic and social status of clerks and the subsequent concern this caused was frequently blamed on the influx of Germans into the occupation.¹⁴¹ Complaints appear to have concentrated on the low wages allegedly paid to German clerks who, it was maintained, could live on less money than their British counterparts. There were also fears of unemployment. In 1887 an inquiry showed that in many London offices about 40% of the clerks were foreign.¹⁴² Although Anderson suggests that after 1900 the threat had receded, due to a return to prosperity and a standstill in the percentage of foreign clerks employed, a cursory study of the financial journals for 1912-14 show that the issue was still being raised, although possibly it was then due to simple xenophobia rather than direct competition. As with other minorities, it is suggested that scapegoating and stereotyping were used to create a German 'threat'. Anderson feels that British clerks, unable to understand fully the problems they were facing, accepted the 'half truths and mythology' of German competition as the cause of Britain's general, and their own particular, insecurity.¹⁴³

From these studies, it is clear that other minorities found themselves classified and stereotyped, as did the Jews, and each group had an identifiable main stereotype. There were hostile reactions in a time of economic and social dislocation, when it seemed that these groups were in direct competition in employment and status. These attitudes can be found directed against all the minorities examined here; it is most apparent in Anderson's consideration of German clerks, but hostility towards Irish, blacks and Chinese was also partly due to economic competition. The other substantial element present was the fear of the introduction of an 'alien' culture or cultures into a British way of life. In the main, such views concerned the Chinese and the Jews. The

'Yellow Peril' was still largely a product of events abroad and journalistic rhetoric at home, as May has suggested (with the exception of a few specific areas and incidents). The cultural threat of the Jews was more readily identifiable and, for some, was seen as already changing the fundamental nature of British society. In this sense, of all the minority groups, it was the Jew who was considered most dangerous.

In addition to examining contemporary attitudes to other minorities in Britain, we should also place British anti-semitism in a wider perspective. Again, a conclusive comparative study is not possible within the confines of this thesis, but we can at least establish the relativity of British anti-semitism in contrast to the Jews' experience in other countries at this time. The four most important areas for such an approach are the U.S.A., Russia, France and Germany, since they represent the main areas of Jewish settlement by the early twentieth century.

The history of anti-semitism in the United States produces some interesting parallels with that experienced in Britain. In the general restructuring of American society after the Civil War, the rise of some Jews in the economic and social hierarchy provoked some discrimination. As Higham describes it,

'... a new stereotype of the Jews as rude, ostentatious parvenus took form, both distorting and reflecting their ambition and success. Through this stereotype, and the discriminations that accompanied it, a society vexed by its own assertiveness gave a general problem an ethnic focus.'¹⁴⁴

Although the initial discrimination appears confined to social clubs and summer resorts, increasing immigration, with the subsequent disruption to American society, increased the problem. Restrictive practices began to operate in housing, education and employment towards the end of the century.¹⁴⁵ As a reflection of growing discrimination, we can point to the formation in 1913 of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, a body constituted to counteract the spread of such practices.¹⁴⁶

Newly arrived Jewish immigrants faced objections from native Americans, couched in very similar language to that used against their co-religionists in Britain.¹⁴⁷ 'Jew-baiting' was a regular occurrence¹⁴⁸ and continuing immigration in the early years of the century appears to have produced the increasing demands for restriction, which became particularly strong after 1910, culminating in the post-war legislation.¹⁴⁹

In addition to this 'social anti-semitism', so defined by Higham¹⁵⁰, there was also the development of a potentially more hostile attitude, political anti-semitism. Most writers see the 'Populist Era, the 1890s, as crucial in the formulation of such views, the explanation being that the socio-economic crisis and nationalistic inclinations of these years focused on the Jew as the cause of dislocation and discontent.¹⁵¹ A stereotype of the rich Jew 'entwined with international finance'¹⁵² was apparent, seemingly confirmed by the conspicuous example of the Rothschilds.¹⁵³ Despite economic recovery, this image seems to have been absorbed into certain aspects of American culture and helps to explain the publicity given to the Protocols in America after the War. Indeed, in the years immediately prior to 1914, there was an increase in the kinds of tensions experienced in the 1890s, producing a general growth of nativism directed at most minority groups. The tensions of a pre-war situation, the economic recession and depression of 1913-14, pressures of immigration combined to produce an uneasy society, which at times produced violence against minorities, including Jews, as the lynching of Leo Frank shows.

Accused in 1913 of the murder of a fourteen year old girl in Atlanta, Georgia, and convicted on dubious evidence, Frank was sentenced to death, reprieved by the state governor and then taken from prison by a mob and hanged.¹⁵⁴ Higham suggests that Frank's fate indicates the re-emergence of the anti-semitism of the Gilded Age.

'Many factors combined to draw the web of hatred around Frank's neck. He was a Northerner and an employer of labor, and earned a full share of mistrust on these grounds alone. As a Jew he inherited all the dislikes stirred up by the racist writers of the period, and also the murky suspicions about Jewish blood murders left over from agitation of American opinion by such a trumped-up charge in Russia a few years earlier. Finally, the indignation everywhere outside the state that followed Frank's conviction, and the ultimate commutation of the sentence by the governor, raised the suspicion that justice was being frustrated through the intercession of powerful, hostile outsiders. Under skillful (sic) manipulation, these became the goads that prodded the mob into action.'¹⁵⁵

We might justifiably describe Frank as the ultimate scapegoat.

A closer examination of the years immediately before the War indicates an increase in the kind of tensions which led to the atmosphere of the 1890s. There was a general growth of nativism, an anti-Catholic, anti-radical reaction which encompassed most minority groups and displayed 'symptoms of hysteria and violence that has been rare or non-existent since the 1890s.'¹⁵⁶ Conditions allowed the re-emergence of the anti-semitism of the Gilded Age, as Higham shows.

'In the last stages of the Frank case, anti-Semitism regained the fiercely nationalistic twist it had acquired briefly in the nineties; and it assumed also an explicitly racial tone ... Something bigger than a local episode was in the air, something nourished by all the forces of racial nationalism, distorted progressivism, and economic decline.'¹⁵⁷

Thus, the early years of the twentieth century in the U.S.A. reveal a growing anti-semitism, based on similar stereotypes to those used in Britain. It is possible to identify, as Handlin does, the existence by 1914 of an American racial ideology, reinforced by contemporary sociology, which 'definitely marked certain ethnic groups, including the Jews, as inferior and unassimilable.'¹⁵⁸ Again, we note the similarity to the British experience, where certain elements of society also regarded the Jews as perpetual aliens. Discrimination and

violence were more frequent and widespread than in Britain, since the problems and tensions partly caused by immigration and social mobility were on a far greater scale. The acceptance of the Protocols after the War, however, illustrates the basic similarity to British anti-semitism, in that the imagery before 1914 had prepared the ground for their relative success after 1918.

Jews in Russia found that their position was decisively changed in the 1880s, when there was a marked increase in hostility by the Russian government and many of the Russian people. The accession of Alexander III in 1881 ushered in a period of reaction which lasted, in effect, until 1917 and was notable for an anti-semitism that was often violent. Jews became identified with 'things Western' and the government sought to sustain its popularity by a virulent and openly anti-Jewish policy.¹⁵⁹ The civil service was closed to Jews, as were academic posts, and it was difficult for them to enter the liberal professions. Quotas were imposed for admission to schools and universities and the regulations governing the Pale of Settlement made more stringent.¹⁶⁰ More fundamentally, a series of pogroms began in 1881 and lasted intermittently until 1920.¹⁶¹ What is clear is that these outbursts of violence were by no means spontaneous - 'they demanded long-term planning, careful organisation, above all intensive agitation. Sometimes this work was carried out by the police, but sometimes private individuals - above all, unscrupulous journalists - took a hand.'¹⁶² Cohn shows that it was through these agencies that the most infamous of Russian anti-semitic propaganda, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, were communicated. In addition, the traditional superstitions regarding the Jews were played upon, particularly the accusation of ritual murder. It was such an accusation by a fanatical newspaper editor which helped produce the Kishinev massacre in 1903, where forty five Jews were killed and several hundred injured.¹⁶³

In the period leading up to the First World War, overt violence declined.

The pogroms of 1905-6, largely inspired by the government as an attempt to blame the Jews for the defeats in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, and often organised by the police,¹⁶⁴ were the last on such a wide scale before 1914. After 1906, it is suggested that the anti-semites turned away from the pogrom and sought less violent means for the oppression of the Jews.¹⁶⁵

Publication of the Protocols in various forms continued,¹⁶⁶ as did discrimination, and it is also in these years immediately prior to the War that we find the revival of the blood libel. In 1911, a conference of an association of nobles, demanding that Russia be rid of its Jews, had claimed once again that the Jews required Christian blood for their religious observances.¹⁶⁷ Later that year, Mendel Beilis, a Jewish clerk in Kiev, was accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy. The trial was eventually held in 1913 and Beilis was acquitted, although the claim that Jews carried out such actions was still maintained.¹⁶⁸ Evidence clearly indicates the intervention by police and the government and the attempt to use this isolated incident to discredit all Jews.¹⁶⁹

Ettlinger suggests that the case of Beilis symbolised the struggle in Russia at that time; Beilis represented the forces of liberalism under attack from the reactionary government. It is clear that anti-semitism in Russia was used for such political ends, although its appeal lay in the superstitions and images of pre-racial hostility. The severity of the persecution can be seen by the numbers of Jews who emigrated from Russia; between 1898 and 1914, about one and a quarter million left to seek new opportunities and new freedom.¹⁷⁰ Some came to Britain, where the discrimination and hostility they experienced was undoubtedly less harsh.

For the Jews of France, the twentieth century began still in the shadows of the Dreyfus affair. Although emancipation had come relatively early at the

end of the eighteenth century, France had, like most other European countries, a long history of anti-semitism and this legacy became apparent in the 1880s, when the beginnings of a political movement, using hostility to the Jews, emerged. As in other countries, the target was often the alleged dominance and corruption of wealthy Jews;¹⁷¹ the theme of La France Juive, published in 1886 by Edouard Drumont, a leading anti-semitic writer, was the destruction of the old France by the Jews.¹⁷²

It was within this growing background of anti-semitism that the Dreyfus affair developed. Kedward suggests that there were several groups in France who sought to blame their problems upon the Jews. Social and economic tensions amongst the lower middle class and the lesser officers of the army found expression in anti-Jewish sentiments; indeed, it was in this area that Jewish competition for employment and status was most noticeable. There was also a degree of socialist anti-semitism, focusing, as in Britain, on the Rothschilds as the arch example of the Jew-capitalist. 'And finally, deriving from acute insecurity, political and religious attitudes and local tradition, was the anti-semitism of the Catholics and political conservatives whose interests had been undermined by the anticlerical legislation of the Republic.'¹⁷³ These various sections of French society could all explain their own misfortunes in terms of the rise of the Jews. Thus the trial of Dreyfus provided the focal point for the expression of their various fears and their identification of the root cause as the Jews.

Following the conviction of Dreyfus came the birth (or perhaps gradual evolution) of 'Action Française' a right wing political organisation which was to use anti-semitism as one of the elements of its appeal. In addition, there were, from the Catholic Union Nationale, demands for the exclusion of Jews from public employment, calls for the withdrawal of citizenship and even for expulsion from France.¹⁷⁴ It seemed to French Jews that freedoms thought to have been won during the era of enlightenment were now under attack.

Even after Dreyfus was eventually cleared in 1906, anti-semitism was still prominent amongst members of right wing movements like the Camelots du Roi and also in a profusion of anti-Jewish literature. According to Blumencranz's study, the main themes were Jewish conspiracy against the Christian world, the links between Jews and secret societies, Jewish spies during the Dreyfus period, Jewish terror, Jewish invasion and the accusation of ritual murder.¹⁷⁵ These allegations and fears are very similar to those found in Britain, all relating basically to the problem of Jewish power as seen in the activities of a few individuals. The scale of publication, however, appears to have had a wider base in France, drawing on the experience of the 1890s and it had a political organisation ready and willing to use anti-semitism. Although the support for 'Action Française' had declined in the years immediately before 1914, it survived to become a force again in the 1920s and 30s, as Nolte's detailed study shows. In political terms, although only the 'movement of a small minority,'¹⁷⁶ it displayed a dimension of anti-semitism before 1914 which was not fully experienced in Britain until the 1930s.

Legal emancipation for Germany's Jews came later than that of France. The partial freedoms gained whilst the German states were under Napoleonic control had been followed by an anti-semitic reaction. However, with the gradual evolution of a middle class, at least partially committed to liberalism, Jews began to experience fewer barriers and their full civil rights were finally achieved within the new German Reich in 1871.¹⁷⁷ Yet along with emancipation came further hostility as Jews entered the gentile world and began to compete within that social system. Undoubtedly part of the reaction consisted of 'respectable anti-semitism'; the familiar reaction against 'the insinuating presence of a money-making, money-centred clannish group',¹⁷⁸ but it also contained a new element of 'modern' anti-semitism. Whilst there were many variations to this new hostility, the essence was the belief that the Jews had

become the controllers of power in the modern Germany.

'... Jews were not only despicable but mortally dangerous - because Germans were peculiarly vulnerable to Jewish subversion. From the beginning to the end of German anti-semitism was this paranoid fear of the power of the Jews: at first, they were depicted as the economic masters of the Germans, but gradually, and long before Hitler, there developed the myth that Jews had the power to destroy the German character, to corrupt Germans, economically, morally, eugenically, sexually.'¹⁷⁹

With the economic collapse of 1873 came accusations that it had been engineered by the Jews, just as the economic problems in France were blamed on Jewish financiers.¹⁸⁰ Groups hostile to the new German state, petit bourgeoisie, Conservatives and Catholics,¹⁸¹ began increasingly to identify the Jew as the focal point of their discontent. 'In the politics of cultural despair, a compound of nationalism, anti-modernity, and anticapitalism, the Jew was the symbol of evil.'¹⁸²

The anti-semitism took several forms. One was the increase of anti-semitic publications, notably that of Eugen Duehring, whose work, The Jewish Question, (1880), condemned the Jew in racial terms, introducing the element of racism into anti-semitism and leading the way to a more virulent brand of hostility against the Jews.¹⁸³ There was also a growing political use of anti-semitism, first practiced by Adolf Stoecker's Christian Social Workers' Party.¹⁸⁴ This activity came to a peak in the early 1890s, when the Conservatives, one of the major parties in control of the country, included in its 1892 programme a critique of the destructive Jewish influence over German national life and thus began to compete with the other smaller anti-semitic parties. The 1893 Reichstag elections saw a considerable rise in the anti-semitic vote - 'For the first time the anti-semites had a sufficient number of seats in the Reichstag to enable them to act as an independent parliamentary group.'¹⁸⁵ Jews also suffered from discrimination, particularly exclusion from positions of authority.

'Jewish officers were not promoted, the Ministry of Justice prevented the appointment of Jews to judicial positions, and the Ministry of Education did likewise with government teaching positions. The hostile attitude towards the Jews prevailing in academic circles precluded them from obtaining university posts.'¹⁸⁶

In parliamentary terms, 1893 marked the peak of the anti-semites' success. The number of seats held was not a true indicator of their decline after this date, since in 1907 they held more than in 1893. More significant was the 'shrinking membership in the fragmented parties, the growing dissatisfaction with German institutions evidenced by conventional anti-Semites, and their recognition that the purely anti-Semitic part of the program had become an obstacle to election.'¹⁸⁷ This should not, however, be taken as an indication of a general decline in German anti-semitism.¹⁸⁸ In the written form, it continued to be expressed throughout the country and began increasingly to take on a 'scientific' racialist element. Perhaps the culmination of this process was Chamberlain's Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, (1898), which saw all history as the struggle between the Aryan and Jewish races.¹⁸⁹ This influential (in intellectual terms) work sold many thousands of copies and Kaiser Wilhelm II is said to have proposed that it be included in the study programme of all officer cadets.¹⁹⁰ Anti-semitism became deeply entrenched in the educational system, in the teaching, in the teachers and amongst students. Practically all student groups were hostile to Jews after 1890 and excluded them from student societies.¹⁹¹ Whilst political anti-semitism may have been in decline, both occupational and social exclusion generally increased.¹⁹²

It has been suggested that German anti-semitism adopted a less harsh tone after 1900 and that there is little evidence of violence after this date. What was noticeable was the lack of contact between Jew and gentile and this would appear to signify the almost complete absorption into German society of hostility towards Jews by the early years of the twentieth century.¹⁹³ The publication in 1910 of Sombart's The Jews and Capitalism, which was an assertion of the powerful role played by the Jews in the construction of the capitalist system, was

seized on by anti-semites such as Theodor Fritsch, who used it selectively to perpetrate the Shylock stereotype.¹⁹⁴ There were even calls for state action against Jews - in 1912, Heinrich Class, leader of the Pan-German movement, called for rigid isolation and double taxation.¹⁹⁵ These few examples show clearly that although the immediate political value of anti-semitism was in decline by 1914, anti-semitism itself was certainly not diminished. The fear of the power of the Jews, outlined by Stern, as the core of such hostility is a familiar theme, since this chapter began with just such a study in the anti-semitic tradition of Britain.

CHAPTER 9 : FOOTNOTES

1. See p. vii
2. See Henry D'Avigdor-Goldsmid, 'The Little Marconi Case', History Today, Vol. 14, no. 4 , (April, 1964), pp. 283-6, for a brief account of the affair. This article is somewhat unhistorical in its approach; certain judgements being of dubious validity. For example, it is claimed that anti-semitism was a political force in Britain at the time, yet no evidence is produced. The author claims that it was supported by 'respectable people' and that 'honourable people' sympathised with the cause, terms which have no useful meaning.
The Indian Silver affair is often confused with the Marconi Scandal or seen as arising from it. For example, Waley, dealing with Indian Silver, refers to the Marconi Scandal of 1911 (sic), 'which had no doubt pre-disposed people to make accusations of this kind.' (S.D. Waley, Edwin Montagu : A Memoir and an Account of his Visits to India, (London, 1964), p. 55. The chronology shows that the two scandals occurred virtually simultaneously, rather than by cause and effect.
3. J.M. Keynes, Indian Currency and Finance, (London, 1913 - 1971 edition), p. 101
4. The Witness was to the fore in the reaction, to such an extent that Edwin Montagu wished to sue for libel, but his family declined to do so. (Waley, op. cit., p. 56)
5. See its claim, 13 February 1913, for its publicity as the beginnings of the demand for an investigation. Rupert Gwynne was, despite the similarity of name, no relation to the editor of the Post, H.A. Gwynne.
6. 2 November 1912
7. The Throne, 30 October 1912
8. Spectator, 2 November 1912
9. Ibid., 9 November 1912
10. John Bull, 9, 16 November 1912
11. 2 November 1912
12. Keynes, op. cit., p. 101
13. Proceedings of Royal Commission on Indian Finance and Currency (1913), House of Commons Sessional Papers, Cd. 7069
14. Final Report of Royal Commission on Indian Finance and Currency (1914), House of Commons Sessional Papers, Cd. 7236, p. 49
15. 11 December 1912

16. 30 November 1912
17. See Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 44, cols. 685-743
18. Ibid., Vol. 47, col. 1747
19. Quoted in D'Avigdor-Goldsmid, History Today, op. cit., p. 286
20. For details, see ibid.
21. See Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 48, col. 1232; Our Flag, February 1913 (in which Gwynne included a hand-drawn genealogical table of the Samuel family).
22. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 48, col. 1262
23. 14 February 1913
24. Pall Mall Gazette, 12 February 1913
25. 19 April 1913
26. Daily Herald, 31 May 1913
27. The Outlook, 31 May 1913
28. 15 February 1913
29. Letter from Henry Samuel, a South African landowner, in New Age, 23 August 1913
30. 31 March 1913
31. 8 March 1912
32. See p. 315
33. Jewish Chronicle, 8 March 1912
34. Ibid., 27 December 1912
35. Alderman, Welsh History Review, op. cit.
36. Geoffrey Alderman, 'Into the Vortex : South Wales Jewry Before 1914', in Provincial Jewry in Victorian Britain, papers for a conference of the Jewish Historical Society of England, July 1975
37. Ibid. The article deals only briefly with events before 1911, ignoring, for instance, a near riot in Pontypridd in September 1903 (see Jewish Chronicle, 25 September, 2 October 1903)
38. Alderman, Welsh History Review, op. cit., p. 198
39. Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 187

40. 7 May 1913
41. 22 January 1913
42. Thomas Wodehouse Legh, 2nd Baron Newton (1857-1942)
1886-98, Conservative M.P. for Newton
1898 , succeeded father to peerage
1915 , Paymaster-General and Privy Councillor
1916-19, Controller, prisoner-of-war department, Foreign Office
43. See article, 'Shylock and the Law', Truth, 4 June 1913
44. Parl. Debates (Lords), 5th series, Vol. 14, cols. 690-1
45. Ibid., Col. 694
46. Halévy, op. cit., p. 372 (for details of the 1900 Act, see ibid., p. 238)
47. He was not alone in such judgement. Arnold White, warning of the dangers of an anti-Jewish reaction in England, referred to the 1900 Bill as 'purely anti-semitic in its effects' (White, The Modern Jew, op. cit., pp. 278-9)
48. Meath can be identified as an opponent of alien immigration in the 1880s, supporting Arnold White and the Earl of Dunraven in their exclusion movement. See Gainer, op. cit., pp. 61, 107-8
49. Parl. Debates (Lords), 5th series, Vol. 14, cols. 694, 698
50. 9 July 1913
51. 25 December 1913
52. 12 July 1913
53. 9 July 1913
54. 27 December 1913
55. Edna Bonacich, 'A Theory of Middleman Minorities', American Sociological Review, Vol. 38 (1973), pp. 583-594
56. 21 May 1913
57. 10 June 1913
58. 7 June 1913
59. 3 February 1912
60. For a sociological explanation of the Jewish joke, contrary to the school of thought which proclaims it as a factor in easing tension, see Simpson and Yinger, op. cit., p. 235
'By laughing at the joke we share a bond of common "knowledge" with out associates, we get a feeling of superiority, and by acknowledging its humour we get a twisted kind of proof that our original attitude was correct.'

61. Jewish Chronicle, 10 January 1913
62. Letter of 4 October 1913, quoted in Eva Reading, For the Record : The Memoirs of Eva, Marchioness of Reading, (London, 1973), p. 28
63. As one of the characters in Israel Zangwill's famous novel of Jewish life, Children of the Ghetto, (1909), remarked, 'the conception of the Jew in the mind of the average Christian is a mixture of Fagin, Shylock, Rothschild, and the caricature of the comic papers.' (Quoted in Leftwich, op. cit., p. 40)
64. 2 April 1913
65. 11 December 1912
66. One might make the comparison here with attitudes of the anti-immigrant lobby of the 1960s and 70s, which describes the 'Black British' - second and third generation immigrants from the West Indies, India and Pakistan - in similar fashion.
67. Spectator, 7 December 1912
68. 10 April 1913
70. Hollis, The Mind of Chesterton, op. cit., p. 142
71. For details of Jews in Britain during the war, particularly attitudes to Jews of foreign origin (or suspected of being so), see C.C. Aronsfeld, Jewish Social Studies, op. cit., Elkan D. Levy, 'Anti-Semitism in England at War, 1914-1916', Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 4, no. 5 (Sept - Oct 1970), pp. 27-30, uses the same sources as Aronsfeld and has little to add to the earlier study.
72. Analysis of material produced by L'Action Française, New Age, 26 December 1912
73. In 1911 Sir Ernest Cassell gave £210,000 for the creation of the British-German Foundation, a body to promote cooperation between the two nations (Chaim Bermant, The Cousinhood, (London, 1971), p. 220). See also contributions by Alfred de Rothschild, Alfred Mond, Herbert Samuel and Rufus Isaacs, amongst others, in Ludwig Stein (ed.), England and Germany, (London, 1912). This collection of essays by the editor of Nord und Süd was designed to illustrate the extent of pro-German feeling in Britain.
74. Aronsfeld, Jewish Social Studies, op. cit., pp. 275-6
75. L. Perry Curtis Jnr., Apes and Angels : The Irishman in Victorian Caricature, (Newton Abbott, 1971), p. 3
76. A.G. Gardiner, Prophets, Priests and Kings, (London, 1908-1914 edition), pp. 158-9
77. Ibid., pp. 252-3
78. See Hugh Thomas, op. cit., p. 13

79. The use of this name is interesting, since Bleichroeder was a famous German financier of the late 19th century. See below, p.
80. Quoted in The Outlook, 24 May 1913. The review called the novel 'A brilliant, distinguished, memorable book'.
81. Waley, op. cit., p. 39
82. J.M. Keynes, Essays in Biography, (London, 1933), quoted in ibid., p. 15
83. Montagu to Asquith, 22 December 1915, quoted in Waley, op. cit., p. 84
84. Waley, op. cit., p. 93. There were probably other circumstances surrounding Montagu's refusal. For example, Asquith had apparently seen Montagu's Jewishness as a disqualifying factor for the Viceroy's position and Montagu was, therefore, simply pointing out the operation of a double standard.
85. Waley, op. cit., p. 4
86. Ibid., pp. 139-40
87. 11 March 1911, paraphrased in Bermant, op. cit., p. 253
88. Letter in Nation, 18 March 1911
89. Geoffrey Bindman, 'Discrimination in Wills', Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 9 no. 6 (Nov-Dec 1975), p. 23
90. Nation, 3 August 1912 (details of will published in The Times, 29 July 1912)
91. 10 August 1912
92. Curtis, op. cit., p. 29
93. John A. Jackson, The Irish in Britain, (London, 1963), pp. 156-7
94. Ibid., p. 156
95. Ibid.
96. Kevin O'Connor, The Irish in Britain, (London, 1972 - revised edition 1974), p. 40
97. Quoted in J.E. Handly, The Irish in Scotland, (London, 1943), p. 228
98. E.V. Lucas, Playtime and Company : a Book for Children, (London, 1925) p. 34, quoted in Jackson, op. cit., p. 157
99. James Walvin, Black and White : The Negro and British Society, 1555-1945, (London, 1973), p. 202
100. Based on ibid., pp. 202-4
101. Ibid., p. 205

102. Kenneth Little, Negroes in Britain : A Study of Racial Relations in English Society, (London, 1948 - revised edition, 1972), pp. 232-40. See also John Rex, Race, Colonialism and the City, (London, 1973), esp. pp. 75-93
103. Rose, op. cit., p. 214
104. Ibid., p. 216
105. Donald Read, Edwardian England (Historical Association pamphlet), (London, 1972), p. 16. For further examples of colonial attitudes to other races, see Read, Edwardian England, op. cit., pp. 136-40
106. Blunt, op. cit., 21 February 1911, p. 754. Blunt displayed a similar approach as Belloc, Chesterton and others to the 'Jewish Question', lamenting the growing Jewish influence in all spheres of British life. For details of his views on the Marconi Scandal, see Earl of Lytton, Wilfred Scawen Blunt : A Memoir by his Grandson, (London, 1961), pp. 184-7
107. G.P. Gooch, History of Our Own Times (London, 1911), quoted in Read, Edwardian England, op. cit., p. 139
108. For details of the Congress, see Michael Biddiss, 'The Universal Races Congress of 1911', Race, Vol. 13, no. 1 (July 1971), pp. 37-46
109. John Bull, 1 February 1913
110. Umpire, 29 September 1912
111. 1 September 1912
112. 25 September 1912
113. Roy May and Robin Cohen, 'The Interaction Between Race and Colonialism : A Case Study of the Liverpool Race Riots of 1919', Race and Class, Vol. 16 no. 2 (October 1974), p. 115
114. Gary Dimmock, 'Racial Hostility in Britain with particular reference to the disturbances in Cardiff and Liverpool in 1919' M.A. Thesis, Sheffield University, 1975, pp. 39-42
115. Walvin, op. cit., p. 208. For a brief account of the riots, see pp. 206-8
116. May and Cohen, Race and Class, op. cit., pp. 116-7
117. Walvin, op. cit., pp. 208-9
118. Gina Mitchell, 'John Buchan's popular fiction : a hierarchy of race', Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 7, no. 6 (November-December 1973), p. 24
119. George Watson, The English Ideology : Studies in the Language of Victorian Politics, (London, 1973), p. 204
120. Mitchell, Patterns of Prejudice, op. cit., p. 28. For an interesting consideration of the image of blacks in Victorian literature and text-books, and the influence of colonialism in the creation of the imagery, see Dimmock, op. cit., pp. 49-58

121. J.P. May, 'The British Working Class and the Chinese, 1870-1911, with particular reference to the seamen's strike of 1911', M.A. Thesis, Warwick University, 1973
122. For a description of the wider geographical ramifications of the 'Yellow Peril', see Geoffrey Barraclough, An Introduction to Contemporary History, (London, 1964 - Pelican edition, 1967), pp. 81-4
123. May, op. cit., p. 118
124. Ernest Krauz, Ethnic Minorities in Britain, (London, 1971), pp. 20-1
125. May, op. cit., pp. 28-38
126. See p. 315
127. May, op. cit., pp. 54-5
128. For full details, see ibid., pp. 51-84
129. Ibid., pp. 85-9
130. Dimmock, op. cit., p. 41
131. May, op. cit., pp. 24-5
132. See p. 206
133. A.K. Russell, Liberal Landslide : The General Election of 1906, (Newton Abbott, 1973), pp. 65, 69, 83
134. Ibid., pp. 106-7
135. 20 January 1906, quoted in ibid., p. 196
136. The Throne, 17 May 1913
137. Ibid., 24 May 1913
138. J.A. Hobson, Gold, Prices and Wages, (London, 1913), p. 136
139. Quoted in Jewish Chronicle, 23 February 1913
140. See D.H. Aldcroft (ed.), The Development of British Industry and Foreign Competition, 1875-1914, (London, 1968).
141. Gregory Anderson, Victorian Clerks, (Manchester, 1976), p. 7. He also notes that blame was apportioned to young men and to female clerks (p. 49)
142. Ibid., p. 61
143. Ibid., p. 132
144. John Higham, 'Anti-Semitism in the Gilded Age : A Reinterpretation', Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 43 (1956-7), p. 567

145. For details, see John Higham, 'American Anti-Semitism Historically Reconsidered', in Dinnerstein (ed.), op. cit., p. 70. John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925, (New York, 1955 - 1974 edition), pp. 160-1, Ruth Gay, Jews in America: A Short History, (New York, 1965), p. 114, Oscar Handlin, Adventure in Freedom: Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in America, (New York, 1954 - 1971 edition), pp. 197-9
146. Gay, op. cit., p. 114, Handlin, op. cit., p. 199
147. See Irving Howe, The Immigrant Jews of New York, (London, 1976), p. 396 - for comparison, see Garrard, op. cit., Garner, op. cit.
148. Higham, M.V.H.R., op. cit., pp. 576-7
149. For details, see Higham, Strangers in the Land, op. cit., p. 177, Lee J. Levinger, Anti-Semitism in the United States: Its History and Causes, (New York, 1925 - 1973 reprint), p. 61
150. M.V.H.R., op. cit., p. 562
151. For an indication of the debate, see papers by Handlin, Hofstadter, Higham and Jaker in Dinnerstein (ed.), op. cit.
152. Howe, op. cit., p. 398
153. Higham. M.V.H.R., op. cit., pp. 567-8
154. The most comprehensive account can be found in Leonard Dinnerstein, The Leo Frank Case, (New York, 1968)
155. Higham, Strangers in the Land, op. cit., p. 186
156. Ibid., p. 183
157. Ibid., p. 186
158. Handlin, op. cit., p. 195. See also Alexander Thomas and Samuel Sillen, Racism and Psychiatry, (New York, 1972), pp. 14-61, which points to the legitimising of such attitudes by American psychiatrists in these years by their acceptance and justification of 'instinctive' prejudice.
159. S. Ettinger, 'The Jews in Russia at the Outbreak of the Revolution', in Lionel Kochan (ed.), The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917, (London, 1972), p. 17
160. Ibid.
161. For details, see G.F. Abbott, Israel in Europe, (London, 1907-1972 reprint), pp. 329-378
162. Cohn, op. cit., p. 118
163. Quoted in ibid., p. 119
164. See ibid., p. 120, Ettinger, op. cit., p. 18

165. Maurice Samuel, Blood Accusation : The Strange History of the Beiliss Case, (London, 1967), p. 18
166. See Cohn, op. cit., pp. 122-6, Gerard Israel, The Jews in Russia (translated by Sanford L. Charnoff), (London, 1975), p. 90
167. S. Ettinger, 'The Modern Period', in H.H. Ben-Sasson (ed.), A History of the Jewish People, (London, 1976), p. 888
168. For full details, see Maurice Samuel, op. cit.
169. Israel, op. cit., p. 92, Ettinger, 'The Modern Period', op. cit., p. 888
170. Ettinger, 'The Jews in Russia', op. cit., p. 21
171. See, for example, the importance of the collapse of the Union Générale bank in 1882 (Michael Marrus, The Politics of Assimilation, (London, 1971), p. 125, Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, (London, 1961 - 1967 edition), p. 97) and the Panama Canal Scandal of 1892 (Roderick Kedward, The Dreyfus Affair : Catalyst for Tensions in French Society, (London, 1965 - 1969 edition), p.4, Ettinger, 'The Modern Period', op. cit., p. 878, Abbott, op. cit., p. 432
172. For an evaluation of this work, see Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, (London, 1965), pp. 50-1, Kedward, op. cit., p. 54
173. Kedward, op. cit., p. 54. For a comprehensive account of anti-Jewish attitudes, see Robert F. Byrnes, Antisemitism in Modern France : Prologue to Dreyfus, (New Brunswick, 1950). On socialist anti-Semitism, see Edmund Silberner, 'French Socialism and the Jewish Question, 1865-1914,' Historia Judaica, Vol. 16, part 1 (April 1954), pp. 3-38. Some details of Catholic hostility can be found in Stephen Wilson, 'Catholic Populism in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair : The Union Nationale', Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 10, no. 4 (October 1975), pp. 667-705
174. Wilson, Journal of Contemporary History, op. cit., p. 694
175. Bernhard Blumenkranz et al., Histoire des Juifs en France, (Toulouse, 1972), p. 365
176. Carsten, op. cit., p. 17
177. Cohn, op. cit., p. 41
178. Fritz Stern, Gold and Iron : Bismarck, Bleichroeder and the Building of the German Empire, (London, 1977), p. xviii
179. Ibid., p. 495
180. See p. 347
181. See Paul Massing, Rehearsal for Destruction : A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany, (New York, 1959), pp. 46-7
182. Stern, op. cit., p. 468

183. See George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology : Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich, (London, 1966), p. 131, Stern, op. cit., pp. 508-9 and Massing, op. cit., pp. 46-7
184. See P.J. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria, (London, 1964), pp. 90-4
185. Massing, op. cit., p. 71
186. Ettinger, 'The Modern Period', op. cit., p. 877
187. Richard S. Levy, 'The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany, (London, 1975), p. 225. See pp. 225-253 for full details.
188. See Levy, op. cit., p. 259
189. For a brief analysis, see Mosse, op. cit., pp. 90-7
190. Ettinger, 'The Modern Period', op. cit., p. 877
191. See Mosse, op. cit., pp. 134-5, 145
192. Stephen Sharot, Judaism : A Sociology, (Newton Abbott, 1976), p. 117
193. Mosse, op. cit., pp. 134-5
194. Ibid., pp. 141-2
195. Ibid., p. 138

CHAPTER 10

RICH JEW, POOR JEW

Whilst such an analysis of the Jewish image, and a comparative synthesis, is revealing of the various experiences of other minority groups and of other 'host' communities, there is a further element in the study of anti-semitism which is perhaps more significant. It concerns the change of emphasis of the 'Jewish Question' in Britain; a change which is of great relevance to post-war developments. Simply stated, it is the increasing concentration before 1914 on the rich Jew. No longer is the bulk of the hostility directed against immigration and against the poor Eastern European Jew, as it had been in the period leading up to the 1905 Aliens Act. This, no doubt, reflects the diminishing number of immigrants arriving in Britain after the Act,¹ but it also suggests that the nature of opposition to Jews was, in itself, taking on a new emphasis.

With the continued integration of Jews into British society, and the progress of certain of their number into the highest echelons of politics, trade and finance, the 'Jewish Question' was now far more frequently posed in terms of Jewish dominance or control of this industry, of that trade, of the media and of politics. Symbols of this Jewish power were, as in other European countries and in the USA, the Rothschilds in particular and Jewish financiers in general. Eric Hobsbawm has suggested that much of the 'pervasive anti-semitism' of the period was a reaction to the increasing importance of German-Jewish financiers.² Similarly, Cecil Roth pointed to the 'Court Jews', the wealthy financiers linked with Edward VII, as both symbol of Jewish success and also of the threat posed to the 'British way of life'.

'Their prominence attracted not only attention, but also envy, and they gave the impression that Judaism and wealth were interchangeable terms. The English Anti-Semitism of the early 20th century, of the Chesterton-Belloc school, had as its main target, and main justification, the Court Jews on the one hand and the South Africa millionaires on the other. To some extent the poor Jewish immigrant of the East End suffered and paid the

price for the prominence enjoyed by his plutocratic co-religionists in Mayfair and the Court of St James.'³

As Roth indicates, the distinction between rich-Jew and poor-Jew anti-semitism is a semantic one, since anti-Jewish feeling was usually seen as being directed against all Jews. One only has to look at the fears of the established Anglo-Jewish community at the prospect of mass immigration and the subsequent hostility of the native population not only against the poor newcomers but also against themselves to appreciate the commonly-held view.⁴ However, accepting the distinction as somewhat artificial in its end result, it is still possible to distinguish that the dominant strain of anti-semitism in the period immediately before 1914 was directed against wealthy and powerful Jews.

This does not mean that poor-Jew hostility ceased to exist. Reactions against immigrants were still quite frequent and found their way into the pages of the press, particularly Conservative journals. The Outlook noted with some pleasure the campaign of the Morning Post against alien immigrants in July 1913,⁵ and also contained many references in its own pages. There was particular concern about emigration from Britain, and the replacement of 'fine British stock' with inferior goods. A traveller to the Orient, noting the number of emigrants to Australia, wrote:

'The passengers, including myself, could not help remarking what a loss to our country such a fine-looking lot of young men must be, especially when we know that our silly alien laws admit the scum of Europe to take their place, degrade our country, spread anarchism, and eventually to become British citizens.'⁶

Similar sentiments were expressed in The Throne, which spoke of sadness at the emigration, 'while, in exchange, we get the scum of Europe ... in spite of the agitation which took place after the Houndsditch murders.'⁷ Joseph Banister contributed his own thoughts on the subject,

'... Thanks to the country being governed by the representatives of a party dependent on wealthy Jews for the bulk of its funds, the huge gaps made in our population by the emigration of the flower of

our industrial and agricultural population are partly filled by aliens of such a notoriously undesirable character that no other country could be induced to receive them.

When London has a daily Press controlled by Englishmen, rather than by Jews, Quakers, Americans, and denationalised Celts, and which will attach as much importance to the interests of the British race as to the retention of Jewish advertisement patronage, it is possible that it will be anxious to promote the restriction of the undesirable alien influx, rather than to encourage the afflux of desirable Englishmen.⁸

This kind of argument led to attacks upon aliens of all classes (hence the artificiality of rich-Jew/poor-Jew distinctions), as a letter from 'E.R.' showed.

'These aliens come upon our rates and enter our hospitals often from the moment they land, and hatch plots against the rulers of countries which are our allies. Besides that they intermarry with our people and cause degeneration of the race. So-called English people will soon be nothing but mongrels; but what out-Herod's Herod is that questionable aliens under glorified names should be allowed to occupy seats in our House of Parliament.'⁹

Just as in the earlier debate over immigration, the danges of poor aliens creating a universal impression caused a reaction in the long-established immigrant community. George Raffalovich, a naturalised British subject, spoke of the 'alien adulteration of English urban areas' by the 'scum of the slums of Europe' but spoke of 'many worthy and useful naturalised British subjects, who wish they could do more for the country they respect and love, instead of merely witnessing with sorrow in their hearts the state of degradation of present-day politics.' Raffalovich's solution was similar to that proposed by some sections of the Anglo-Jewish community in previous years. 'Is there no possibility of the next Conservative Cabinet bringing in a Bill to create two classes of naturalisation, or at least to establish severe tests as to the language, the knowledge of history, the mental and physical health of the applicant?'¹⁰

Fear of anarchism and the alien had, of course, been given a great boost by the events leading up to the Sidney Street siege.¹¹ This produced demands for the tightening of legislation against immigration and for increased powers against aliens; aims which found little success in the over-loaded parliament of

that time.¹² Questions about the deportation of criminal aliens were a feature of the early part of 1912, with M.Ps like Viscount Wolmer and Sir J.D. Rees anxious to know if policy was strict enough.¹³ James O'Grady, the Labour M.P. for Leeds, who had been an occasional advocate of restriction before 1906,¹⁴ was still troubled by the threat of undercutting wages and prices which he felt immigration posed, particularly when a Russian tailor, Schaye Goldfied, appealed against deportation and was successful, one of the officials of the Immigration Board referring to the need for cheap labour.¹⁵ It was probably this concern which led O'Grady to introduce a Bill 'To Amend the Aliens Act 1905' on 1 May 1913.¹⁶ The Bill did not get beyond the first reading, suffering the same fate as similar Labour amendments in 1905 and 1906.¹⁷ In addition, Rowland Hunt, of Clean Government League fame, asked if aliens were still keeping down wages and creating unemployment, proceeding to make several political points about the Aliens Act.¹⁸ His dislike of aliens was not limited to rich ones.

However, whilst there was continuing concern about poor immigrants, particularly Jews, and still a certain degree of hostility, the focus in 1911-1914 was undoubtedly on the more wealthy alien, particularly the Jew. This was not, of course, a new phenomenon. Its particular appeal for socialists has been documented by Garrard, who suggests that anti-Jew anti-semitism did not, for them, come 'within the forbidden category of racialism at all',¹⁹ and he lists examples from William Cobbett in 1806 to the agitation surrounding the Boer War and Jewish capitalists.²⁰ As we have seen from Justice and the Daily Herald, this tendency still existed during the Marconi Scandal and its subsequent events. However, it would be a mistake to see rich-Jew anti-semitism as a monopoly of the left. From this case study, it has become apparent that hostility was expressed in Conservative journals with, if anything, more regularity and the general studies of the period make frequent references to the anti-semitism of

the Edwardian age, as reflected by the middle and upper classes, as a widespread phenomenon.

'Anti-semitism was common in the West End, of course, but it was not of a sort calculated to start a pogrom. It was expressed rather in a certain social snobbery, and in the literary tradition which embraced Melmotte in Trollope's The Way We Live Now and Svengali in Du Maurier's Trilby (which has been called the first modern best seller).'²¹

Similarly, Bernard Bergonzi, seeking to place Belloc and G.K. Chesterton in their cultural context, wrote:

'... in the years before the first world war anti-semitic attitudes seem to have been extraordinarily common both in literary circles and out of them. As Orwell once remarked, there have been very few English writers who were not in some degree anti-semitic ...'²²

Whilst these descriptions are impressionistic rather than scientifically detailed, the implication, reinforced by this study, is that hostility towards Jews was on the increase in the years before the First World War.²³ The pages of the Jewish Chronicle reflect the growing concern of Jews at this state of affairs. In addition, the concentration is on the successful Jew, who had, as it were, taken his place in society and had thus begun to compete within the existing social structure for whatever rewards might be available. This evident result of emancipation seems to have been the keynote of the increasing tension which was directed against these Jews.

In discussing how this rich-Jew anti-semitism manifested itself, it seems important to consider two aspects. Firstly, in the light of the European experience, we must ask if the hostility was translated into discrimination. Here the evidence is extremely difficult to obtain. Obviously the petty social snobbery mentioned above had some impact but more serious discrimination, with the sanction of some institution, was apparently largely absent from the Jewish experience in Britain in these years. There is the case of Lewis Namier, the historian, who found his application for a fellowship at

All Souls, Oxford, rejected because he was a Jew. The circumstances were described by A.F. Pollard, who was himself present at the selection meeting.

' "The meeting on Friday morning for the election of Fellows was lively and I was told the debate was the best on record, which perhaps I should not repeat as I had to take a considerable part in it. The lawyers could not conscientiously run a law candidate, so we had two for history. The best man by far in sheer intellect was a Balliol man of Polish-Jewish origin and I did my best for him, but the Warden and majority of Fellows shied at his race, and eventually we elected the two next best." '24

A letter to the Jewish Chronicle from Woolfe Crammer would appear to confirm that Oxford and Cambridge did practise discrimination, particularly when Jewish candidates applied for scholastic posts.²⁵ Other examples of discrimination are difficult to confirm. Dudley Barker records that some pieces written by G.K. Chesterton were rejected by F.Y. Eccles, editor of the left wing Liberal Speaker because he was convinced the handwriting was that of a Jew ('an odd sidelight on advanced radical thought at the turn of the century')²⁶, whilst Robb's study notes that the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians were reported to have rejected the lowest tenders for milk and poultry contracts because they came from Jews.²⁷

However, other evidence of discrimination is not immediately apparent and this is probably indicative of the particular nature of the liberal tradition in Britain, which generally made overt discrimination socially unacceptable. Yet the absence of discrimination on a wide scale is not necessarily a denial of the increase in hostility.

'... as long as intergroup conflicts persist, there is nothing to prevent the existence or increase of prejudice toward the minority, even if the expression of that prejudice must be handled with care by majority group members in public situations. In psychological terms, prejudice may have an important compensatory function for majority group members. Socially shared negative stereotypes about the minority group, which majority group members may express to one another, may function to release those frustrations and aggressions stemming from conflict that cannot be released in the form of discrimination.'²⁸

It is important at this stage to establish that there was some kind of dominant cultural norm which prevented the escalation of hostility and the outbreak of violence against Jews (apart from the South Wales riots).

Fishman, writing of the prevarications over restrictive legislation against immigrants in the 1880s and 90s, states:

'It could be argued that public distaste (as expressed in press and Parliament) for anti-semitism in the form of pogroms and the current exposures of the Dreyfus case was influential in postponing laws against immigrants who were predominantly Jews ... Even the most virulent working-class antagonists presented a superficial obeisance to the norms of tolerance and brotherhood which offset the possibility of a continental Judenherze.'²⁹

Garrard and others have similarly maintained that there was a social force, similar to Myrdal's 'American Creed', which allowed prejudice but discounted discrimination and the overt expression of hostility.³⁰

Allowing for those individuals and groups present in every generation who were not bound by the majority morality, what is apparent in the years before 1914 is the erosion of the liberal tradition. Of course, its power was still very strong and prevented the translation of hostility into acts of violence against Jews. Parliamentary politics were, in the main, free from any outspoken criticism of Jews as such; indeed, there still appears to have been a reluctance to discuss any question of racial significance.³¹ What can be detected are cracks in the facade, deeper and perhaps more significant than in the period of anti-alien agitation. Journals of political extremes, both right and left, show that there was a move away from the silence on racial issues and that debate was beginning. Publicists like Belloc and the Chestertons, journals like The Outlook and the National Review, were uneasy with the state of Edwardian society, albeit for different reasons and would appear to have been less influenced by the prescribed norms of 'acceptable' behaviour, that is, they adhered to a different set of social rules to the ones outlined above. Thus, they wrote what others would not put into words and thereby began to focus attention upon the 'Jewish Question', an important

stage in raising consciousness.

'There is good reason to think that the creation of awareness is one of the main effects of the news media, whereas the formation of attitudes and opinions about issues would seem to result more from subsequent face-to-face communication with others than from media consumption ... Newspapers make people aware of certain things, and suggest the degree of importance that different events and issues have by the amount and prominence of coverage that they given them.'³²

In turn, this created the framework for the wider confirmation of beliefs, which, as suggested above, is an important function in the reinforcement of hostile attitudes. Writing to The Outlook in agreement with an editorial comment, or with a letter published the previous week, was part of this process. The fact that it was a public expression of hostility, and that this was being done increasingly from about 1911 onwards, indicates that the 'British Creed' was under siege.

As we have said, the increasing expression of hostile views was, in the main, now directed at the rich Jew, and it is the particular nature of these attitudes which is the second facet of rich-Jew anti-semitism. The basis of discontent seems to have been with the increasing involvement of Jews in various aspects of British life, in business, trade, finance, politics and social institutions. Whilst the number of Jews achieving visible success in any of these fields was limited, as it had been until emancipation, it seems that the degree of hostility was also limited. In a sense, there was no need for anti-semitism, since the Jews were not effective economic or social competitors. What hostility existed was mainly a comic stereotype and perhaps disparaging remarks about financial trickery. These conceptions of the Jew were based less on reality than on tradition and mythology.³³ With the removal of legal barriers during the nineteenth century, it became easier for Jews to move into professional circles and to become full citizens of the various European states in which they lived. In Britain, it was not merely

the destruction of those obstacles, but the development of political and economic thinking which encouraged those Jews who believed in the values of 'self-help'. As Chaim Bermant put it:

'Never before and never again was individualism so highly valued. Samuel Smiles' Self Help, published in 1859, was read as a supplement to the Bible, and its opening line, 'God helps those who help themselves', was almost the credo of the age. No Jew needed the admonition of a Smiles to accept the idea. It is part of traditional Jewish teaching and confirmed by everything in Jewish experience. The Cousinhood were thus Smilesian before Smiles and Victorian before Victoria ...

The nineteenth century, and we use the term loosely to include the years up to World War 1, was a time when the traditional Jewish virtues were the accepted English ones and to be a staunch Jew was to be a sound Englishman.'³⁴

Bermant's model is too general and simplistic to be good history, but it does provide an explanation of the success of some of the Jewish middle and upper class in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. He goes on to say that the complacency of what appeared to be great achievements was shaken by the development at the end of the nineteenth century of anti-semitism in Germany, which, unlike anti-semitism in Eastern Europe, was directed against Jews of the middle and upper classes.³⁵ Whilst not accepting such a rigid distinction, one could note developments in France, the growth of Action Française and the writings of Drumont³⁶, which parallel the German experience. Certain Jews in France and Germany were achieving high social and economic standing, in similar fashion to those in Britain, and therefore, as Bermant points out, they became objects of a particular kind of hostility.

Although British Jews took on the dominant values of their peer group, they were not necessarily accepted by its established members. Davidoff, writing of the Victorian era, states that, by accumulating wealth and 'adhering to the rules of etiquette and gentlemanly behaviour', Jews had been able to integrate into 'society', but they still faced a certain degree of hostility.³⁷ Often their efforts worked in reverse. 'The more like Christians they became,

the more mysterious, elusive and frightening they appeared.'³⁸

In addition to this social hostility, Jews also faced the reaction to their success in the world of work. Increasing opportunities for those with education and wealth provided some Jews with the chance to reach the heights in their chosen trade or profession. The changing economic and social system obviously did not benefit everyone and resentment could be channeled against the Jew as the symbol of the new order.³⁹ Frequently, an individual's lack of control over his own destiny could be explained by the exaggerated claim of Jewish domination of this or that sphere of life. Thus, during the time of the Marconi Scandal, the Witness could publish a letter from an 'ANTI-SEMITES', asking

'How much of the wealth and work of this country is now in the hands of the Jews? When there is not room enough and work enough for our own people why should we show hospitality to an alien race?

Our country is really suffering from an invasion of the Jews ...'⁴⁰

The Daily Citizen, in a profile of Rufus Isaacs, hinted at what it saw as the root cause of anti-semitism.

'Those who ought to know say that some of the high-placed Jews in England are apprehensive that an anti-Semitic movement may grow here as it has grown elsewhere when people realise how the strings of trade and commerce, not to mention politics, are pulled by Hebrew hands.'⁴¹

The emancipation of Jews, together with the general increase in opportunities in business and the professions, appears, therefore, to have provided Jews with a ladder to success but also to have increased tension and resentment rather than diminished it. It is this phenomenon which forms the backbone of Stern's recent study of anti-semitism in Germany in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴² By Edwardian times, the success of a few Jews had brought about in Britain a similar kind of anti-semitism to that experienced slightly earlier in France and Germany, although on a less concentrated level. Poliakov points out that there were anti-semites of this kind in

Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century - 'But their writings did not create a political movement, or combat organisations or defence leagues, in other words, collective and organised panic.'⁴³ What the years before the war do indicate, and this is why the Marconi Scandal is significant, is the escalation of this anti-semitic process. The creation of the National League for Clean Government indicates this increasing hostility, for it approaches the kind of political organisation referred to by Poliakov. The immediate motivation for this organisation, the Marconi Scandal, was a measure of the heights to which Jews had risen, in this case to Cabinet office, and also of the resentment and suspicion caused by this success.

Just as the Dreyfus case in France in the 1890s showed the extent of Jewish control of important offices in military and political terms, at least to anti-semites and those who wished to find evidence of that nature⁴⁴, so the Marconi Scandal and other events previously mentioned indicated the increasing influence of Jews in British politics and finance. An example from the correspondence columns of the Witness during the time of the Scandal indicates the general conclusions which could be made from the particular. A letter from 'H' pointed to the link between emancipation and Jewish power. It attributed the disintegration of British politics to the involvement of the Jews and warned of the (unspecified) dangers to the English race. In fact, in vague terms, it attempted to explain the general decline of Britain's power as the result of the emancipation of the Jews⁴⁵.

Politics was simply another area of Jewish influence by the time of the Scandal. The combination of Jews in business and Jews in politics was, after all, the alliance which had been responsible for the Marconi affair. Again, emancipation, which allowed Jews to become involved in conventional politics to the full, seems to have increased tensions in this area. During the Scandal, the Jewish Chronicle pointed to the irony of success.

'It is, in fact, open to argument that the promotion of our three coreligionists to office has actually given a distinct impetus to anti-Semitism in England. What was naturally regarded as the coping stone of the Jewish position is the stone chosen, as a missile, to be flung at our heads.'⁴⁶

(Yet, a few months later, the Chronicle provided more ammunition by making some play of the fact that there were now 17 Jewish M.Ps, the highest number yet.⁴⁷) Incidents like the Marconi Scandal and the Indian Silver affair, when it appeared that Jewish politicians and financiers dominated the India Office, clearly drew attention to the general belief that Jews had undue influence in British politics.

It is true that, in arithmetical terms, Jews were proportionally over represented in national politics. Although the Jewish population in 1911 was approximately half a per cent of the total population of Great Britain (250,000 out of 41,000,000)⁴⁸, Jews represented three per cent of all Conservative and Liberal candidates in the 1910 elections.⁴⁹ A total of 17 M.Ps, whilst apparently not excessive, could, however, be taken as an indication of growing Jewish political power.

Together with this apparent manifestation of political power, there was an increasing interest in the Jewish 'vote'. Although the number of Jewish electors in 1910 was only 25,000, they did make up significant voting groups in certain areas, particularly in London, Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow.⁵⁰ In some constituencies, the Jewish vote was seen as a critical factor in winning or losing the election. Very few historical studies of the pattern of such a vote, or even of its existence, have been made, as recent research has shown.⁵¹ Alderman has suggested that the Jewish establishment of the present day has a vision of an Anglo-Jewish community 'totally integrated with the existing political structure.'⁵² i.e. that there is not, and never has been, a 'Jewish vote' in the sense of a singularity of interest. However, his own research leaves him to conclude that this vision 'remains stubbornly unfulfilled',⁵³ and he traces the pattern of Jews in British politics from

emancipation times. Whilst suggesting that, by the turn of the century, leading Jewish figures were Conservatives (in 1900 there were seven Conservative M.Ps and two Liberals), he estimates that the bulk of Jewish voters remained Liberal.⁵⁴

They became even more firmly of this conviction as a consequence of the agitation surrounding legislation against immigration and the Aliens Act of 1905 passed by a Conservative government. This had the effect of turning not only Jewish voters but other 'erstwhile Unionist opinion'⁵⁵ towards the Liberals, a situation which was exploited by the party.⁵⁶ Indeed, Garrard puts forward the theory that there was a change of attitude by the Jewish elite, turning to purely sectional interests, and that appeals by Jews for a Jewish vote were not condemned outright, as they had been in earlier years.⁵⁷ Thus, the claims that Jews were as divided politically as the rest of the population do not seem to have been true.

Jewish votes came to be described as a solid bloc, usually aligned with the Liberals. Thus, Lord Derby, in a letter of condolence to Bonar Law on his defeat in N.W. Manchester in the December 1910 election, wrote ' "I try to think of anything we left undone - but can only come to the conclusion that large as was your majority in the thinking and business part of the town - the majority in the foreign Jew quarter was too strong for us." '⁵⁸ Since it was N.W. Manchester in 1908 which represented perhaps the peak of concerted Jewish action on behalf of a Liberal candidate,⁵⁹ it is hardly surprising that Jewish electors were considered so important in this particular constituency.

Attempts were made to woo the Jewish vote away from Liberals, even in the 1906 election campaign, when the Conservative Party discouraged candidates from playing on the immigration question and dissociated itself from the British Brothers' League. Jewish Conservative candidates were put up in some East End constituencies.⁶⁰ After 1906, there were still Conservative

attempts to gain the votes of Jews, with particular support coming from leading Jewish Conservatives such as Lord Rothschild. A by-election in August 1912 at N.W. Manchester revealed a serious campaign by the Conservative candidate, Sir John Randles, who saw the possibility of using the apparently forgotten Liberal promise of a reduction in the naturalisation fees.⁶¹ Local figures, like Nathan Laski, a J.P., also stressed this failure, and urged Jews to vote against the government.⁶² Yet Laski had been one of the key figures in launching Winston Churchill as Liberal candidate in the constituency in 1904.⁶³ N.W. Manchester in 1912 probably represents a changing mood amongst its Jewish voters; Clarke suggests that some wealthier Jews were forsaking the loyalty of the ghetto.⁶⁴ However, it was a marginal seat and, as such, vulnerable to the kind of swing experienced by the Liberal government after 1911. There is not sufficient evidence to say that Conservatives had captured the Jewish vote. As Alderman has written, in the absence of poll books, no definitive statements can be made.

Other attempts were made to forge links between Conservatives and Jews. One very determined effort came at Whitechapel, in the election following Sir Stuart Samuel's resignation over the Indian Silver contract.⁶⁵ Samuel's opponent, Monteagle Browne, conducted a very vigorous campaign. At his adoption meeting, he stressed his mission.

'He would be greatly disappointed if his Jewish friends did not abide by the promises they had given. From his conversations with them, he knew that they were absolutely antagonistic to the programme of the Liberal party. "Let them vote for the policy, and not for the man", he continued.'⁶⁶

At another meeting, he emphasised the importance he had laid on gaining Jewish support. 'Apologising to his Christian friends for not having seem more of them, Captain Browne said he had been engaged in the enemy's camp. The result was that he was on most friendly terms with the Jewish people and his opponents.'⁶⁷

His efforts were hindered by Sir Stuart Samuel's claim that the charges against him (and also the events of the Marconi Scandal) were the result of anti-semitism. Judicious use of this accusation by the Liberal press was seen as a Liberal method of safeguarding its Jewish vote⁶⁸, and provoked strong Conservative reaction.

'Sir Stuart Samuel will have lost any sympathy to which as a private member he may have been entitled by his attempt to utilise the Marconi and India Office revelations as an electioneering dodge. He has been trying to persuade the Jewish electors of Whitechapel that these exposures of ministerial shortcomings have been inspired by anti-Semitism. A more unscrupulous distortion of the truth could not have been perpetrated. Mr Lloyd George is not a Jew, and he has come in for the severest criticism of all. Lord Murray is not of the Chosen People, and he has not escaped censure. The fact that two Semitic families are mainly concerned is merely incidental. It is certainly not a point upon which a member of one of those families should lay emphasis.'⁶⁹

There were also left wing critics. The Daily Herald wrote: 'So far as the honour of Jews depends on this election, they should oppose Sir Stuart Samuel. Neither Sir Stuart Samuel nor Sir Rufus Isaacs has improved the reputation of Jews.'⁷⁰

This campaign reopened the discussion on the role of 'Jewish politics'. The pages of the Jewish Chronicle were filled with differing viewpoints. One approach to the topic was typified by R.M. Sebag-Montefiore, who, denying the absence of real anti-semitism in Britain, claimed that Samuel was 'playing with fire'. By describing his opponents as anti-semitic, he could well influence them in that direction. Jewish politics should be divorced from Party Politics.⁷¹ The opposing view was put by R. Abeles. Declaring that the by-election had been 'an extraordinary one, taking place at a time when "anti-Semitism" if not exactly rampant, was in the air', he suggested that many Jews had felt the need to close ranks and abstain from voting, if they could not bring themselves to vote for Samuel's politics. His defeat would have been a blow for the Jewish community at a time when 'charges of corruption are made broadcast against Jewish men who have attained positions

in the state.'⁷²

The election also brought to the attention of Gentiles the possibility of a 'Jewish vote'. Talk of appealing to just such a vote, estimated to be about a thousand strong, was a constant factor in the journalistic coverage of the campaign. What was ignored was the fact that there was an Irish vote of about the same strength.⁷³ Given the alleged significance of the Irish question in national politics, and the fact that Monteagle Browne, the Conservative candidate, was Irish, it might have been expected that the Irish vote would have been one to fight over. Yet, it appears to have been overlooked completely in the scramble for Jewish votes.

In a more general vein, the fact that Jews appeared to be committed almost exclusively to the Liberal Party, with a few notable exceptions, also began to create resentment amongst Conservatives. The Outlook, referring to the meeting at the National Liberal Club to celebrate the exoneration of the Liberal ministers involved in the Marconi Scandal, predicted, 'There will be much religious exultation in that tabernacle of undefiled Radicalism. Perhaps Mr Falconer himself will perform the office of Chief Rabbi and will do the anointing.'⁷⁴ More specifically, Sir George Younger, Conservative M.P. for Ayr, in an article on the various bribes offered by the Liberals at by-elections to win over specific groups of voters, noted how the Jewish vote had been wooed at N.W. Manchester in 1908, and how the promises, particularly relating to naturalisation fees, had not been fulfilled.⁷⁵ He also gave the impression of Conservative annoyance at such misguided loyalty. Therefore, it is apparent that the Jewish vote was becoming a political battle-field, publicised and hotly disputed.

This made a contribution to the 'Jewish power' arguments and fears, since the publicity concerning such a bloc vote merely added to the impression of Jewish clannishness. It might also be claimed that it was an indication of the Jews' lack of patriotism and the failure to integrate into British society.

In addition, because of the strong identification of Jews with Liberalism, attacks upon Jews could become attacks upon 'the system', the establishment, conventional politics and the like. Corrupt Jews were a symbol of a corrupt system.

The attempt at explaining why there should be a particular escalation of anti-semitic feeling before 1914 has been channeled, by the available evidence, towards social and economic explanations. Without dismissing the psychological functions of individual inclination towards racial animosity, as, for example, Mandle uses in his study of the British Union of Fascists⁷⁶, it should be noted that there are problems in the use of a discipline whose concepts are designed basically for face-to-face contact.⁷⁷ From the sources studied in this thesis, we can look at the particular nature of the anti-semitism of the period under consideration and ask what it can tell us about society at that time.⁷⁸

A close consideration suggests that a great deal of the agitation about the Jews can be attributed to the discontent of the time. From the general history of the pre-war years, we are aware of the social tensions of the period. As Marwick points out, 'what was happening after 1910 was that an essentially undemocratic fabric, which had not been sufficiently adapted and modified in preceding years, was now subject to intense strain from forces of democracy, nationalism and economic discontent.'⁷⁹ Indeed, these pressures were already bringing about changes in the social and economic structures of society, with the inevitable dislocation of those whose status lay within the confines of the old order. The consequences of change were dramatic and added to the tension, as a contemporary observer noted.

'Here again the psychological effect of all those changes is not sufficiently realised. The bitterness created by dispossession of ancient rights and privileges, the disdain of new, raw recruits filling vacated possessions, the bumptiousness and self-satisfaction of the newly arrived - these and many other complicated reactions create an unsatisfactory, irritated, inflamed atmosphere.'⁸⁰

More specifically, the Scandal drew attention to some of the problems of the changing situation.

'The Marconi affair appeared to many a portent of the decadence of a new plutocratic generation, where old standards of integrity had decayed and "monopoly capitalism" was squeezing out the "small investor". Lackeys of this exploitive system were politicians like Lloyd George and Isaacs, without "bottom"; Unionist opinion naturally interpreted the affair as a manifestation of Liberal political corruption in the widest sense.'⁸¹

This quotation illustrates why the particular link of financial scandal and Jews was so important. It has been a consistent facet of the study of modern anti-semitism that the Jew was the scapegoat for the discontent of those whose lives were disturbed by the new social structures which were developing in the nineteenth century. With emancipation and partial integration, the Jew became closely identified with the modern world, the values of which clashed with those of the discontented.⁸² In the nineteenth century, it was those groups who were most threatened by modernity; the clergy and, often, the landed aristocracy,⁸³ were initially caught up in this kind of anti-semitism. The threatening doctrines - socialism, liberalism, democracy, secularism - could be identified as part of a Jewish plot, because Jews did adopt or support these creeds in their quest for acceptance and equal opportunity. Thus did anti-semitism take on its political implications. 'From now on anti-semitism was to be deliberately whipped up by ultra-conservative politicians and publicists, in their struggle against the progressives.'⁸⁴

By the time of this particular study, it was no longer simply the British clergy and members of the aristocracy whose status and authority was being threatened. The previous quotation suggests that many conservatives, working-, middle- and upper-class, felt themselves under pressure from technological, economic and social change. Thus, there was a harking-back to the past, a desire to point out the differing standards of the present era and to compare them unfavourably with some vision of a previous 'Golden Age'. The Scandal was used by some Conservative writers as a symbol of all that was wrong with

political life at that moment. Would the great politicians of the past have behaved in such a manner? 'What would have been thought of Peel, Gladstone, Stafford-Northcote or Goschen under similar circumstances? Disraeli would have been greeted with a Radical shriek that would have gone down with his name to posterity.'⁸⁵ Similarly, F.C. Eden, in the Spectator, wrote that the sad aspect of the affair was that the various charges had been believed. In the old days, they would have been dismissed as impossible.⁸⁶ One obviously alien influence which might be blamed for society's ills was that of the Jews. The prominence of Jews in areas like finance and politics appeared to coincide with the moral decline in those fields.

John Higham has drawn attention to the interrelationship between the rise of social discrimination against Jews in America in the 1870s and the involvement of 'a good many Jewish nouveaux riches in the hectic social competition of the Gilded Age.'⁸⁷ Similarly, this thesis has referred to the rise of Jews in British society, which stimulated hostility in the social group most affected by this rise, what might loosely be called the professional classes. As Simpson and Younger point out, anti-Jewish feelings arise not just because Jews are different but because they become 'effective competitors' within whatever field the person exhibiting the hostility is operating, social and/or economic.⁸⁸

This explanation is, however, only partial. Again Higham's study of American anti-semitism suggests that social and economic frustrations were not, in themselves, an automatic guarantee of ethnic friction.⁸⁹ He points to the excesses of nationalism as a vital ingredient of the peaks of hostility towards Jews; '... anti-semitism in the modern world has reached maximum intensity as an integral component of movements aimed at defending the nation from various perils originating beyond its frontiers.'⁹⁰ The anti-German feeling of the pre-war period in Britain has already been referred to, and the particular hostility directed against German Jews as in, for example, the pages of the

National Review, has been noted.⁹¹ Whilst Higham points to three periods of political anti-semitism in Western Europe and America, the 1880s and 90s, the post-war years and the 1930s,⁹² it would appear that the British experience shows the years immediately preceding the war to be of key concern, at least in the formation of attitudes. That the vital ingredient of nationalism was present in this period cannot be disputed.⁹³ The link between nationalism and anti-semitism in Germany and Austria has been well documented. British anti-semitism appears to exhibit the same relationship to jingoism and patriotism. One can point to the extremes of nationalism following the Boer War and the outcry against alien immigration⁹⁴ and also to the fervent declarations of patriotism by the fascist movements in the 1930s. Thus, the conditions laid down in Higham's general model are fulfilled by the British experience in the years 1911-1914.

Finally, we can say that the pre-war period plays a significant part in the history of British anti-semitism, since it can be seen as laying the groundwork for post-1918 hostility and the acceptance of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion by many individuals.⁹⁵ The Marconi Scandal was still remembered - for example, in June 1920, at the height of the publicity for the Protocols, Jewry Über Alles, a journal published by the Britons, complained that the two chief figures in the Scandal had been raised to the highest offices in the 'Jew-alition' government. There was a Marconi Premier Lloyd George and a Marconi Lord Chief Justice Rufus Isaacs. It also referred to the 'Jew Herbert Samuel' and complained about his appointment as 'British' High Commissioner for Palestine. In addition, two other Jews prominent during the Marconi era had also risen to great heights. Godfrey Isaacs controlled the Empire wireless system and Edwin Montagu the Indian Empire. Thus was the triumph of the group complete. 'From East to West and West to East, it is JEWRY - JEWRY UEBER ALLES.'⁹⁶

In a wider sense, too, the era of Marconi was important. Writing about the publicity surrounding the appearance of the Protocols in 1920, Hartmann and

and Husband declared 'It is an indication of the potency of the latent anti-semitism in Britain that those "Protocols" should have been taken so seriously and given coverage in the British press.'⁹⁷ Referring to the idea of a Jewish conspiracy, they added: 'that it should have been based on such evidence as the "Protocols" shows how important the pre-existing conceptions relating to Jews were in facilitating the perception and reporting of such specious material as possibly valid.'⁹⁸ There is ample evidence to show that the kind of anti-semitism pertaining to a conspiracy theory was being created in the pre-war period. Drawing once more on Higham's model, we can see the importance of a learning pattern. He places the hostility of the Gilded Age in context, pointing out that the 'genial and democratic norms of American life remained basically undisturbed'. Its significance is its place in the general history of hostility to Jews in America.

'The story of anti-semitism in the Gilded Age is worth telling, however, if it suggests how the basic pattern of the more serious movements of political anti-semitism in the 1920s and 1930s came into being. For those later movements, the Gilded Age set the stage and trained the cast.'⁹⁹

The same lessons can be learned from the era of the Marconi Scandal: it gives a clear indication of the way anti-semitism in Britain was to develop in the 1920s and 30s, a clearer indication than the opposition to immigration of the earlier period.

CHAPTER 10 : FOOTNOTES

1. Gainer, op. cit., p. 203
2. Op. cit., p. 169
3. Roth, 'The Court Jews of Edwardian England, op. cit., p. 293
4. See Gainer, op. cit., pp 55-6
5. The Outlook, 19 July 1913
6. Ibid., 16 March 1912
7. 28 August 1912
8. The Throne, 20 April 1912
9. Ibid., 15 February 1913
10. Ibid., 8 March 1913
11. For a study of the siege, its implications and of the literature on the affair, see Holmes, Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, op. cit.
12. For an account of the demands, see Gainer, op. cit., pp. 205-7
13. See, for example, Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 34, cols 972, 1366; Vol. 38, col. 1922
14. Garrard, op. cit., p. 184
15. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 46, col. 53
16. Ibid., Vol. 52, col. 1408
17. See Garrard, op. cit., p. 108
18. Parl. Debates, 5th series, Vol. 56, col. 2257
19. Op. cit., p. 190. Similar sentiments are expressed by Iain McLean in his biography of Keir Hardie, (London, 1975), p. 103
 'Hardie, like other Labour leaders, was by no means free of anti-semitism himself. Like many on the left, he believed that the South African war had largely been caused by the manipulations of Jewish capitalists on the Rand. But in 1905 there had been no such thing as Nazism; nobody therefore thought there was anything particularly deplorable in anti-semitism. The Jewish plutocrat was an automatic stereotype - a bogeyman for the left, in the same way as, for instance, the U.S. Imperialist in the 1960s.'
 McLean does not distinguish between criticism of Jews and anti-semitism, although his general case may still be true. For a defence of Hardie against the charge of anti-semitism, see Kenneth Morgan, Keir Hardie: radical and socialist, (London, 1975), p. 258

20. Garrard, op. cit., pp. 190-3. For a study of socialists and anti-semitism see Silberner, Historia Judaica, op. cit. Note that Silberner's claims about Justice being free from anti-semitism after 1899 (p. 49), repeated by Garrard, p. 193, conflict with the findings of this thesis (see Chapter 4).
21. Garrard, op. cit., p. 120. This general view is endorsed by Christopher Sykes in his study of Nancy Astor (op. cit., p. 145)
22. Bernard Bergonzi, 'Chesterton and/or Belloc', Critical Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1959), p. 64
23. Many biographies of prominent individuals indicate a certain hostility to Jews. For example, the Cecil family papers reveal the kind of social snobbery referred to by Gainer. 'Jews, too, were rarely mentioned in Robert and Nelly Cecil's private correspondence without a phrase of disparagement from which neither Rothschilds nor Sassoons were immune. During the shortage of coal in 1919 Nelly wrote to her husband from Sussex: "I suppose the golfing Jews get it all - but one must pay to be a Christian."'
- Rose, op. cit., p. 171
- Similarly, Koss suggests that Asquith's letters to Venetia Stanley reveal that he was 'less sportive in his anti-Semitism than Jenkins would have us believe.'
- Koss, Asquith, op. cit., p. 140
24. Letter to his parents, 5 November 1911, quoted in Julia Namier, Lewis Namier: A Biography, (London, 1971), p. 101
25. 25 July 1913
26. Barker, op. cit., p. 90
27. Hackney Gazette, 16 September 1911, quoted in Robb, op. cit., pp. 204-5
28. William Newman, American Pluralism: a study of minority groups and social theory, (New York, 1973), pp. 225-6
29. Fishman, op. cit., pp. 87-8
30. For a development of this theme, see Melvin M. Tumin, 'What is Antisemitism', in Dinnerstein (ed.), op. cit., p. 14
31. For a thesis of elite consensus on this topic, see Alan Brier and Barrie Axford, 'The Theme of Race in British Social and Political Research', in Ivor Crewe (ed.), British Political Sociology Yearbook: Volume 2, The Politics of Race, (London, 1975), pp. 2-25
32. Paul Hartmann and Charles Husband, Racism and the Mass Media: A study of the Role of the Mass Media in the formation of white beliefs and attitudes in Britain, (London, 1974), pp 127-8
33. Here 'mythology' is used in the sense defined by Cohn, op. cit., pp. 12-13n For an indication of the stereotypes which emerged, see U.R.Q. Henriques, 'The Jewish Emancipation Controversy in Nineteenth-Century Britain', Past and Present, No. 40 (July, 1968), pp 126-146
34. Bermant, op. cit., p. 425

35. Ibid., p. 426
36. See Chapter 9
37. Leonore Davidoff, The Best Circles: Society Etiquette and the Season, (London, 1973), pp 75-6
38. Leon Poliakov, The History of Anti-Semitism: Volume III, From Voltaire to Wagner, (London, 1975), p. 460
39. This line of thought will be developed further in the chapter.
40. The New Witness, 2 January 1913
41. 19 March 1913
42. See Stern, op. cit.
43. op. cit., p. 324
44. See Kedward, op. cit., p. 51
45. The New Witness, 24 April 1913
46. 7 February 1913
47. 20 June 1913
48. Figures from 1911 census, quoted in Pauline Gregg, A Social and Economic History of Britain, 1760-1965 (London, 1965), p. 584 and from Jewish Year Book, quoted in A.H. Halsey, Trends in British Society since 1900, (London, 1972), p. 505
49. Blewett, op. cit., p. 232
50. Ibid.
51. Geoffrey Alderman, 'Not Quite British: The Political Attitudes of Anglo-Jewry', in Crewe (ed.), op. cit., pp. 188-211. For a more wide-ranging study, see Ofin Seliktar, 'The Political Attitudes and Behaviour of British Jews', in Katz and Seliktar, Jewish Political Behaviour: Two Studies, (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde Survey Research Centre occasional papers No. 12, 1974)
52. Alderman, 'Not Quite British', op. cit., p. 189
53. In fact, the limited amount of research so far carried out suggests that Max Beloff's view - 'In Great Britain, the majority group was an anomaly and the Jewish vote, if it existed, a matter of indifference' (Beloff, op. cit., p. 112) - needs some qualification.
54. Alderman, 'Not Quite British', op. cit., p. 190
55. Russell, op. cit., p. 194
56. See Garrard, op. cit., pp. 143-7
57. Ibid., pp 113-24

58. Quoted in Randolph Churchill, Lord Derby: King of Lancashire, (London, 1959), p. 122. Law's defeat came in spite of support from Lord Rothschild (Garrard, op. cit., p. 131)
59. See Garrard, op. cit., pp. 124-30, Peter Clarke, Lancashire and the New Liberalism, (London, 1971), pp. 259-60
60. Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour, op. cit., p. 29
61. The Times, 2 August 1912
62. See Manchester Evening Chronicle, 30,31 July 1912, Clarke, op. cit., p. 260
63. See Oscar Rabinowicz, Winston Churchill on Jewish Problems: A Half-Century Survey, (London, 1956), p. 37
64. op. cit., p. 272
65. Because of this election's significance, I hope to publish a more detailed study shortly.
66. East End News, 15 April 1913
67. East London Observer, 26 April 1913
68. See Jewish Chronicle, 2 May 1913, Daily Herald, 29 April 1913
69. The Outlook, 19 April 1913
70. 29 April 1913
71. 2 May 1913
72. 23 May 1913
73. East London Observer, 26 April 1913
74. 28 June 1913
75. Our Flag, April 1914. For details, see Garrard's account, cited above. Accusations that the Liberals tried to 'buy' the Jewish vote in the same constituency in the 1912 by-election can also be found in the Conservative press (see, for example, The Throne, 14 August 1912).
76. See Mandle, op. cit., pp. 19-23. Note also Michael Biddis, 'Fascism and the Race Question: A Review of Recent Historiography', Race, Vol. 10, No. 3 (January 1969), pp. 263-4, which points out the need for applications of this discipline in historical studies.
77. In this respect, see the warning of Bruce Mazlish:
 'It is all too easy to make crude, misguided "analogies"; and parlor-room Freudian analysis, like hypnotic stunts in an earlier day, can bring discredit to a legitimate investigation. More, the application of psychoanalytic methods to "patients" who are dead and no longer subject to verification by clinical processes, and whose "analysis" must proceed in a one-way Socratic dialogue with their remaining documents is fraught with danger, some pointed out by Freud himself (who nonetheless occasionally fell victim to them).

Bruce Mazlish (ed.), Psychoanalysis and History, (Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963), p. 14

78. For the importance of such a study, see Simpson and Yinger, op. cit., p. 221
79. Arthur Marwick, Britain in the Century of Total War: War, Peace and Social Change, 1900-1967, (London, 1968 - Pelican edition, 1970), p. 47
80. Caroline Playne, The Pre-War Mind in Britain: An Historical Review, (London, 1928), p. 34
81. Shannon, op. cit., p. 446
82. See, for example, Norman Cohn's cogent account in the introduction to Herman Bernstein, The Truth about "The Protocols of Zion": A Complete Exposure, (New York, 1935-1971 edition), pp. xii-xv
83. But see Pulzer, op. cit., pp. 280-1 for an analysis of German anti-semitism which suggests the upper class played little part in the organisation and support of such a movement.
84. Bernstein, op. cit., p. xv
85. 'Anglo-Saxon', writing to The Outlook, 5 April 1913
86. 19 April 1913
87. Higham, M.V.H.R., op. cit., p. 566
88. op. cit., p. 197
89. Higham, M.V.H.R., op. cit., p. 571
90. Ibid., pp. 571-2
91. See Chapter 6
92. op. cit., p. 570
93. See, for example, Carsten, op. cit., p. 10, which notes some of the common features of the pre-1914 precursors of the fascist movements - 'They were violently nationalist - a nationalism very different from that of nineteenth-century conservative or liberal groups.' He also states that they were anti-semitic, 'using the Jews as a convenient scapegoat for the ills of capitalist society.'
For an interesting sidelight on the general foreign scapegoat theme, see Tressell, op. cit., pp. 20-22
94. Garrard, op. cit., pp. 55-6
95. Recent research has similarly suggested the necessary basis for understanding British fascism of the 1920s is the history of pre-war right wing politics. See Barbara Lee Farr, 'The Development and Impact of Right-wing Politics in Great Britain, 1903-1932', Ph.D., University of Illinois, 1976, pp. xi, 79, 114.
96. Jewry Über Alles, June 1920, Vol. 5, No. 1

97. op. cit., p. 183
98. Ibid.
99. Higham, M.V.H.R., op. cit., p. 578

APPENDIXMARCONI SHARE PRICES

- A. 1909-1912, from Stock Exchange lists
- B. 1912-1913, from The Investors' Review

A.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES OF ENGLISH MARCONI SHARES

(ADAPTED FROM SELECT COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS)

VALUE OF SHARES IN £s.

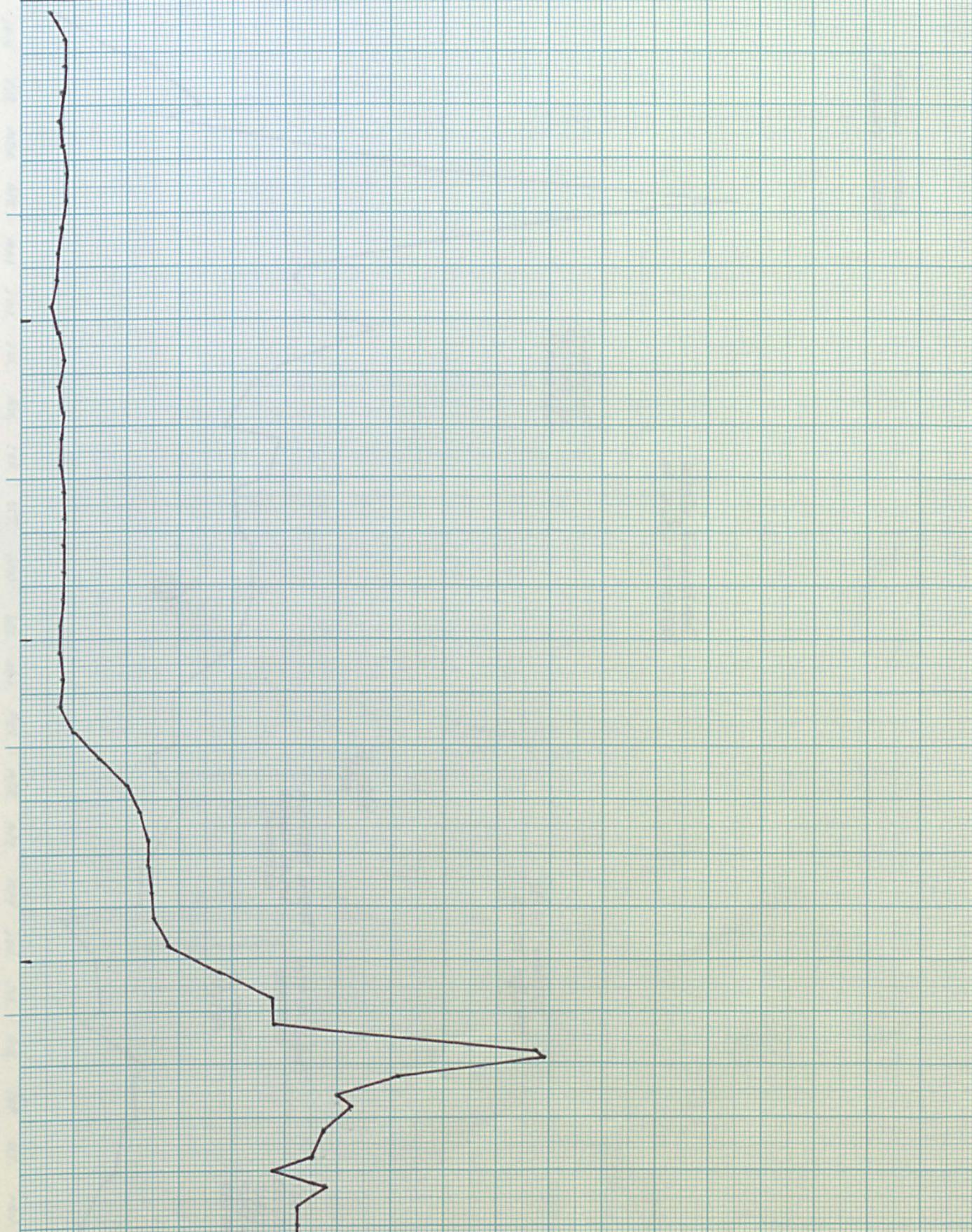
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1909

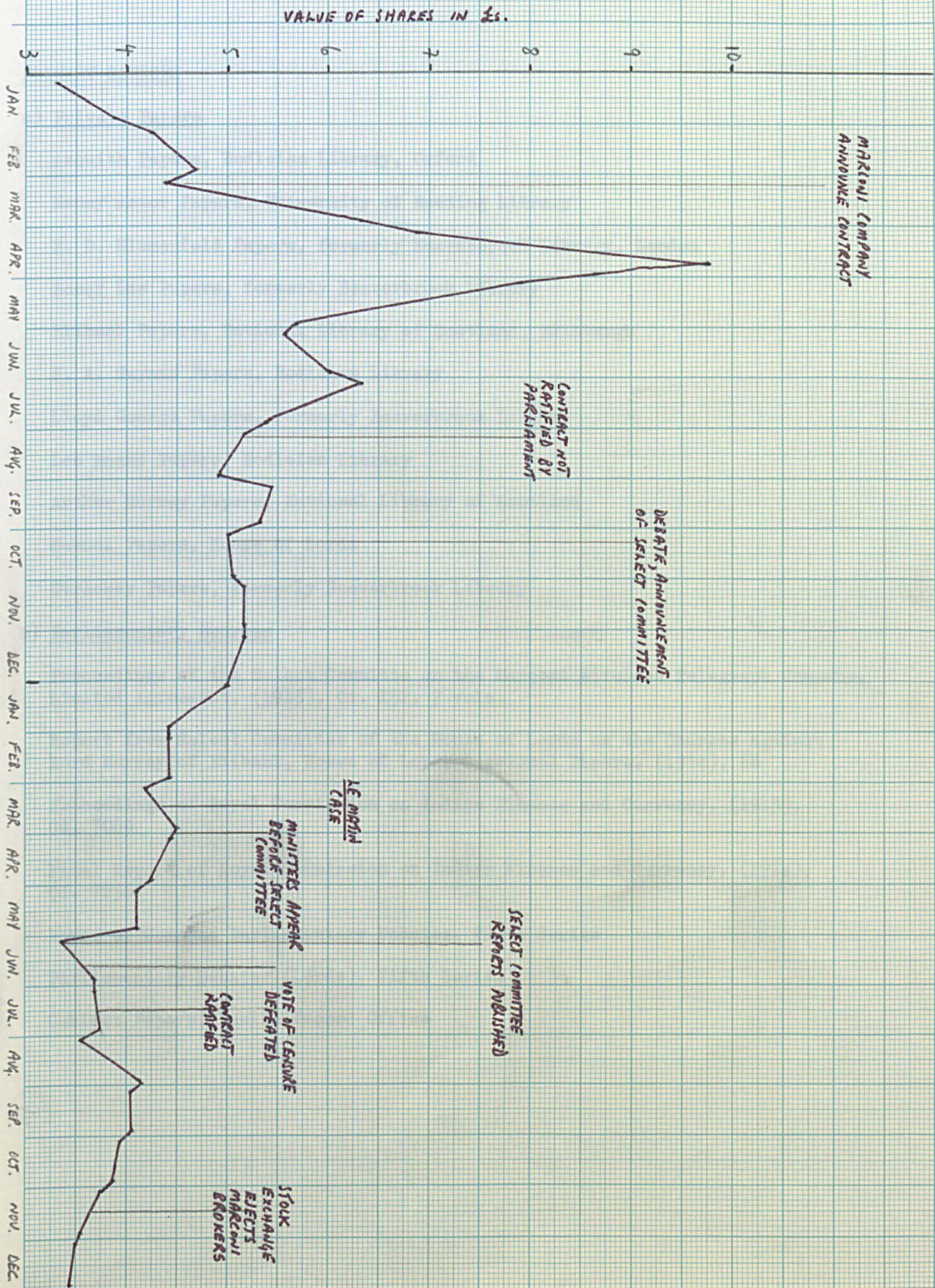
1910

1911

1912



B. PRICE OF ENGLISH MARCONI SHARES (PRICES FROM THE INVESTORS' REVIEW)



1912

1913

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H. A. Gwynne Papers, Bodleian Library

Lloyd George Papers, formerly Beaverbrook Library

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Samuel Papers, House of Lords

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Daily News
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