# ‘We Really are Doing Nothing’: The British Government, Humanitarian Aid in Japan, and the Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1923

*Francis Reynolds, ‘Where East and West are One’, Punch, 12 September 1923, p. 3.*

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**Abstract**

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.9 struck the Kanto Plain, a region in the east of Japan, on 1 September 1923.[1] The earthquake triggered countless fires across Tokyo, Yokohama, and the surrounding areas. Scholars disagree over the number of people who died during the disaster, with estimates ranging between 91,000 and 140,000 fatalities.[2] The earthquake struck roughly two weeks after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, a series of diplomatic and military arrangements that had defined relations between Britain and Japan for over twenty years, had ended. Historians, though, are yet to examine how the British government reacted to what remains the deadliest earthquake in Japanese history.[3]

This thesis addresses this lacuna by investigating the role that the British government played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. This study analyses reports that the Admiralty compiled, minutes of Cabinet meetings, and letters that the Foreign Office exchanged with the Treasury. This thesis argues that most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake was solely for the benefit of British expatriates and the Imperial University of Tokyo, the oldest university in Japan. The government responded in this way due to pressure from British merchants, the actions of the Treasury, and due to the advice that diplomats and scholars offered.

This thesis contributes to the study of humanitarian aid in inter-war Britain in several ways. This study demonstrates that the British state played a role in the overseas provision of aid by offering relief to universities and British expatriates. This thesis challenges the eurocentrism that surrounds the literature by highlighting how the British government provided aid outside of Europe. This study also shows that humanitarian aid played a contested role in British foreign policy because the Foreign Office and the Treasury disagreed over spending.

[1] J. Charles Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923', 2013, <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>, accessed date: 30 January 2020.
[2] Asuka Imaizumi, Kaori Ito, and Tetsuji Okazaki, 'Impact of Natural Disasters on Industrial Agglomeration: The Case of the Great Kanto Earthquake', *Explorations in Economic History*, 60 (2016), p. 54; Chris Perkins, 'From the Ashes of the Great Kanto Earthquake: The Tokyo Imperial University Settlement', *Japan Forum*, 31/3 (2019), p. 414.
[3] Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.

**Declaration**

I, the author, confirm that this thesis is my own work. I am aware of the Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means at the University of Sheffield. This thesis has not previously been presented for an award at this, or at any other, university.

**Acknowledgements**

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of various people. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisors. Dr Emily Baughan and Professor Hugo Dobson introduced me to the history of humanitarian aid and humanitarianism, offered constructive and prompt feedback on my drafts, and provided books. I am grateful for their kindness and support.

I would also like to thank Dr Susan Townsend for offering constructive feedback on my drafts, for her belief in me, and for supporting my interest in Anglo-Japanese relations.

Finally, a special thank you to my family. Lisa, my mother, and Derek, my stepfather, who offered inspiration throughout this project. They provided emotional support, offered insightful advice on my drafts, and played an instrumental role in the timely submission of this thesis. I am grateful to Emma, my sister; Connor, my brother-in-law, and to Jude, my nephew, for their continuous support.

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## Editorial Notes

This thesis follows several editorial conventions. This study adopts the European convention that places forenames before surnames. This thesis does not include macrons in Japanese words. This study uses the French spelling of "Louvain" as opposed to the Dutch spelling of "Leuven". This thesis contains discriminatory images and language that may distress or offend readers.

This study uses the exchange rates that were in use in September 1923. David Challis estimates that one pound sterling at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake was worth the same amount as ¥9.34. He likewise argues that one pound sterling was worth the same amount as $4.54. He also reasons that one Japanese yen was worth the same amount as $0.49.[1] The Bank of England estimates that one pound sterling in 1923 was worth the same amount as £52.12 today.[2]

[1] David Challis, 'Archival Currency Converter', 2019, <https://canvasresources-prod.le.unimelb.edu.au/projects/CURRENCY_CALC/>, accessed date: 15 March 2025.
[2] The Bank of England, 'Inflation Calculator', 2025, <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>, accessed date: 26 May 2025.

## Personalia

This personalia identifies every historical figure whom this thesis names. The table outlines the name and role of each person. In some cases, the personalia only provides the initials or surname of a historical figure, instead of their full name, because their forename is unclear. The personalia highlights the dates when each historical figure was in office if applicable. The table lists people alphabetically by surname.

| **Name** | **Role(s)** |
|---|---|
| T. Akamine | A domestic servant who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains unclear. |
| Prince Arthur | A cousin of King George V |
| Frank Ashton-Gwatkin | An advisor on Japanese affairs at the Foreign Office, 1919-29. He was married to Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin. |
| Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin | A ballet dancer. She was married to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin. |
| Stanley Baldwin | British prime minister, May 1923 – January 1924, November 1924 – June 1929 |
| Lord Balfour | British prime minister, July 1902 – December 1905<br><br>President of the British Academy, 1921-8<br><br>Chair of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, December 1923 – March 1930 |
| Sir George Barstow | A civil servant at the Treasury, 1919-27 |
| Laurence Binyon | Head of Asian art at the British Museum, 1913-33<br><br>A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee |
| Rash Bose | An Indian seditionist who lived between the late nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries |
| Robert Boulter | British vice-consul in Yokohama, 1921 – September 1923<br><br>British acting consul in Yokohama, September 1923 – 1924 |
| Herbert Brackley | An aviation adviser who worked for the Japanese navy, 1921-4 |
| William Brawn | A clerk at the Stationery Office, 1925-47 |

| | |
|---|---|
| H. Brett | British commercial secretary in Peking at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains uncertain. |
| Harman Broomall | American vice-consul in Kobe, October 1922 – April 1924 |
| Stanley Bruce | Australian prime minister, February 1923 – October 1929 |
| Edward Bulwer-Lytton | A member of Parliament, June 1831 – July 1841 |
| Sir Maurice de Bunsen | British ambassador to Austria-Hungary, 1913-14<br><br>British secretary of legation in Japan, 1891-4 |
| Sir Frederick Butler | Head of overseas trade at the Foreign Office, 1917-33 |
| Philip Cabeldu | A bicycle salesman who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| Sir Vincent Caillard | Finance director at Vickers, 1906-27 |
| William Caxton | A printer who lived in England during the fifteenth century |
| Robert Cecil | Head of the British delegation at the League of Nations at the time of the earthquake<br><br>A member of Parliament, November 1911 – November 1958 |
| Sir Austen Chamberlain | British foreign secretary, November 1924 – June 1929 |
| Sir Neville Chamberlain | Chancellor of the exchequer, August 1923 – January 1924<br><br>A member of Parliament, December 1918 – November 1940 |
| Geoffrey Chaucer | A poet who lived in England during the fourteenth century |
| Kenneth Chorley | A conservationist who lived in the United States during the twentieth century |
| Winston Churchill | British colonial secretary, February 1921 – October 1922 |
| Sir George Clausen | A painter at the Royal Academy of Arts, 1895-1944<br><br>A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee |
| Sir Josiah Conder | An architect who lived in Tokyo between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries |
| Calvin Coolidge | President of the United States, August 1923 – March 1929 |
| Leonard Coote | A Christian missionary who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| William Cosgrave | Irish prime minister, December 1922 – March 1932 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Curzon | British foreign secretary, October 1919 – January 1924 |
| W. Davies | British commercial secretary in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains unclear. |
| Christine Dennis | A governess who lived in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake |
| Lord Devonshire | Governor-general of Canada, November 1916 – August 1921 |
| Erle Dickover | American consul in Kobe, 1921-32 |
| Dircks | A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. His forename remains unclear. |
| John Doty | An engineer who was in Yokohama onboard the *RMS Empress of Australia* when the earthquake struck |
| Sir Eric Drummond | Secretary-general of the League of Nations, January 1920 – July 1933 |
| Elizabeth Dunstan | A nun who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| M. Ebizawa | A domestic servant who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains unclear. |
| Prince Edward | The heir to the British throne, May 1910 – January 1936 |
| Lord Elgin | British colonial secretary, December 1905 – April 1908 |
| Sir Charles Eliot | Vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield, July 1905 – March 1912<br><br>Vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, March 1912 – April 1920<br><br>British ambassador to Japan, April 1920 – January 1926 |
| Lord Emmott | Member of Parliament, July 1899 – December 1926 |
| Frederic Ferguson | A bibliographer and bookseller who lived in Britain between the late nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries |
| Sir Norman Fisher | Permanent secretary to the Treasury, 1919–39 |
| Phineas Fletcher | A clergyman who lived in England between the late sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries |
| Ralph Forster | British consul in Kobe, 1914-25 |
| Sir Stephen Gaselee | Chief librarian at the Foreign Office, 1920-43 |
| Sir Auckland Geddes | British ambassador to the United States, 1920-4 |
| King George V | British monarch, May 1910 – January 1936 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Oliver Goldsmith | A poet who lived in Britain during the eighteenth century |
| Sir Israel Gollancz | Secretary of the British Academy, August 1902 – June 1930<br><br>Chair of English at King's College in London, 1903 – June 1930<br><br>Secretary of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, December 1923 – June 1930 |
| Henry Grace | Commodore of the base that the China Squadron maintained in Hong Kong, June 1922 – October 1924 |
| Sir William Greene | British ambassador to Japan, December 1912 – April 1920 |
| Lord Grey | Governor-general of Canada, December 1904 – October 1911 |
| Sir Edward Grey | British foreign secretary, December 1905 – December 1916 |
| Henry Guppy | Head of the John Rylands Library in Manchester, 1899-1948 |
| Bhai Gyanee | An Indian seditionist who lived between the late nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries |
| William Haigh | British vice-consul in Yokohama, 1920 – September 1923 |
| Hake | A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. His forename remains uncertain. |
| Robert Hamilton | Captain of the *HMS Despatch*, April 1922 – May 1924 |
| Masanao Hanihara | Japanese ambassador to the United States, December 1922 – December 1924 |
| Sir Maurice Hankey | British Cabinet secretary, 1920-38 |
| Hardie | A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. His forename remains unclear. |
| Gonsuke Hayashi | Japanese ambassador to Britain, May 1920 – August 1925 |
| Maurice Headlam | An assistant secretary at the Treasury, 1920-6 |
| Prince Heinrich | A member of the German royal family who lived between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries |
| Prince Yorihito Higashifushimi | A member of the Japanese royal family who lived between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries |
| Hill | A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. Their forename remains uncertain. |
| Yoshitaro Hirano | An economist who taught at the Imperial University of Tokyo during the twentieth century |
| Kiichiro Hiranuma | Japanese minister of justice, September 1923 – January 1924 |

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|---|---|
| Crown Prince Hirohito | The heir to the Japanese throne, July 1912 – December 1926 |
| Ernest Holmes | British consul in Yokohama, 1921 – September 1923 |
| Hugh Horne | British acting commercial counsellor in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake |
| Charles Hughes | American secretary of state, March 1921 – March 1925 |
| William Hughes | Australian prime minister, October 1915 – February 1923 |
| Hikokichi Ijuin | Japanese foreign minister, September 1923 – January 1924 |
| Kikujiro Ishii | Head of the Japanese delegation at the League of Nations, 1920-6 |
| Paul Jenks | American vice-consul in Yokohama, September 1916 – September 1923 |
| Sir William John | A sculptor at the Royal Academy of Arts, 1884-1952<br><br>A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee |
| W. Johnston | An engineer who was in Yokohama onboard the *RMS Empress of Australia* when the earthquake struck. His forename remains unclear. |
| Sir Edward Jones | A decorator and painter who lived in Britain during the nineteenth century |
| Hajime Kawakami | A professor who taught law at the Imperial University of Kyoto between 1915 and 1928 |
| William King | Canadian prime minister, December 1921 – June 1926, September 1926 – August 1930 |
| Max Kirjassoff | American consul in Yokohama, February 1922 – September 1923 |
| Kitagawa | A servant who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains uncertain. |
| Yoshinao Kozai | President of the Imperial University of Tokyo, 1920-8 |
| Walter Lamb | Secretary of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1913-51<br><br>Chair of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee |
| Alexander Leeper | Assistant private secretary to the British foreign secretary, December 1920 – February 1924 |
| Sir Arthur Leveson | Commander-in-chief of the China Squadron, 1922-5 |

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|---|---|
| Godfrey Locker-Lampson | Parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, December 1925 – June 1929 |
| Lord Lugard | A member of the British delegation at the League of Nations, 1922-45 |
| John Lydgate | A monk who lived in England between the late fourteenth and the middle of the fifteenth centuries |
| James Lyes | A shipping clerk who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake |
| Ramsay MacDonald | British prime minister, January – November 1924, June 1929 – June 1935<br><br>British foreign secretary, January – November 1924 |
| Giacomo de Martino | Italian ambassador to Japan, 1922-5 |
| M. Maruyama | A scribe who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains uncertain. |
| Annie Mary | A nun who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| William Massey | Prime minister of New Zealand, July 1912 – May 1925 |
| K. Masukawa | The superintending servant at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains unclear. |
| Tsuneo Matsudaira | Japanese ambassador to Britain, February 1929 – June 1935 |
| Ronald McNeill | Parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, October 1922 – January 1924 |
| Arthur Meighen | Canadian prime minister, July 1920 – December 1921, June – September 1926 |
| Duffussy Michael | A nun who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| Chuzo Mitsuchi | Japanese Cabinet secretary, November 1921 – June 1922 |
| T. Mitsuhashi | A scribe who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains uncertain. |
| Miyazaki | A member of staff at the Japanese Embassy in London at the time of the earthquake. His role at the Embassy and his forename remain unclear. |
| Rentaro Mizuno | Japanese education minister, June 1927 – May 1928 |
| James Mollison | A retired dynamite merchant who lived in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. He was the father of John Mollison. |

| | |
|---|---|
| John Mollison | An expatriate who lived in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. He was married to Mary Mollison and he was the son of James Mollison. |
| Mary Mollison | An expatriate who lived in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. She was married to John Mollison. |
| Sir Charles Montgomery | Deputy parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, 1930-3 |
| Sir Edward Moore | Lord mayor of London, December 1922 – December 1923 |
| William Morris | An artist and poet who lived in Britain during the nineteenth century |
| Agnes Moule | Mother of George Moule |
| Edith Moule | An Anglican missionary who lived in Tokyo at the time of the earthquake. She was married to George Moule. |
| George Moule | An Anglican missionary who lived in Tokyo at the time of the earthquake. He was married to Edith Moule and he was the son of Agnes Moule. |
| Sir Oswyn Murray | Permanent secretary to the Admiralty, 1917-36 |
| Fridtjof Nansen | Commissioner for refugees at the League of Nations, September 1921 – May 1930 |
| Norah Nichols | An expatriate who lived in Tokyo at the time of the earthquake. She was married to Robert Nichols. |
| Robert Nichols | Chair of English at the Imperial University of Tokyo, 1921-4<br><br>He was married to Norah Nichols. |
| Sir Otto Niemeyer | Head of finance at the Treasury, 1922-7 |
| Inazo Niitobe | Undersecretary-general of the League of Nations, 1919-26 |
| Sir Charles Palairet | British chargé d'affaires in Tokyo, 1922-5 |
| Palmer | A member of the Art Subcommittee of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. His forename remains unclear. |
| Sir Montague Paske-Smith | British vice-consul in Kobe, 1923-5 |
| Alfred Pollard | A bibliographer at the University of London, 1919-32 |
| Arthur Ponsonby | Parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, January – November 1924 |
| Alfred Richards | A medical officer who lived in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake |

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|---|---|
| Sir Benjamin Robertson | A commissioner who lived in India between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries |
| John Rockefeller Junior | An industrialist and philanthropist who lived in the United States between the late nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth centuries |
| Maurice Russell | A whiskey merchant who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| Makoto Saito | Governor-general of Korea, August 1919 – April 1927 |
| Thomas Sanderson | A bookbinder and printer who lived in Britain between the middle of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries |
| Tsunetami Sano | A surgeon who formed the Japanese Red Cross Society in 1887 |
| Taizen Sato | A physician who founded the Juntendo School, a medical school that is now a university, in the Japanese town of Sakura during the late 1830s |
| Sekido | A servant who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains uncertain. |
| William Shakespeare | A playwright who lived in England between the middle of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries |
| Prince Shotoku | A regent who ruled Japan between the late sixth and early seventh centuries |
| Jan Smuts | South African prime minister, September 1919 – June 1924 |
| Wilhelm Solf | German ambassador to Japan, 1921-8 |
| Lord Stamfordham | Private secretary to King George V, 1910-31 |
| Eustace Strong | A chaplain who lived in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake |
| A. Tait | A bank manager who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake. His forename remains unclear. |
| Kenzo Takayanagi | A professor of law who taught at the Imperial University of Tokyo during the twentieth century |
| Giichi Tanaka | Japanese prime minister, April 1927 – July 1929<br><br>Japanese foreign minister, April 1927 – July 1929 |
| Lord Tennyson | British poet laureate, November 1850 – October 1892 |
| William Thackeray | A journalist and novelist who lived in Britain during the nineteenth century |
| Thomas Thomas | A silk trader who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| Sir John Tilley | British ambassador to Japan, January 1926 – July 1931 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sir William Tyrrell | Deputy permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, November 1920 – April 1925 |
| Robert Vansittart | Private secretary to Lord Curzon, December 1920 – January 1924 |
| William Verbeck | An American-Dutch general who lived between the middle of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries |
| Vile | A typist who worked at the British Consulate in Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. Her forename remains uncertain. |
| David Waddell | An accountant who worked at the British Embassy in Tokyo at the time of the earthquake |
| Sir Charles Wakefield | Honorary treasurer of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, December 1923 – March 1932 |
| William Warren | Prime minister of Newfoundland, July 1923 – May 1924 |
| Basil Washington | Captain of the *HMS Durban*, May 1922 – May 1924 |
| Sir Victor Wellesley | Head of East Asian policy at the Foreign Office, 1920-36 |
| Sweeney Wilfrid | A nun who lived in Japan at the time of the earthquake |
| Cyrus Woods | American ambassador to Japan, July 1923 – June 1924 |
| Moritaro Yamada | An economist who taught at the Imperial University of Tokyo during the twentieth century |
| Gonnohyoe Yamamoto | Japanese prime minister, September 1923 – January 1924<br><br>Japanese foreign minister, September 1923 |
| Asakichi Yasukouchi | Governor of Kanagawa, 1922-4 |
| Emperor Yoshihito | Japanese monarch, July 1912 – December 1926 |

## Chapter One: Introduction

### The Scope of the Thesis

Sir Charles Eliot, the British ambassador to Japan, sent a letter to Sir William Tyrrell, the deputy permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, on 13 September 1923. Eliot warned Tyrrell that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the Japanese government surmised that 'we really are doing nothing'.[1] Eliot wrote this letter almost two weeks after an earthquake had struck the Kanto Plain, a region in the east of Japan, with a magnitude of 7.9 on 1 September.[2] The earthquake triggered fires that raged across Tokyo, Yokohama, and the surrounding cities, towns, and villages for three days. Historians estimate fatalities ranging from 91,000 to 140,000.[3] Whatever the figures, the "Great Kanto Earthquake" remains the deadliest earthquake in Japanese history.[4]

Figure 1.1 outlines the topography of the Kanto Plain at the time of the earthquake. John Doty, a Canadian engineer, and W. Johnston, a fellow engineer, drew this map on 12 September.[5] The forename and nationality of Johnston remain uncertain. Paola Albini and Kenji Satake explain that the engineers were visiting Japan and were onboard the *RMS Empress of Australia*, a Canadian passenger ship that was docked alongside a pier in Yokohama, when the earthquake struck.[6]

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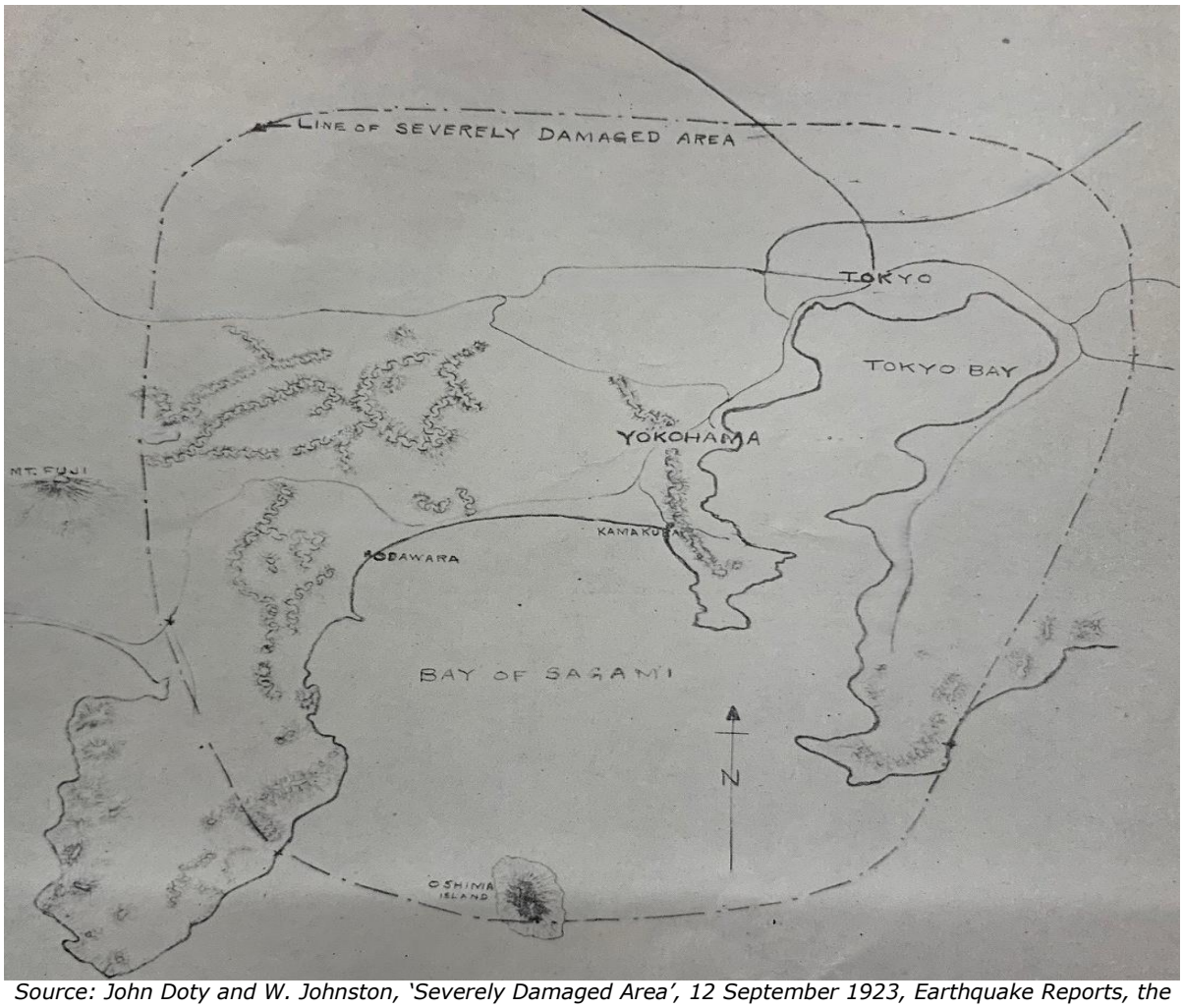
[1] Sir Charles Eliot to Sir William Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', 13 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[2] J. Charles Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923', 2013, <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>, accessed date: 30 January 2020.
[3] Asuka Imaizumi, Kaori Ito, and Tetsuji Okazaki, 'Impact of Natural Disasters on Industrial Agglomeration: The Case of the Great Kanto Earthquake', *Explorations in Economic History*, 60 (2016), p. 414.
[4] Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[5] John Doty and W. Johnston, 'Severely Damaged Area', 12 September 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, p. 82.
[6] Paola Albini and Kenji Satake, 'Voices of Foreign Residents in Yokohama and Tokyo at the Time of the 1923 Kanto Earthquake', *Journal of Disaster Research*, 18/6 (2023), p. 602.

**Figure 1.1 – The Topography of the Kanto Plain, September 1923**




*Source: John Doty and W. Johnston, 'Severely Damaged Area', 12 September 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, p. 82.*

The map highlights various geographical features and settlements. Mount Fuji, the tallest mountain in Japan, stands to the west of Yokohama. The twisty black lines to the northeast and southeast of the mountain as well as to the northwest and south of Yokohama represent other mountains. The black lines that connect Kamakura, Tokyo, and Yokohama and run to the east, north, and west of Tokyo represent railways. The 'severely damaged area' that Doty and Johnston circled outlines the area that sustained damage during the earthquake.[7] The municipal government of Tokyo estimated that almost 11,750,000 people lived across the Kanto Plain when the earthquake struck.[8] Tokyo, the largest city in Japan with a population of over 2,250,000 people, and

[7] Doty and Johnston, 'Damaged Area', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 82.
[8] Imaizumi, Ito, and Okazaki, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 54.

Yokohama, the sixth largest city in the country with a population of nearly 450,000 people, lay near the epicentre of the earthquake.[9]

The earthquake and the fires that followed devastated both cities. The disaster wrecked over 300,000 houses across Tokyo, representing sixty-two percent of all houses in the city.[10] This destruction displaced almost 1,400,000 people across Tokyo, accounting for sixty-one percent of the population of the city.[11] The earthquake and fires razed 63,000 houses across Yokohama, representing sixty-three percent of all houses in the city.[12] The Home Ministry reported that the disaster ruined 7,000 factories, roughly 1,000 places of worship, over 350 bridges, nearly 350 banks, over 100 schools, and over sixty cinemas and theatres across Tokyo.[13] The earthquake and fires destroyed over 2,500 factories across Yokohama, accounting for eighty-eight percent of all factories in the city.[14] The disaster destroyed forty-five percent of all buildings in Tokyo and ninety percent of all buildings in Yokohama.[15]

The earthquake triggered a humanitarian crisis. The earthquake displaced over 2,500,000 people, representing over a fifth of the population of the Kanto Plain.[16] Most of those who were displaced were left destitute because few insurance companies had offered insurance against earthquakes.[17] Janet Borland outlines how those who were displaced often built and lived in "barracks", makeshift wooden houses in public parks, throughout the days, months, and years that followed the earthquake.[18] The Kanto Plain faced a shortage of medicine as the earthquake had destroyed over 160 hospitals.[19] J. Charles Schencking argues that 'the disaster left a large teeming mass of people hungry,

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[9] Doty and Johnston, 'Damaged Area', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 82; Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>; Imaizumi, Ito, and Okazaki, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 54; Tetsuji Okazaki, Toshihiro Okubo, and Eric Strobol, 'Creative Destruction of Industries: Yokohama City in the Great Kanto Earthquake', *The Journal of Economic History*, 79/1 (2019), p. 4.
[10] Eun-Gyong Lee, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake and "Life-Rationalisation" by Modern Japanese Women', *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 21/1 (2015), p. 6.
[11] Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[12] Caroline Norma, 'Reconstruction in Service of the Japanese Nation: Yokohama City and the Great Kanto Earthquake', *Eras*, 10 (2008), p. 2.
[13] Janet Borland, 'Stories of Ideal Japanese Subjects from the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923', *Japanese Studies*, 25/1 (2005), p. 23; J. Charles Schencking, '1923 Tokyo as a Devastated War and Occupation Zone: The Catastrophe One Confronted in Post-Earthquake Japan', *Japanese Studies*, 29/1 (2009), pp. 114-15.
[14] Okazaki, Okubo, and Strobol, 'Creative Destruction of Industries', p. 6.
[15] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', pp. 113-15.
[16] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', p. 111; Imaizumi, Ito, and Okazaki, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 54.
[17] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', p. 114.
[18] Janet Borland, 'Makeshift Schools and Education in the Ruins of Tokyo', *Japanese Studies*, 29/1 (2009), pp. 139-40.
[19] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', p. 115.

thirsty, homeless, jobless, and often assetless'.[20] Janet Hunter and Kota Ogasawara contend that the lack of food caused the average price of wheat in Tokyo and Yokohama to increase by over fifty percent between August 1923 and December 1925.[21]

The American government provided humanitarian relief throughout the autumn. The Philippine Garrison Army, a branch of the American military, transported 3,000 beds, 680 tonnes of food, and almost 140 tonnes of medicine to Yokohama. The American navy requisitioned forty-nine commercial passenger ships and dispatched these ships along with seven destroyers to Tokyo and Yokohama. The ships carried eighteen tonnes of baked beans, nearly 18,000 lbs of barley, over 120 tonnes of bread, almost 40,000 lbs of oatmeal, five prefabricated houses, nearly sixty tonnes of sugar, and almost 120 tonnes of timber.[22] The American government and public spent over eight times more than the rest of the world combined spent in response to the earthquake. The government spent $9,000,000 in total, the equivalent of nearly £2,000,000 or roughly £103,000,000 today.[23] In comparison, the government spent $60,000,000 in reaction to the famine that unfolded along the Volga River in Russia towards and after the end of the First World War, the equivalent of over £13,200,000 or almost £690,000,000 today.[24]

The government provided a limited amount of relief to American expatriates in Japan. Over 1,200 Americans lived in Tokyo, Yokohama, and the surrounding areas when the earthquake struck. Erle Dickover, the American consul in Kobe, and Harman Broomall, the American vice-consul in Kobe, donated food, medicine, and water to the American community in Tokyo and Yokohama as soon as news of the earthquake reached Kobe. Julia Irwin, however, explains that only 'a small portion' of the aid that the American government provided was for the benefit of American expatriates. Dickover lambasted his government for prioritising the Japanese government and public over Americans. This criticism reflects that most of the relief that the American government provided was for the benefit of Japanese nationals.[25]

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[20] Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[21] Janet Hunter and Kota Ogasawara, 'Price Shocks in Regional Markets: Japan's Great Kanto Earthquake', *The Economic History Review*, 72/4 (2019), p. 1343.
[22] Natsuko Chubachi, Atsushi Kawauchi, Soraya Ono, Yuichi Ono, and Ken Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake and U.S.-Japan Relations: Japanese Students' Thank-You Letters Sent to the United States and their Implications for International Disaster Risk Reduction Cooperation', *Journal of Disaster Research*, 20/1 (2025), pp. 65-7.
[23] Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[24] Tehila Sasson, 'From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), p. 521.
[25] Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century* (Chapel Hill, 2024), pp. 113-14, 124, 127.

In contrast, most of the aid that the British government offered was exclusively for the benefit of British expatriates and the Imperial University of Tokyo, the oldest university in Japan. The Royal Navy rescued expatriates who were stranded, provided shelter to merchants, recovered property that belonged to British and other European nationals, identified and buried the bodies of British expatriates, and distributed clothes, food, and toiletries amongst British nationals.[26] The Foreign Office and the British Academy, the national academy for the arts, humanities, and social sciences in Britain, established the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, a panel of British scholars, in December 1923. The Committee donated 41,700 books to the University on behalf of the government throughout the decade that followed the earthquake.[27] The British government spent nearly £37,000 in response to the earthquake, the equivalent of roughly £1,900,000 today.[28] This sum was less than a fiftieth of the amount that the American government spent.[29] This comparison explains why Eliot warned Tyrrell that 'we really are doing nothing'.[30]

Although the British government provided a comparatively small amount of aid, the earthquake nonetheless offers numerous insights into the role that the state in inter-war

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[26] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 6 September 1923', 6 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Robert Boulter, 'Report for 7 September, 1923', 7 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Robert Boulter, 'Report for 8 September 1923', 8 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 710; Sir Arthur Leveson to Sir Oswyn Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Admiralty, the National Archives in London, ADM 1/8668/176; Robert Boulter, 'The Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, pp. 11, 17, 19-24.
[27] Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[28] Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[29] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[30] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

Britain played in the history of humanitarianism. The earthquake demonstrates that the state was not a single, unified humanitarian actor, but was instead a contested space where the Foreign Office and a multiplicity of other actors circulated competing humanitarian agendas and priorities. The government played a geographically expansive role in the international provision of aid as the earthquake shows that the British government provided aid outside of Europe as well as outside of the British Empire. At the same time, the earthquake reflects that this aid was politically and socially confined to British nationals and universities. The earthquake also highlights how the American and British governments reacted to humanitarian crises in contrasting ways.

The earthquake struck fifteen days after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended on 17 August 1923. The Alliance had contained several diplomatic and military agreements that had defined the relationship between the British and Japanese governments as well as their obligations towards each other. The governments had agreed to provide diplomatic and military assistance to each other in the event of a war against another country. The terms of the Alliance had recognised British and Japanese interests in China and had allowed the British and Japanese governments to protect these interests through military force. The Japanese military had agreed to defend India, a British colony, as long as the Royal Navy supplied weapons to the Japanese navy.[31] Shigeru Murashima contends that diplomatic relations entered 'a new stage' when the Alliance ended as Britain and Japan were no longer allies for the first time in over twenty years.[32] Historians, however, are yet to consider what the British response to the earthquake reveals about the new, post-Alliance relationship.

This lacuna reflects that historians have only discussed the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake in passing. Schencking argues that the British government 'gave far less humanitarian assistance [than the American government provided] to Japan'.[33] Ian Nish concurs that the British government offered 'much less' aid than the American government offered.[34] These arguments illustrate that historians have overlooked the aid that the British government provided in favour of the

[31] Christina Davis, 'Linkage Diplomacy: Economic and Security Bargaining in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *International Security*, 33/3 (2009), pp. 160, 164, 174.
[32] Shigeru Murashima, 'The Opening of the Twentieth Century and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1895-1923', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 191.
[33] J. Charles Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns: Corporate Giving from America's Industrial Heartland following the Great Kanto Earthquake', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 21/8 (2023), p. 61.
[34] Ian Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance, 1920-30', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 270-1.

larger amount that the American government provided. As a result, scholars have ignored the role that humanitarian aid played in defining the post-Alliance relationship.

Historians have also overlooked the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the history of humanitarianism. Juliano Fiori *et al.* propose that historians should look 'beyond the state' when approaching aid and humanitarianism. They reason that this approach would allow historians to 'better understand the variety of motives that shaped the act of giving'. This proposal, though, ignores that states have likewise engaged in 'the act of giving'.[35] This factor explains why Emily Baughan suggests that historians should instead 'think more about the role of states … rather than the comparatively small efforts of non-state actors'.[36]

This thesis responds to this proposal by investigating the role that the British government played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. In particular, this study outlines what the government provided in reaction to the disaster, such as books and food. This thesis examines who within the government supported the provision of relief as well as the reasons behind their decisions. At the same time, this study analyses who within the government opposed the provision of relief as well as the reasons that underpinned their decision-making. These questions help to explain how and why the British government provided humanitarian aid in Japan.

This thesis argues that most of the aid that the government provided was solely for the benefit of British expatriates and the Imperial University of Tokyo. Most of the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook was for the benefit of British and other European nationals because Sir Arthur Leveson, the commander-in-chief of the British warships that sailed to Japan, saw expatriates as his priority. The navy prioritised expatriates over the Japanese public amidst pressure from British and other European merchants in Yokohama. The Foreign Office did not provide any clothes, food, or other provisions to the Japanese government because the Treasury protested that the British government could not afford to spend money on aid in the face of an impending deficit.[37] The Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee donated books because British diplomats and scholars advised that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public. Ramsay MacDonald, the British

[35] Juliano Fiori, Matthew Hilton, and Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarianisms in Context', *European Review of History*, 23 (2016), p. 1.
[36] Emily Baughan, Eleanor Davey, Bronwen Everill, Matthew Hilton, Kevin O'Sullivan, and Tehila Sasson, 'History and Humanitarianism: A Conversation', *Past and Present*, 241 (2018), p. 20.
[37] Sir Otto Niemeyer to Sir Neville Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

prime minister, and Robert Nichols, the chair of English at the University, agreed that books would represent a permanent expression of friendship between Britain and Japan.[38] The actions and views of the Cabinet, the Treasury, and Japanese ministers convinced Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, that his government should offer books to the University.

This thesis contributes to the study of humanitarianism by underlining how different government departments debated who should receive aid from the British government as well as the amount of relief that they should receive. Robert Boulter, the British acting consul in Yokohama, and Leveson envisioned that most of the relief that the Royal Navy provided in Japan should be for the benefit of British and other European nationals. The Admiralty and the Foreign Office argued that the British government should offer assistance to the Japanese government and public as well as to expatriates. The Treasury, however, maintained that the British government could not afford to provide humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government or public. These examples reflect that the state in inter-war Britain played a contested role in the provision of humanitarian aid.

This introductory chapter explains the originality of this thesis as well as the sources and the structure that underpin this study. The rest of this chapter is divided into four parts. The next part outlines why this thesis represents an original contribution to the study of humanitarian aid and humanitarianism in inter-war Britain. The third part examines the diplomatic relationship between Britain and Japan at the time of the earthquake. The penultimate part highlights how the international community reacted to the disaster. The final part analyses the sources and the structure that underpin this thesis. The structure of this chapter helps to illustrate how the study of humanitarianism, the study of Anglo-Japanese relations, and the scholarship on the earthquake have changed in recent years.

**Humanitarianism in Inter-war Britain: Definitions and Themes**

Political scientists recognise that "humanitarianism" is difficult to define. Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss argue that fieldworkers in the contemporary humanitarian sector often describe "humanitarianism" as the provision of life-saving assistance that revolves around five principles. Barnett and Weiss contend that fieldworkers provide aid in the belief that all human beings are equal. Secondly, "impartiality" entails the provision of relief based on the needs of recipients rather than on account of their nationality,

[38] Robert Nichols to Sir Charles Eliot, 'The Library of the Imperial University', 7 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir John Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

political affiliation, religion, or other characteristics. "Independence" is the principle that aid should be distributed by those who are not affiliated with any belligerents or stakeholders. Fourthly, "neutrality" is the belief that those who distribute relief should refrain from activities that could benefit or hinder belligerents or stakeholders. Finally, fieldworkers see "altruism" as the view that those who provide aid should not expect anything in return for their sacrifices.[39]

Historians and political scientists, though, tend to dismiss this definition because it implies that humanitarianism is apolitical. Dolores Martin-Moruno explains that humanitarianism is never apolitical because the decision to address the suffering of one group of people instead of the suffering of another group is a political choice.[40] Barnett and Weiss outline that fieldworkers who provide aid in response to genocides or similar situations cannot remain neutral if their relief work supports survivors or hinders perpetrators. Fieldworkers cannot remain independent if they can only provide relief by working with governments or other stakeholders. The pair maintain that fieldworkers are not altruists as the provision of aid often raises their self-esteem and status in society.[41]

Trevor Burnard *et al.* define "humanitarianism" as 'the long-distance projection of empathy and concern for the welfare of others'.[42] Alan Lester and Rob Skinner reason that transoceanic exploration and the spread of European imperialism introduced Europeans to Aboriginals, Polynesians, and other 'distant strangers' during the eighteenth century. "Humanitarianism" emerged as the provision of assistance across national borders in the belief that such assistance would alleviate, end, or prevent what Europeans saw as the suffering of fellow human beings. This early form of humanitarianism entailed campaigns against transatlantic slavery, the protection of indigenous groups across Oceania, and other kinds of assistance. Humanitarianism was intertwined with imperialism as the growth of colonial empires imbued Europeans with a newfound feeling of responsibility for the lives and welfare of the 'distant others' whom they had colonised.[43]

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[39] Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, 'Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present', in Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss (eds), *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (London, 2008), pp. 11-12.
[40] Dolores Martin-Moruno, 'Feeling Humanitarianism during the Spanish Civil War and Republican Exile', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 21/4 (2020), p. 449.
[41] Barnett and Weiss, 'A Brief History', in Barnett and Weiss (eds), *Humanitarianism in Question*, pp. 4, 12.
[42] Trevor Burnard, Joy Damousi, and Alan Lester, 'Selective Humanity: Three Centuries of Anglophone Humanitarianism, Empire, and Transnationalism', in Trevor Burnard, Joy Damousi, and Alan Lester (eds), *Humanitarianism, Empire, and Transnationalism, 1760-1995: Selective Humanity in the Anglophone World* (Manchester, 2022), p. 1.
[43] Alan Lester and Rob Skinner, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), pp. 731-2, 739.

Kerrie Holloway and other historians have started to define "humanitarianism" as a range of emotions that audiences experience when they see what they interpret as the suffering of fellow human beings.[44] Fuyuki Kurasawa identifies five of these emotions. He describes "compassion" as a sympathetic concern for those whom audiences believe are suffering. "Guilt" juxtaposes the conditions of those who are portrayed as suffering with the conditions of the audience and underlines the possible consequences for the former if the audience does not act. "Outrage" involves anger and disgust at what the audience see as suffering. "Pity" entails sorrow for those whom audiences deem to be suffering. "Shock" describes the surprise that audiences feel at the scale of what they see as suffering.[45]

The appeal that the Save the Children Fund ran between August 1921 and April 1923 in response to the famine that unfolded along the Volga River aimed to elicit most of these emotions from the British public.[46] Scholars estimate that between 2,500,000 and 9,000,000 people died as a result of the famine.[47] Save the Children printed photographs in newspapers, on buses, and on the walls of the London Underground that depicted emaciated children begging for food.[48] Kurasawa reasons that these images aimed to evoke compassion by encouraging the British public to feel sympathy for the children. The photographs sought to evoke pity by asking the audience to feel sorrow for the starving Russians. The images aimed to elicit guilt by contrasting the conditions along the Volga with living and working conditions in Britain and by underlining what could happen to the children if the British public did not offer relief.[49]

Historians who define "humanitarianism" as a spectrum of emotions contend that these emotions entail an imperative to act. Kevin O'Sullivan argues that the emotions that audiences experience lead to 'an act, or set of actions, based on the imperative to

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[44] Kerrie Holloway, 'Empathy in Narratives of British Humanitarian Workers Assisting Spanish Republican Refugees at the Time of the Retirada: Esme Odgers, Audrey Russell, Richard Rees, and Lilian Urmston', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 21/4 (2020), p. 504.
[45] Fuyuki Kurasawa, 'The Making of Humanitarian Visual Icons: On the 1921-3 Russian Famine as Foundational Event', in Jeffrey Alexander, Dominik Bartmanski, and Bernhard Giesen (eds), *Iconic Power: Materiality and Meaning in Social Life* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 71.
[46] Kurasawa, 'The Russian Famine', in Alexander, Bartmanski, and Giesen (eds), *Iconic Power*, pp. 67-74.
[47] Kurasawa, 'The Russian Famine', in Alexander, Bartmanski, and Giesen (eds), *Iconic Power*, p. 68; Luke Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890-1923* (Cham, 2018), p. 167.
[48] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire* (Oakland, 2022), pp. 39-43.
[49] Kurasawa, 'The Russian Famine', in Alexander, Bartmanski, and Giesen (eds), *Iconic Power*, pp. 67-74.

help'.[50] Enrico Lago *et al.* maintain that these actions include 'any form of activity [that is] undertaken in the name of organising and "improving" the lives of the less well-off'.[51] Barnett and Weiss, though, caution that 'to define humanitarianism so that it includes nearly all conceivable acts that might potentially alleviate suffering … [could] stretch the concept to the point of uselessness'.[52]

In light of these different definitions, this thesis defines "humanitarianism" as the provision of assistance to fellow human beings across national borders. O'Sullivan explains that those who provide such assistance aim to alleviate, end, or prevent what they see as the suffering of others.[53] Holloway outlines that those who offer relief show compassion, pity, and sympathy for those whom they believe are suffering.[54] Those who provide relief aim to protect the lives and/or welfare of others. This thesis adopts this definition, as opposed to a narrower definition, because this approach reflects that humanitarianism is emotional as well as transnational.

This definition means that the support that the British government offered to its own citizens in Japan represents an example of humanitarianism. The Royal Navy provided assistance across national borders in response to the earthquake as Sir Arthur Leveson ordered warships that were anchored in China and Hong Kong, a British colony, to sail to Japan. The sailors who were onboard these ships aimed to alleviate the suffering of British nationals by providing shelter to merchants in Yokohama, offering food to diplomats in Tokyo, and by distributing clothes and toiletries amongst expatriates.[55] The sailors aimed to protect the welfare of British nationals by rescuing those who were stranded and by recovering property that belonged to expatriates.[56]

Historians of inter-war humanitarianism tend to focus on the provision of aid in Europe. Janet Borland *et al.* outline that historians have examined how and why fieldworkers and nongovernmental organisations distributed aid across Europe and the Soviet Union. They

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[50] Baughan, Davey, Everill, Hilton, O'Sullivan, and Sasson, 'History and Humanitarianism', p. 17.
[51] Enrico Lago and Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Towards a New History of Humanitarianism', *Moving the Social: Journal of Social History and the History of Social Movements*, 57 (2017), p. 7.
[52] Barnett and Weiss, 'A Brief History', in Barnett and Weiss (eds), *Humanitarianism in Question*, p. 11.
[53] Baughan, Davey, Everill, Hilton, O'Sullivan, and Sasson, 'History and Humanitarianism', p. 17.
[54] Holloway, 'British Humanitarian Workers Assisting Spanish Republican Refugees', p. 504.
[55] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '8 September', 8 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 710; Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[56] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.

lament that scholars have paid more attention to Europe than they have paid to the Pacific.[57] This eurocentric tendency explains to some extent why Barnett assumes that Europeans only started to provide relief outside of Europe after the end of the Second World War.[58] This thesis challenges this eurocentrism by analysing how and why the British government provided aid in Tokyo and Yokohama during the 1920s.

At the same time, Esme Cleall and other historians investigate the provision of humanitarian relief within the British Empire. Cleall examines how the Zenana Missionary Society, a group of missionaries, utilised lipreading, sign language, and tactile alphabets to educate blind, deaf, and deafblind children in Ceylon and India.[59] Bronwen Everill analyses how colonial governments supported 7,000 displaced Abyssinians who settled in Kenya, Somaliland, and Sudan, three British colonies, during the Italian invasion of Abyssinia that started in October 1935.[60] This thesis constitutes an original contribution to the study of aid and humanitarianism by investigating how and why the state in inter-war Britain provided relief in Japan, a country outside of Europe and outside of the British Empire. This study highlights that the role that the government played in the provision of aid on the world stage was geographically expansive, but was also politically and socially confined to universities and to British nationals.

Scholars have interpreted the history of humanitarianism as a means through which they can examine diverse themes. Michael Marten contends that the relief work that Presbyterian missionaries undertook in Palestine, a League of Nations mandate that the British government administered, after the end of the First World War shows how missionaries in inter-war Britain conceptualised "civilisation".[61] Jo Laycock outlines how the relief work that the Lord Mayor's Fund for Armenian Refugees, a group that offered relief to displaced Armenians, undertook between August 1921 and December 1926 illustrates how British fieldworkers responded to displacement.[62] Rose Holmes suggests

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[57] Janet Borland and J. Charles Schencking, 'Objects of Concern, Ambassadors of Gratitude: Children, Humanitarianism, and Transpacific Diplomacy following Japan's 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 13/2 (2020), pp. 196-7.
[58] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York, 2011), p. 2.
[59] Esme Cleall, 'Imperial Optics and Colonial Disability: Missions to Blind and Deaf Children in "the East", c.1880-1939', *Postcolonial Studies*, 27/1 (2024), p. 17.
[60] Bronwen Everill, 'The Italo-Abyssinian Crisis and the Shift from Slave to Refugee', *Slavery and Abolition*, 35/2 (2014), p. 358.
[61] Michael Marten, 'Scottish Presbyterian Churches and Humanitarianism in the Inter-war Middle East', in Inger Okkenhaug and Karene Summerer (eds), *Christian Missions and Humanitarianism in the Middle East, 1850-1950: Ideologies, Rhetoric, and Practices* (Leiden, 2020), p. 209.
[62] Jo Laycock, 'Saving the Remnant or Building Socialism? Transnational Humanitarian Relief in Early Soviet Armenia', *Moving the Social: Journal of Social History and the History of Social Movements*, 57 (2017), pp. 77-84.

that the photographs that fieldworkers published during the Spanish Civil War that took place between July 1936 and April 1939 underline the role that photography played in the British humanitarian movement.[63] Kevin Myers argues that the settlement of displaced Spanish children in Birmingham in May 1937 highlights the role that children played in the British media.[64] These examples reflect that historians have interpreted humanitarianism as a lens through which they can analyse displacement, missionaries, photography, and various other themes. Juliano Fiori *et al.* describe the study of humanitarianism as 'a broad church' that includes disaster relief, human rights, and other transnational themes.[65]

Historians from the early 2010s have started to analyse the relationship between humanitarianism and imperialism. Tehila Sasson and James Vernon propose that contemporary famine relief draws upon the model of colonial governance that the British government imposed in India and Ireland during the nineteenth century. The pair cite the Indian Famine Code of 1883 as an example. The government divided India into districts and built a camp in each district. The camps aimed to alleviate and prevent famines by providing food in exchange for agricultural work. The government expected those who sheltered in the camps to work twelve hours per day for a daily allowance of one pound of grain. The government hoped that the camps would lower crime and combat the spread of disease by separating those who were starving from the rest of society.[66]

Nongovernmental organisations drew upon the Indian Famine Code roughly forty years later during the Volga Famine. Fridtjof Nansen, the commissioner for refugees at the League of Nations, divided the Volga into districts that he assigned to several nongovernmental organisations in August 1921.[67] The Friends Emergency War Victims Relief Committee, a group of British Quakers, established camps in and around the town of Buzuluk that distributed over 16,500 tonnes of food over two years.[68] Sasson contends that nongovernmental organisations drew upon the experiences of colonial administrators who had provided relief in India. The British Red Cross asked Sir Benjamin Robertson, a former commissioner in India, to inspect the camps in and

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[63] Rose Holmes, '"Make the Situation Real to Us without Stressing the Horrors": Children, Photography, and Humanitarianism in the Spanish Civil War', in Johannes Paulmann (ed.), *Humanitarianism and Media: 1900 to the Present* (Oxford, 2019), p. 68.
[64] Kevin Myers, 'The Ambiguities of Aid and Agency: Representing Refugee Children in England, 1937-8', *Cultural and Social History*, 6/1 (2009), p. 41.
[65] Fiori, Hilton, and O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarianisms in Context', p. 4.
[66] Tehila Sasson and James Vernon, 'Practising the British Way of Famine: Technologies of Relief, 1770-1985', *European Review of History*, 22/6 (2015), pp. 860-3.
[67] Sasson, 'The Russian Famine', pp. 523-8.
[68] Sasson, 'The Russian Famine', p. 528; Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia*, pp. 187-9.

around Buzuluk in January 1922.[69] Sasson and Vernon reason that the overseas relief work that British nongovernmental organisations undertook after the end of the First World War 'built upon and extended the colonial ethic of famine relief'.[70]

Other nongovernmental organisations in inter-war Britain proposed that humanitarian causes justified and necessitated imperial expansion. The Antislavery and Aborigines Protection Society, a group that campaigned against slavery, lobbied the British government to stage a military intervention in Abyssinia from January 1922. Amalia Forclaz explains that the society argued that what it described as the "benefits" of British imperialism would help to end slavery in East Africa. Lord Lugard, a member of the British delegation at the League of Nations, endorsed the proposal on the grounds that the League could help to end slavery by allowing the British government to establish a mandate in Abyssinia. The threat of military action convinced the Abyssinian government to join the League in August 1923.[71]

British politicians saw humanitarianism as a way to promote imperial unity. Robert Cecil and Lord Emmott, two members of Parliament, established the Imperial War Relief Fund in March 1920. The public appeal raised money in Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa on behalf of over forty British and Dominion nongovernmental organisations that undertook relief work in continental Europe. The fund had raised roughly £840,000 by the time that the appeal ended in September 1925, the equivalent of almost £44,000,000 today.[72] This sum was over twenty times larger than the amount that the British government spent in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake.[73] Emily Baughan suggests that Cecil and Emmott believed that the fund would guard the British Empire against disunity and would enhance British prestige by helping British and Dominion nongovernmental organisations to liaise with each other.[74]

Nongovernmental organisations also played an active role in reaction to the Volga Famine. Save the Children raised £1,300,000 in response to the famine between August

[69] Sasson, 'The Russian Famine', pp. 532-3.
[70] Sasson and Vernon, 'Practising the British Way of Famine', p. 863.
[71] Amalia Forclaz, '"The Breath of a New Life?" British Antislavery Activism and the League of Nations', in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London, 2011), pp. 93, 101-3.
[72] Emily Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund and the All British Appeal: Commonwealth, Conflict, and Conservatism within the British Humanitarian Movement, 1920-5', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), pp. 846-7.
[73] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund', p. 847.
[74] Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund', p. 845.

1921 and April 1923, the equivalent of nearly £68,000,000 today.[75] Diplomatic relations between Britain and the Soviet Union were hostile when the famine unfolded as British soldiers were fighting Bolsheviks as part of the Russian Civil War. Linda Mahood and Vic Satzewich argue that Save the Children anticipated that the provision of food to Russian children would discourage Russian refugees from spreading diseases across Europe, calm international markets, and turn enemies into friends.[76]

Save the Children played a prominent role in the All British Appeal for Germany. The Friends Emergency War Victims Relief Committee, Save the Children, and other nongovernmental organisations established the public appeal in December 1923 in response to inflation and unemployment in the Ruhr. Although the Imperial War Relief Fund declined to join the appeal, Save the Children nevertheless campaigned on behalf of the Appeal for Germany by adopting the imperialist rhetoric that the Imperial Fund espoused. Save the Children informed the British public that the provision of aid in Germany, a former enemy, would enhance the "glory" of the British Empire. Baughan contends that Save the Children drew donations away from the Imperial Fund 'only by echoing its imperial rhetoric'.[77]

These examples reflect that historians tend to examine humanitarianism by focussing on nongovernmental organisations. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie explain that scholars have concentrated on a 'few large-scale … [nongovernmental] organisations', like Save the Children, due to the accessibility of their archives, such as the Save the Children Archives in Birmingham. They lament that this tendency means that scholars have overlooked the role that states have played in the history of humanitarianism. In particular, Piller and Wylie bemoan that historians have overlooked that the First World War was a significant moment in the evolution of humanitarianism, when governments and state bureaucracies became heavily involved in the provision of relief.[78] Burnard *et al.* agree that historians have ignored that states started to play a more active role in the provision of aid towards the end of the war by resettling refugees and distributing food.[79] This thesis helps to address this lacuna by highlighting how and why the British state provided humanitarian relief in reaction to the earthquake.

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[75] Baughan, *Saving the Children*, pp. 39-46.
[76] Linda Mahood and Vic Satzewich, 'The Save the Children Fund and the Russian Famine of 1921-3: Claims and Counterclaims about Feeding "Bolshevik" Children', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 22/1 (2009), p. 66.
[77] Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund', pp. 845, 856.
[78] Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie, 'Humanitarianism and the Greater War', in Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (eds), *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914-24* (Manchester, 2023), pp. 2, 6, 20.
[79] Burnard, Damousi, and Lester, 'Selective Humanity', in Burnard, Damousi, and Lester (eds), *Selective Humanity in the Anglophone World*, p. 19.

This thesis also contributes to this field of literature by illustrating that the state was not a single, unified humanitarian actor. This study demonstrates that the state was instead a contested space where diplomats, government departments, and other humanitarian actors competed with each other for influence and circulated their own agendas and priorities. Robert Boulter and Leveson, for example, believed that the Royal Navy should prioritise British and other European expatriates over the Japanese public. The Admiralty and the Foreign Office, however, maintained that the British government should provide aid to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates. In contrast, the Treasury opposed the provision of relief to Japanese nationals for financial reasons. These examples reflect that different groups contested who should receive humanitarian support from the British state as well as the amount of support that recipients should receive.

This study is an example of what Julia Irwin calls 'catastrophic diplomacy'. She defines this field as the study of how the provision of humanitarian relief in response to wars, earthquakes, and other natural disasters has influenced relations between states.[80] Natsuko Chubachi *et al.* suggest that this field likewise entails the study of how recipients and the ways in which they have reacted to the aid that they have received have shaped diplomatic history.[81] Irwin and Frank Kaser propose that states started to formulate what the pair describe as 'humanitarian policies' from the first decade of the twentieth century. They define 'humanitarian policy' as the principle that a state can advance its diplomatic and political objectives by providing aid overseas.[82]

This thesis analyses how the Admiralty and the Foreign Office developed humanitarian policies in response to the earthquake. The Royal Navy offered humanitarian assistance to British and other European nationals in Japan in keeping with the navy's wider imperial strategy that aimed to protect British and other European expatriates across Asia.[83] Lord Curzon envisioned that the provision of aid to the Japanese government would support the diplomatic objectives of the British government by promoting cordial diplomatic ties between the two countries.[84] This thesis contributes to the study of catastrophic diplomacy by underlining how the provision of humanitarian relief in Japan supported the diplomatic and imperial aims of the British state.

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[80] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[81] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 63.
[82] Frank Kaser, 'A Civilised Nation: Japan and the Red Cross, 1877-1900', *European Review of History*, 23/2 (2016), p. 27; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[83] Matthew Heaslip, *Gunboats, Empire, and the China Station: The Royal Navy in 1920s East Asia* (London, 2021), pp. 126-32.
[84] Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.

Lester and Skinner explain that historians have started to pay more attention to the relationship between humanitarian relief and foreign policy.[85] Peter Anderson, for example, argues that British diplomats in Madrid and Valencia evacuated refugees who supported the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War in the hope that these gestures would encourage friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and the Nationalists.[86] This thesis contributes to this growing field of literature by examining the role that the British Foreign Office anticipated that humanitarian aid should play in the formulation and execution of foreign policy. In particular, Curzon believed that his government should offer provisions to the Japanese government to convey that the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did not represent the end of friendly relations between the two governments.[87] In contrast, Sir Neville Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer, warned that the British government could not afford to donate food or other provisions to the Japanese government.[88] This thesis demonstrates how the Treasury contested the humanitarian policies of the Foreign Office as well as the role that humanitarian aid should play in British foreign policy.

Historians from the early 2020s have started to investigate how British scholars provided intellectual relief overseas. Tomas Irish defines "intellectual relief" as the provision of humanitarian assistance to academics, libraries, students, universities, or writers. He outlines that the first type of intellectual relief includes the provision of food, medicine, or other provisions to academics, students, or writers. The second kind entails the donation of equipment, literature, or money to libraries or universities.[89] The books that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee donated to the Imperial University of Tokyo in response to the earthquake constitute an example of this second type of intellectual relief.

British academics provided intellectual relief across Europe during the First World War and throughout the decade that followed. Austro-Hungarian troops shelled the Belgrade University Library when they assaulted the Serbian capital in July 1914. The Royal Society of Literature, an academic society in London, responded by offering over 18,000

[85] Lester and Skinner, 'Humanitarianism and Empire', p. 731.
[86] Peter Anderson, 'British Government Maritime Evacuations in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-9', *War in History*, 26/1 (2019), pp. 68-74.
[87] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[88] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[89] Tomas Irish, 'The "Moral Basis" of Reconstruction? Humanitarianism, Intellectual Relief, and the League of Nations, 1918-25', *Modern Intellectual History*, 17/3 (2020), pp. 769, 778.

books to the University between January 1919 and August 1923.[90] German soldiers destroyed over 300,000 books when they torched the Louvain University Library in Belgium in August 1914 during what Belgian, British, and French propaganda nicknamed "the sack of Louvain". Henry Guppy, the head of the John Rylands Library in Manchester, established an international appeal as soon as news of the destruction reached Britain. Steven Witt estimates that the appeal donated nearly 56,000 books to the Louvain University Library by the time that the University reopened in July 1928.[91]

Historians have overlooked the role that states have played in the provision of intellectual relief. Although Irish and Witt explain how British scholars provided books to universities in Belgrade and Louvain, historians are yet to consider if the British government played any role in the donation of these books. This lacuna means that historians have not yet questioned how different government departments envisioned the role that the British state should play in the provision of intellectual relief. This thesis represents an original contribution to the study of intellectual relief by highlighting how and why the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee provided books to the Imperial University of Tokyo on behalf of the British government. The earthquake destroyed over two thirds of the campus and over 700,000 books at the University Library, representing the University's entire collection.[92] The Committee reacted by donating 41,700 books between December 1923 and March 1932, over double the number that the Royal Society of Literature provided to the Belgrade University Library.[93]

This thesis also contributes to the study of intellectual relief by underlining the role that this particular kind of aid played in British foreign policy. Ramsay MacDonald believed that the donation of books to the Imperial University of Tokyo would represent a permanent expression of friendship between Britain and Japan.[94] Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British foreign secretary, concurred that the gift of books would foster friendly relations between the British and Japanese governments.[95] These examples

[90] Tomas Irish, *Feeding the Mind: Humanitarianism and the Reconstruction of European Intellectual Life, 1919-33* (Cambridge, 2024), pp. 165-8.
[91] Steven Witt, 'Inter-war Internationalism and the Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', *Libraries: Culture, History, and Society*, 4/1 (2020), pp. 2, 15-16.
[92] Yoshinao Kozai to Sir Charles Palairet, 'The Library of the Imperial University', 4 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 570-1.
[93] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.
[94] Ramsay MacDonald to Gonsuke Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[95] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.

demonstrate that diplomats maintained that intellectual relief should play a role in British foreign policy by encouraging friendly diplomatic relations with other states.

Historians are yet to question how the recipients of intellectual relief responded to the aid that they received. Although Irish explains how and why American and other academics supported the reconstruction of universities in Belgrade, Louvain, and Tokyo, he does not consider how scholars and students at these universities reacted to the aid that they received. This thesis helps to address this lacuna by illustrating how academics at the Imperial University of Tokyo responded to the books that they received from the Committee. In particular, Yoshinao Kozai, the president of the University, offered theological texts to the British government because he wanted to convey that his University was grateful for the books that the Committee had donated.[96] This example reflects how the donation of books to the University led to a reciprocal exchange of literature between Britain and Japan that took place during the 1920s and the early 1930s.

As one of the aims of this thesis is to contribute to less eurocentric accounts of humanitarianism, it is necessary to highlight studies of Japanese humanitarianism. Sho Konishi suggests that Taizen Sato, a physician, established the humanitarian movement in Japan when he founded the Juntendo School, a medical school that is now a university, in the town of Sakura during the late 1830s. The school provided medical relief in response to epidemics as well as earthquakes, tsunamis, and other natural disasters. The school aimed to save lives by alleviating what those who studied and taught at the school described as the suffering of fellow human beings.[97] Michiko Suzuki argues that the school shows that Japanese humanitarianism was not 'a cultural import from the West' as Sato founded the school over fifteen years before the Japanese government established diplomatic relations with Britain and the United States.[98]

Humanitarian societies in Japan expanded rapidly from the late nineteenth century. Tsunetami Sano, a surgeon, formed the Japanese Red Cross Society in 1887. The society grew from 5,000 members in 1888 to 900,000 members by 1903. In comparison, the French Red Cross, the first national society of the Red Cross, had 55,000 members in 1907.[99] Suzuki explains that the membership of the Japanese Red Cross continued to

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[96] Yoshinao Kozai to Sir John Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[97] Sho Konishi, 'The Emergence of an International Humanitarian Organisation in Japan: The Tokugawa Origins of the Japanese Red Cross', *The American Historical Review*, 119/4 (2014), pp. 1134-5.
[98] Michiko Suzuki, *Humanitarian Internationalism under Empire: The Global Evolution of the Japanese Red Cross Movement, 1877-1945* (Chichester, 2024), p. 11.
[99] Konishi, 'The Tokugawa Origins of the Japanese Red Cross', p. 1129.

expand and reached 2,000,000 members by 1920, representing over three percent of the Japanese population.[100] Olive Checkland contends that the Japanese Red Cross had become the largest Red Cross society in the world by the early twentieth century.[101]

The Japanese Red Cross provided aid in response to several wars that unfolded between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The society provided medical relief to more than 100,000 soldiers across China, Japan, and Korea throughout the First Sino-Japanese War that took place between July 1894 and April 1895. Over 5,000 volunteers offered medical assistance to more than 10,000 patients across China, Japan, Korea, and Russia during the Russo-Japanese War that took place between February 1904 and September 1905.[102] Nobuko Kosuge reasons that this relief work represented 'an important step' in the inclusion and acceptance of Japan within the international community.[103] The society dispatched over eighty fieldworkers to Netley, a village near Southampton; Paris, and Petrograd who cared for almost 170,000 patients between December 1914 and July 1916 during the First World War.[104] Gordon Daniels and Hiroko Tomida suggest that the Japanese Red Cross acquired 'a remarkable international reputation' during the war as British, French, and Russian observers praised the professionalism of the Japanese nurses.[105] These examples reflect that Japanese humanitarians played an active role on the world stage.

The Japanese Red Cross also played an active role during peacetime. Konishi contends that the society became the first Red Cross society in the world to organise relief during peacetime when volunteers provided aid during the eruption of Mount Bandai, a volcano in the north of Japan, in July 1888. The society likewise offered relief in reaction to the Great Nobi Earthquake that struck the city of Nagoya in October 1891 and in response to the Sanriku Tsunami that inundated the northeast of Japan in June 1896.[106] The society donated over ¥300,000, the equivalent of nearly £34,000 or roughly £1,750,000 today, in response to the San Francisco Earthquake in April 1906, the deadliest earthquake in American history. The Japanese Red Cross distributed facemasks and ran inoculation

[100] Suzuki, *The Japanese Red Cross Movement*, p. 27.
[101] Olive Checkland, *Humanitarianism and the Emperor's Japan, 1877-1977* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 9.
[102] Suzuki, *The Japanese Red Cross Movement*, pp. 20-2.
[103] Nobuko Kosuge, 'The "Non-Religious" Red Cross Emblem and Japan', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 85/849 (2003), pp. 76-7.
[104] Gordon Daniels and Hiroko Tomida, 'Medical Ambassadors: Japanese Red Cross Nurses in Britain, 1915-16', *Social Innovation Research*, 4/1 (2009), pp. 103, 115; Suzuki, *The Japanese Red Cross Movement*, pp. 23-4.
[105] Daniels and Tomida, 'Japanese Red Cross Nurses in Britain, 1915-16', pp. 99-100.
[106] Konishi, 'The Tokugawa Origins of the Japanese Red Cross', p. 1151.

campaigns across Japan as well as Korea and Taiwan, two Japanese colonies, between January 1918 and December 1920 in response to the Spanish Flu Pandemic.[107]

The society started to finance humanitarian relief work across the world when it established the Shoken Fund in May 1912. The fund has offered grants since April 1921 to other Red Cross societies that are undertaking relief work during peacetime. The Japanese Red Cross awarded grants through the scheme to societies in twenty European countries during the 1920s. These grants funded campaigns against tuberculosis, medical training schemes, and other public health programmes. Romain Fathi and Melanie Oppenheimer argue that the Japanese Red Cross anticipated that these grants would portray Japan as a "civilised" nation by helping the society to establish itself as a leader of the international Red Cross movement.[108] The Shoken Fund and the Great Kanto Earthquake illustrate that Asians and Europeans were both donors as well as recipients of humanitarian relief throughout the years that followed the end of the First World War.

In summary, this thesis represents an original contribution to the study of humanitarianism in inter-war Britain in several ways. This study outlines the role that the British state played in the overseas provision of humanitarian relief. This thesis analyses the role that humanitarian aid played in British foreign policy. This study challenges the tendency amongst historians to focus on the provision of relief in Europe or within the British Empire by highlighting how and why the British government provided aid in Japan. This thesis explains the role that the state played in the overseas provision of intellectual relief as well as the role that this particular type of aid played in British foreign policy. Fiori *et al.* contend that historians interpret humanitarianism as a 'lens' through which they can analyse displacement, imperialism, and other themes.[109] The role that the British government played in response to the earthquake offers insights into catastrophic diplomacy, foreign policy, intellectual relief, and the state.

**Anglo-Japanese Relations and the Diplomatic Context**

This thesis also shines a light on Anglo-Japanese relations. The British and Japanese governments established the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in January 1902. This diplomatic and military pact defined relations between the two governments for over twenty years until the Alliance ended in August 1923. This thesis analyses the role that humanitarian aid played in defining the post-Alliance relationship when the earthquake struck less than a month after the Alliance had ended. This part of this chapter examines the diplomatic

[107] Suzuki, *The Japanese Red Cross Movement*, pp. 27-8.
[108] Romain Fathi and Melanie Oppenheimer, 'The Shoken Fund and the Evolution of the Red Cross Movement', *European Review of History*, 30/5 (2023), pp. 816-23.
[109] Fiori, Hilton, and O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarianisms in Context', pp. 5-6.

relationship between Britain and Japan during the First World War and throughout the years that followed.

The historiography revolves around three debates. Antony Best, David Steeds, and other historians dispute whether relations between the two governments were friendly or unfriendly during and after the war. Secondly, Zoltan Buzas, Ian Nish, and other scholars question whether the Japanese government opposed or supported the continuation of the Alliance after the war had ended. Finally, Ian Gow, Tadashi Kuramatsu, and other historians debate whether the post-Alliance relationship was friendly or unfriendly. This study contributes to this third debate by highlighting what the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake reveals about the post-Alliance relationship.

In light of the first debate, this thesis contends that relations between the British and Japanese governments remained mostly cordial throughout and after the war as the governments offered diplomatic and military assistance to each other throughout the conflict. The Japanese government supported its ally by declaring war against Germany in late August 1914, less than three weeks after the British government had declared war. Three British warships and over 1,000 Australian and Indian troops helped the Japanese military to capture the German leasehold of Qingdao in China three months later.[110] Steeds argues that these examples illustrate that the Alliance was 'in full working order'.[111]

The Japanese government and the Japanese Red Cross offered humanitarian assistance to their ally. The government asked the society to dispatch fieldworkers to their wartime allies of Britain, France, and Russia in September 1914. The Japanese Red Cross agreed and dispatched twenty-two nurses, two doctors, an interpreter, and a secretary to Britain. The group provided medical treatment to over 2,500 soldiers at a makeshift hospital in Netley between January 1915 and January 1916. Gordon Daniels and Hiroko Tomida reason that British doctors, nurses, and patients treated the Japanese in Netley as their 'complete social equals'.[112] The war and the earthquake show that the British and Japanese governments exchanged relief with each other and were both donors as well as recipients of aid throughout the early twentieth century.

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[110] Yoichi Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the First World War', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 51.
[111] David Steeds, 'Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1902-23: A Marriage of Convenience', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 217.
[112] Daniels and Tomida, 'Japanese Red Cross Nurses in Britain, 1915-16', pp. 103, 110-15.

The Japanese navy defended British colonial interests across Asia. The navy dispatched over 300 marines and two cruisers to Singapore to help the Royal Navy suppress a mutiny in the colony in February 1915. Three Japanese cruisers protected India throughout the war by patrolling the Indian Ocean. Yoichi Hirama explains that the British government and military came 'to rely totally on the Japanese navy for the security of the Pacific and Indian Oceans'.[113]

Best and several other scholars, though, contend that diplomatic relations between the allies deteriorated throughout and after the war. Best argues that the 'Alliance entered rough waters' due to disagreements over the extradition of Indian seditionists.[114] Buzas agrees that diplomatic relations were 'fraught with tension' due to disagreements over shipbuilding.[115] Shigeru Murashima concurs that diplomatic tensions over China meant that 'alienation between Japan and Britain was accelerating'.[116]

In particular, Murashima outlines that the "Twenty-One Demands" harmed diplomatic ties between the allies. The demands were a list of ultimatums that the Japanese government submitted to the Chinese government between January and May 1915. The demands called on the Chinese government to transfer further mining and railway concessions, the leasehold of Qingdao, and the production of munitions in China to the Japanese government. The Japanese government also demanded that the Chinese government appoint Japanese advisors and open additional ports to Japanese merchants. Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary, feared that the ultimatums could trigger a war between Britain, China, and Japan at the same time as the wider world war. He reprimanded the Japanese government and he publicly denounced the demands as a contravention of the terms of the Alliance.[117]

Requests for extradition caused further tensions. Rash Bose and Bhai Gyanee, two Indian seditionists, took asylum in Japan from July 1915. The British government asked the Japanese government to extradite them to India. The *Rikken Seiyukai*, the largest opposition party in Japan, urged the Japanese government to reject this request on the

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[113] Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Chapman, Gow, and Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume III*, pp. 54-8.
[114] Antony Best, 'Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *Social Science Japan Journal*, 9/2 (2006), p. 183.
[115] Zoltan Buzas, 'The Colour of Threat: Race, Threat Perception, and the Demise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *Security Studies*, 22/4 (2013), p. 598.
[116] Murashima, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, p. 189.
[117] Murashima, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, pp. 184-5.

grounds that extradition would undermine Japanese sovereignty. The Japanese government agreed with the *Rikken Seiyukai* and refused to extradite Bose or Gyanee.[118]

An arms race between the American, British, and Japanese navies caused further diplomatic tensions throughout and after the war. The arms race began when the American government started the Naval Building Programme, a national shipbuilding programme, in August 1916. The Japanese navy reacted by launching the *Mutsu*, a battleship, three years later. The American navy responded to the launch of the *Mutsu* by building seven battleships and six battlecruisers between 1919 and 1920.[119] These developments convinced the Japanese navy to commission thirty-four submarines, six cruisers, three aircraft carriers, and two battleships.[120] The Committee of Imperial Defence, a committee that advised the British government on the security of the British Empire, responded to the arms race in December 1920 by advising the Royal Navy to construct four dreadnaughts. The Cabinet reacted to the arms race in June 1921 by ordering the Admiralty to fortify Singapore against a hypothetical Japanese invasion.[121]

Best, Buzas, and Murashima, however, overlook that the British and Japanese governments and militaries continued to work together despite these disagreements. The Japanese navy defended Malta during the First World War by dispatching twelve destroyers and a cruiser to the British colony from April 1917. The Japanese fleet escorted nearly 800 allied ships that carried roughly 700,000 soldiers across the Mediterranean. Japanese sailors rescued over 7,000 people from sinking ships.[122]

Relations between the British and Japanese royal families remained friendly as well. Prince Arthur, a cousin of the king, visited Japan and presented the baton of a field-marshal to Emperor Yoshihito in June 1918. Prince Yorihito Higashifushimi, a member of the Japanese royal family, reciprocated this gesture four months later when he visited London and offered a baton to King George V. Crown Prince Hirohito, the heir to the Japanese throne, stayed at Buckingham Palace as a guest of the king in May 1921. Prince Edward, the heir to the British throne, visited Japan and met with the crown

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[118] Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Chapman, Gow, and Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume III*, p. 64.
[119] Erik Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Washington Conference', in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability, and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Ilford, 1994), pp. 5, 14.
[120] Heaslip, *The China Station*, p. 27.
[121] Neville Bennett, 'White Discrimination against Japan: Britain, the Dominions, and the United States, 1908-28', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 3/2 (2001), pp. 99-100.
[122] Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Chapman, Gow, and Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume III*, p. 59.

prince between April and May 1922. These examples imply that diplomatic relations were friendlier than Best, Buzas, and Murashima suggest.

The disagreements that arose between the British and Japanese governments during the war had nonetheless resulted in the formation of two factions within the British Foreign Office by the time that the conflict ended. Best contends that the groups held contrasting views over the future of the Alliance. They agreed that the British government should aim to maintain friendly relations with the Japanese government. At the same time, the groups disagreed over how the Foreign Office should maintain this friendship whilst resolving the tensions that had developed over China, extraditions, and shipbuilding.[123]

The first group supported the continuation of the Alliance.[124] Lord Balfour, a former prime minister, argued at the ninth Imperial Conference, an international summit that took place in London in June 1921, that the British government should continue to support the Alliance to prevent hostilities with Japan. Lord Curzon agreed on the grounds that the Alliance allowed the British government to restrain Japanese ambitions in China as well as Japanese shipbuilding.[125] Sir Charles Eliot supported the continuation of the Alliance in the belief that it protected British interests by deterring the Japanese government from pursuing alliances with Germany or the Soviet Union.[126]

In contrast, the other group proposed that the British government should replace the Alliance with a pact that included the American government as well as the British and Japanese governments. Best suggests that Sir William Greene, the British ambassador to Japan between December 1912 and April 1920, and Sir Victor Wellesley, the head of East Asian policy at the Foreign Office, were the most vocal proponents of this proposal.[127] Wellesley outlined his view on the future of the Alliance in a memorandum that he wrote in October 1921. He envisioned that a pact between the American, British, and Japanese governments would "restore" the "solidarity" of what he described as the "white races" of the world without harming diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.[128]

The American government criticised the Alliance throughout and after the First World War. Charles Hughes, the American secretary of state, informed Sir Auckland Geddes, the British ambassador to the United States, in April 1921 that the American government

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[123] Antony Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: An Examination into Historical Mythmaking', *The Historical Journal*, 49/3 (2006), pp. 814-16.
[124] Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', pp. 814-16.
[125] Goldstein, 'British Diplomatic Strategy', in Goldstein and Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2*, p. 7.
[126] Murashima, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, p. 189.
[127] Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', pp. 814-16.
[128] Goldstein, 'British Diplomatic Strategy', in Goldstein and Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2*, p. 25.

disapproved of the support that the British government had provided to the Japanese government.[129] Christina Davis suggests that American criticism persuaded Greene and Wellesley that the Alliance was an obstacle to closer diplomatic relations between Britain and the United States.[130] Erik Goldstein argues that those in the Foreign Office who supported a pact between the three governments warned that the Alliance could force Britain to fight the United States if a war arose between Japan and the United States.[131] Nish interprets these factors as evidence that the Alliance ended because the British and Japanese governments aimed to pursue friendlier diplomatic relations with the United States.[132]

The Canadian government opposed the Alliance on the grounds that it facilitated Japanese migration. Lord Grey, the governor-general of Canada, had warned Lord Elgin, the British colonial secretary, in December 1907 that migration would lead to a Japanese invasion of Canada.[133] Japanese migration continued despite these apprehensions as nearly 18,000 Japanese migrants had settled in the Dominion by May 1924.[134] Lord Devonshire, the governor-general of Canada, advised Winston Churchill, the British colonial secretary, in February 1921 that the British government should replace the Alliance with a pact that included the American, British, and Japanese governments. Arthur Meighen, the Canadian prime minister, repeated what Devonshire had proposed when the premier addressed the ninth Imperial Conference four months later. John Meehan explains that the British government could not ignore Devonshire and Meighen because the Canadian government played a prominent role in the formulation of British foreign and imperial policies after the end of the war.[135] Best maintains that the influence of the Canadian government strengthened the position of those in the Foreign Office who favoured a tripartite pact.[136]

Scholars dispute whether the Japanese government opposed or supported the continuation of the Alliance after the end of the war. Nish contends that the government

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[129] Phillips O'Brien, 'Britain and the End of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Phillips O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-22* (London, 2004), p. 269.
[130] Davis, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 175.
[131] Goldstein, 'British Diplomatic Strategy', in Goldstein and Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2*, p. 29.
[132] Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, pp. 256-7.
[133] Bennett, 'White Discrimination against Japan', pp. 91-3.
[134] Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race, and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (Abingdon, 1998), pp. 68-71.
[135] John Meehan, 'From Alliance to Conference: The British Empire, Japan, and Pacific Multilateralism, 1911-21', in Evan Dawley, Tze-ki Hon, and Tosh Minohara (eds), *The Decade of the Great War: Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 53-61.
[136] Best, 'Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 184.

opposed the continuation of the Alliance on the grounds that it harmed diplomatic relations with the United States.[137] Hirama, however, suggests that the disagreements that had arisen between the British and Japanese governments over China meant that the Japanese government was divided over the future of the Alliance.[138] In contrast, Davis reasons that the Japanese government 'did not request the end of the Alliance and would have supported its renewal'.[139] In particular, Buzas highlights that the Army and Foreign Ministries supported the Alliance and had 'little choice but to acquiesce' when the Alliance ended.[140] Steeds explains that the ministries believed that the Alliance would prevent the British government from supporting the American government in the event of a war between Japan and the United States.[141]

Although it is unclear if the Japanese government opposed or supported the continuation of the Alliance, Naoko Shimazu and Steeds nevertheless agree that the rejection of the racial equality proposals undermined Japanese support for the Alliance.[142] The proposals were several interconnected amendments that the Japanese delegation presented in January 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference. The amendments aimed to embed what the Japanese diplomats described as the "abolition" of racial prejudice and later the principle that all nations are equal into the Covenant of the League of Nations. William Hughes, the Australian prime minister, lobbied the American and British delegations to oppose the proposals because he misinterpreted them as a demand for more lenient legislation on immigration. The League rejected the proposals in April when the American and British delegations vetoed the amendments.[143]

The British and Japanese governments reached an agreement on the future of the Alliance during the Washington Conference, an international disarmament summit, that took place between November 1921 and February 1922. The American, Belgian, British, Chinese, Dutch, French, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese governments participated in the conference. The British and Japanese delegates agreed that their governments would not renew the Alliance when the terms expired. The diplomats concluded that their governments would replace the Alliance with the Four-Power, Five-Power, and Nine-

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[137] Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, pp. 256-7.
[138] Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Chapman, Gow, and Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume III*, p. 63.
[139] Davis, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 174.
[140] Buzas, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 600.
[141] Steeds, 'A Marriage of Convenience', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, pp. 219-21.
[142] Shimazu, *The Racial Equality Proposal*, pp. 27-31; Steeds, 'A Marriage of Convenience', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, p. 218.
[143] Shimazu, *The Racial Equality Proposal*, pp. 18-31.

Power Treaties that the diplomats signed during the conference. The Four-Power Treaty underlined that the American, British, French, and Japanese governments would uphold the status quo in the Pacific by resolving disputes diplomatically. The Five-Power Treaty outlined that the American, British, French, Italian, and Japanese navies would limit their shipbuilding programmes by restricting the number of capital ships that each navy could build. The Nine-Power Treaty explained that every government that participated in the conference would follow the "Open Door" policy that entailed unrestricted access to Chinese markets as well as recognition of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China.[144]

The end of the Alliance can be interpreted as part of a broader change in British foreign policy that took place after the end of the First World War. Patricia Clavin argues that the formation of the League of Nations 'multilateralised' British diplomacy. The League represented a transition away from the military alliances that had defined European diplomacy throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in favour of agreements between multiple states that covered disarmament, refugees, and other transnational issues.[145] The Washington Conference formed part of this move towards multilateral diplomacy. The British and Japanese governments agreed that their military alliance would be superseded by a series of agreements between nine states that revolved around the Four-Power, Five-Power, and Nine-Power Treaties.

This thesis contends that this move towards multilateral diplomacy influenced the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake. Curzon explained why he believed that his government should offer humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government in a memorandum that he presented to the Cabinet in November 1923, over two months after the earthquake had struck. He reasoned that humanitarian aid would convince the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not constitute the end of friendly relations between the two governments. He maintained that the Admiralty had ordered the Royal Navy to offer blankets, food, medicine, and vaccines to the Japanese public for similar reasons.[146] This thesis demonstrates that the Admiralty and Curzon anticipated that humanitarian relief would show that the transition from a

[144] Goldstein, 'British Diplomatic Strategy', in Goldstein and Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2*, pp. 17-22; Tadashi Kuramatsu, 'Britain, Japan, and Inter-war Naval Limitation, 1921-36', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 130; Davis, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 174; Buzas, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 600.
[145] Patricia Clavin, 'The Ben Pimlott Memorial Lecture, 2019: Britain and the Making of Global Order after 1919', *Twentieth Century British History*, 31/3 (2020), p. 343.
[146] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.

bilateral to a multilateral relationship did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations between the former allies.

Scholars debate whether relations between the British and Japanese governments were friendly or unfriendly throughout the years that followed the end of the Alliance. Buzas argues that the end of the Alliance led to alienation between the two governments.[147] Gow suggests that the possibility of a war with Japan became central to the plans that the Royal Navy formulated.[148] In contrast, Nish concludes that 'Britain and Japan enjoyed a … normal friendship'.[149] Kuramatsu outlines that the British and Japanese governments worked together in their aim to end the arms race in the Pacific.[150] This thesis contributes to this debate by examining what the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake reveals about the post-Alliance relationship.

This thesis contends that diplomatic relations remained friendly despite the end of the Alliance. The Admiralty, Curzon, and other British diplomats envisioned that the provision of humanitarian aid to the Japanese government or public could help to define the post-Alliance relationship by convincing the Japanese government that relations between their governments remained cordial. British diplomats maintained that humanitarian aid should play a role in diplomatic relations as they believed that humanitarianism and diplomatic strategy were closely intertwined. Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, the Japanese prime minister, and other Japanese diplomats and politicians showed gratitude for the support that they received from the British government because they agreed with their British counterparts that diplomatic relations should remain friendly. The earthquake shows that British and Japanese diplomats saw their governments as friends and promoted friendly relations between them throughout the 1920s.

In summary, diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan remained mostly cordial during the First World War and throughout the years that followed. The governments offered diplomatic, humanitarian, and military assistance to each other throughout the conflict and relations between the royal families remained friendly. Tensions over China, extradition, and shipbuilding, however, resulted in the development of two factions within the Foreign Office. The first group supported the continuation of the Alliance. In contrast, the other group proposed that the British government should replace the

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[147] Buzas, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', pp. 600-1.
[148] Ian Gow, 'The Royal Navy and Japan, 1921-41', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 114.
[149] Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, p. 275.
[150] Kuramatsu, 'Inter-war Naval Limitation', in Chapman, Gow, and Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume III*, pp. 131-2.

Alliance with a pact between the American, British, and Japanese governments.[151] American and Canadian pressure as well as the rejection of the racial equality proposals encouraged the British and Japanese governments to replace the Alliance with three treaties that included the American, British, Japanese, and six other governments.[152]

**The International Response to the Great Kanto Earthquake**

Julia Irwin interprets the role that the American government played in response to the earthquake as an example of catastrophic diplomacy.[153] Relations between the American and Japanese governments were almost hostile when the earthquake struck due to disagreements over immigration, the Russian Civil War, shipbuilding, and the "Twenty-one Demands".[154] J. Charles Schencking argues that the American government and public offered humanitarian relief to the Japanese government and public in the hope that aid would resolve these diplomatic tensions and would help to maintain peace in the Pacific.[155] Irwin contends that the American government formulated a humanitarian policy that was premised on the belief that the American state could advance its diplomatic objectives in Japan through the provision of humanitarian aid.[156]

The American government worked closely with the American Red Cross. Calvin Coolidge, the president of the United States, and the American Red Cross established the American Red Cross Fund, a nationwide public appeal, on 4 September 1923, three days after the earthquake had struck. The fund had raised $11,800,000, the equivalent of roughly £2,600,000 or approximately £135,000,000 today, by the time that the appeal ended on 1 October.[157] This sum was over seventy times larger than the overall amount that the British government spent in response to the earthquake.[158] The American public donated more money in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake than the public had donated over seventeen years earlier in response to the San Francisco Earthquake in April 1906.[159] Most of the humanitarian relief that the Japanese government and public

[151] Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', pp. 814-16.
[152] Best, 'Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p. 184.
[153] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 112, 130.
[154] J. Charles Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently: Humanitarianism as Diplomacy following Japan's 1923 Earthquake', *Diplomatic History*, 43/4 (2019), pp. 738-9; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 112.
[155] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', pp. 730-7.
[156] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[157] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', pp. 54-5.
[158] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', pp. 54-5.
[159] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 734.

received from the international community in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake came from the United States.[160]

British diplomats paid meticulous attention to the amount of aid that the American government and public provided. Sir Charles Eliot informed Sir William Tyrrell less than two weeks after the earthquake had struck that he had read various newspaper articles in Britain that described the relief work that the American navy had undertaken in Japan.[161] Sir Victor Wellesley reported that the American Red Cross Fund raised $5,000,000, the equivalent of roughly £1,100,000 or over £57,000,000 today, during the fortnight that followed the disaster.[162] Lord Curzon warned his fellow ministers that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the Japanese government surmised that the British government had not shown as much sympathy as the American government had shown.[163] This particular example illustrates that British diplomats saw American aid as a threat to British diplomatic interests in Japan, reflecting that diplomatic strategy and humanitarianism were closely intertwined in the minds of British diplomats.

Janet Borland *et al.* argue that the earthquake and the American Red Cross Fund received widespread publicity across the United States. Every public school in Hawaii donated cash, clothes, food, and toys to the appeal as part of a "Japan Relief Day".[164] Radio stations in Honolulu asked callers to donate money in exchange for song requests. Volunteers across Seattle delivered speeches about the earthquake on behalf of the Red Cross. The Red Cross sent letters that described the earthquake and asked for donations to every house in St. Louis.[165] Schencking explains that the scale of this publicity 'meant that it was virtually impossible for people not to be made aware of the disaster'.[166]

Several corporations supported the appeal. The United States Silk Association, a company that imported silk from Japan, donated over $400,000, the equivalent of almost £90,000 or nearly £4,600,000 today. Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing, a firm that exported electronics to Japan, donated $25,000, the equivalent of over £5,000 or nearly £290,000 today.[167] Darigold, a group of dairies, offered 1,000 tins of milk.[168]

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[160] Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[161] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[162] Sir Victor Wellesley to Sir Norman Fisher, 'A Practical Expression of Sympathy', 9 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[163] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[164] Borland and Schencking, 'Objects of Concern, Ambassadors of Gratitude', p. 213.
[165] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', p. 55.
[166] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 735.
[167] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', p. 56.
[168] Borland and Schencking, 'Objects of Concern, Ambassadors of Gratitude', p. 201.

Endicott-Johnson, a company that produced footwear, provided 16,000 pairs of shoes.[169] Steel mills across the United States donated a combined total of $235,000, the equivalent of over £50,000 or almost £2,700,000 today.[170]

Schencking contends that companies anticipated that their donations would stimulate trade with Japan. Darigold, Endicott-Johnson, and the United States Silk Association believed that their donations would convey that they recognised that Japan was a major commercial partner. Steel mills and Westinghouse envisioned that their donations would encourage the Japanese government to import American machinery and steel when rebuilding Tokyo and Yokohama.[171] American farmers donated flour and grain in the hope that they could offload excess stockpiles and raise the value of bread across the United States.[172] These examples support the views of Enrico Lago *et al.*, who maintain that the history of humanitarianism is inseparable from the growth of Capitalism.[173] These examples demonstrate that the provision of American aid in Japan was driven by diplomatic as well as economic motives.

Irwin reasons that the American Red Cross Fund spent most of the money that it raised on the provision of aid to the Japanese government and public. The appeal spent $110,000, the equivalent of roughly £24,000 or over £1,250,000 today, on the provision of relief to Americans in Japan.[174] This sum means that the appeal spent less than one percent of the money that it raised on the provision of aid to American expatriates. The fund spent the rest of the money on the provision of aid to Japanese nationals.[175] In contrast, the British government offered more relief to British expatriates than it offered to Japanese nationals. This thesis represents an original contribution to the study of international humanitarianism by underlining how the British government and the American Red Cross Fund reacted to the earthquake in different ways.

The Japanese government played a prominent role in shaping the aid that it received from the United States. Cyrus Woods, the American ambassador to Japan, helped the Japanese government to submit requests for blankets, clothes, nails, timber, and tinned fish to the American government. He advised that his government and the American Red Cross should only provide provisions that the Japanese government had requested. He proposed that the Japanese military, rather than the American military, should oversee

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[169] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 744.
[170] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', p. 58.
[171] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', pp. 52-6.
[172] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 742.
[173] Lago and O'Sullivan, 'Towards a New History', p. 7.
[174] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 117.
[175] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', pp. 54-5; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 117.

the distribution of these provisions on the grounds that this gesture would convey equality, respect, and trust between the two nations. The American government accepted these recommendations and allowed the Japanese government to spend over a quarter of the money that the American Red Cross Fund had raised on the construction of the Fraternity Memorial Hospital in Tokyo. The American government allowed the Japanese government to sell excess flour that American farmers had donated, illustrating how the Americans allowed the Japanese to exercise control over the distribution and consumption of aid.[176] Irwin argues that these examples show that the Japanese government and military were proactive, rather than passive, recipients of aid.[177]

The American and Japanese governments as well as the American Red Cross also worked together to establish field hospitals in and around Tokyo and Yokohama. American and Filipino fieldworkers built nearly 100 hospitals throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake. The American Red Cross donated these hospitals to the Japanese government in October on the condition that the Americans would continue to supply the hospitals with equipment and medicine for another six months. Irwin contends that the American government and the American Red Cross hoped that this gesture would convince the Japanese government and public that the Americans saw the Japanese as equals.[178]

The Japanese government and public reacted to the aid that they received by conveying gratitude towards the American government and public. Natsuko Chubachi *et al.* explain that students at schools, colleges, and universities throughout Japan wrote 900 letters in English throughout the months that followed the earthquake. The students thanked Coolidge for the humanitarian assistance that the American government and public had provided. The Japanese Foreign Ministry compiled the letters into three books. Masanao Hanihara, the Japanese ambassador to the United States, and Charles Hughes forwarded the books to the president in May 1924. The ministry informed Coolidge that the students hoped that their gratitude would promote world peace by encouraging cordial diplomatic relations between Japan and the United States.[179] The letters reflect that the Japanese government and students believed that the way in which the Japanese government and public reacted to the aid that they received from the United States could influence American-Japanese relations.

The Japanese government and military distributed food, medicine, and water throughout the months that followed the earthquake. The Emergency Relief Bureau, a government

[176] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', pp. 739-43, 746-8.
[177] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 122.
[178] *Ibid*.
[179] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', pp. 71-3.

body, distributed over 150,000,000 litres of water across Tokyo and Yokohama and established a field hospital that supported over 6,000 patients.[180] 30,000 Japanese sailors rescued 59,000 people throughout the week that followed the earthquake.[181] Nearly 52,000 soldiers, almost a fifth of the Japanese army, and over 65,000 civilian volunteers provided roughly one pound of rice per person per day to over 2,000,000 people throughout September.[182]

Michiko Suzuki argues that the Japanese Red Cross Society also played an active role in response to the earthquake. The disaster destroyed the society's headquarters in Tokyo, causing ¥500,000 in damages. This sum was the equivalent of over £53,000, or nearly £2,800,000 today. The society nevertheless mobilised over 3,500 volunteers who provided medical relief to almost 2,100,000 people in and around Tokyo and Yokohama.[183]

Although there is a substantial amount of literature that covers the American and Japanese reactions to the earthquake, historians have only recently started to consider how the rest of the world reacted to the disaster. Chubachi *et al.* outline that the League of Nations offered condolences to the Japanese government and flags were flown at half-mast across France, Italy, and Sweden.[184] Red Cross Societies in Canada, Chile, the Soviet Union, and in twenty-four other countries dispatched volunteers who undertook relief work in Tokyo and Yokohama for ten months between September 1923 and June 1924. These examples highlight the role that non-European actors played in response to the disaster and contribute to less eurocentric accounts of humanitarianism. The Red Cross Society of China, for example, dispatched twenty-six volunteers to Tokyo who worked with their colleagues in the Japanese Red Cross to distribute clothes and medicine amongst the Japanese public. Suzuki contends that the earthquake represented the 'largest natural disaster relief operation [in the international history] of the Red Cross' for over eighty years until the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004.[185]

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[180] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', p. 123; Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[181] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', pp. 124-5; Masashi Kuratani, 'Disaster Relief Operations by the Imperial Japanese Navy and the US Navy in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake: Focusing on the Activities of the Onsite Commanders of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the US Navy', *Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force Staff College Review*, 1/2 (2012), p. 13.
[182] Schencking, 'Devastated War and Occupation Zone', pp. 112, 125-6; Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.
[183] Suzuki, *The Japanese Red Cross Movement*, pp. 17, 30.
[184] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', pp. 64-5.
[185] Suzuki, *The Japanese Red Cross Movement*, pp. 30-2.

Japanese diplomats and scholars drew the world's attention to the destruction of the Imperial University of Tokyo. Kenzo Takayanagi, a professor of law at the University, asked Kenneth Chorley, a conservationist, and William Verbeck, an American-Dutch general who had lived in Japan, to assist the University when the professor visited the United States. Yoshinao Kozai urged Sir Eric Drummond, the secretary-general of the League of Nations, to endorse the reconstruction of the University. Inazo Niitobe, the undersecretary-general of the League and a former student at the University, called on the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, the branch of the League that provided intellectual relief, to provide books to the University. The Committee accepted this request and issued a global appeal for books in February 1924.[186] These examples reflect that scholars at the University were proactive, rather than passive, recipients of intellectual relief as they actively appealed to the international community for assistance.

The University received more books from the United States than from any other country.[187] American academics provided 77,000 books, almost double the number that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee provided.[188] John Rockefeller Junior, an American industrialist and philanthropist who financed the reconstruction of several libraries across the world during the early twentieth century, donated ¥4,000,000 to the University, the equivalent of nearly £430,000 or over £22,000,000 today. Mary Haskell explains that he made this donation in the belief that the provision of intellectual relief could help to promote friendly diplomatic relations between Japan and the United States.[189]

Tomas Irish contends that the University received books from at least fifteen countries.[190] Britain was the second largest donor as the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee offered 41,700 books.[191] Germany was the third largest donor as German publishers and universities donated 22,800 books. China was the fourth largest donor as the University received 20,000 books from Chinese academics. France was the fifth largest donor as the National Museum of Asian Arts in Paris provided 15,300 books, less than a fifth of the number that the University received from the United States.[192] These comparisons show that scholars and the state in inter-war Britain played an active

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[186] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 183-4.
[187] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[188] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[189] Mary Haskell, 'Brother, Can You Share a Dime? The Rockefeller Family and Libraries', *Libraries and Culture*, 31/1 (1996), p. 135.
[190] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[191] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[192] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.

role in the provision of intellectual relief as the University received almost as many books from Britain as it received from China and Germany combined.[193]

British academics paid close attention to the support that the University received from overseas. In particular, Robert Nichols paid meticulous attention to the assistance that German publishers and the Italian government offered. He feared that the donation of German and Italian books would harm British diplomatic, economic, and political interests in Japan.[194] This thesis contributes to the study of intellectual relief by highlighting how British scholars interpreted this particular type of humanitarian aid as a tool that their government could utilise to compete for influence on the world stage.

In summary, British diplomats and scholars closely observed how the rest of the world responded to the earthquake. Eliot, Wellesley, and other diplomats wrote reports about the amount of aid that the American government and public provided out of fear that American aid would damage diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan. Academics analysed the support that other Europeans offered to the University in the belief that the reconstruction of the University presented the British government with an opportunity to promote British interests in Japan. The volume of aid that the American government and public provided helps to explain why historians have only discussed how the rest of the world reacted to the earthquake in passing. Schencking laments that 'we still know comparatively little about how members of the international community [apart from the American government and public] viewed, interpreted, or responded to the quake'.[195] This thesis helps to address this lacuna by investigating the role that the British government played in response to the disaster.

**Sources and Structure**

This thesis examines sources that are available at the National Archives in London. Archivists have grouped the materials that the British government acquired or produced in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake into four groups. The Records of the Admiralty include the reports that the staff at the Admiralty wrote about the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook in Tokyo and Yokohama. The Records of the Cabinet Office contain the minutes that Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet secretary, wrote when the Cabinet met to discuss the earthquake. The Records of the Foreign Office include the telegrams that British diplomats in Tokyo exchanged with ministers in Whitehall. The Records of the Treasury contain the letters that civil servants at the Treasury exchanged with their colleagues at the Foreign Office. This thesis also analyses letters that are

[193] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[194] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[195] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', p. 54.

available at the Cadbury Research Library in Birmingham and newspaper articles that are available at Gale, an online archive that contains digitised copies of newspapers that were published from the eighteenth century.

Paola Albini and Kenji Satake survey the sources that are available at the National Archives. They argue that the Records of the Admiralty and the Records of the Foreign Office contain a 'rich documentation' of materials.[196] Albini and Satake, however, do not include the Records of the Cabinet Office or the Records of the Treasury in their survey. This thesis addresses this oversight by analysing the sources that all four departments acquired or produced in reaction to the disaster.

These sources shed a light on the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake. In particular, the reports that the staff at the Admiralty wrote and the telegrams that British diplomats exchanged with ministers in Whitehall outline what the government provided in response to the disaster, such as books, clothes, and food. The Records of the Foreign Office reveal who within the government supported the provision of humanitarian aid to the Japanese government and public as well as the factors that underpinned their views. In contrast, the Records of the Treasury illustrate who within the British government opposed the provision of humanitarian relief as well as the reasons for their decisions. The letters that civil servants at the Foreign Office exchanged with their colleagues at the Treasury highlight the amount of aid that the government provided.

These sources reflect that the British state was not a single, unified humanitarian actor. The reports that Robert Boulter and Sir Arthur Leveson wrote demonstrate that they believed that the Royal Navy should prioritise British and other European nationals over Japanese nationals when undertaking relief work in Tokyo and Yokohama. The Records of the Foreign Office, though, show that the Admiralty and the Foreign Office envisioned that the government should offer assistance to the Japanese government and public as well as to expatriates. In contrast, the Treasury protested that the British government could not afford to provide relief to the Japanese government or public. These examples suggest that the state in inter-war Britain was a contested space where government departments competed for influence and maintained their own humanitarian agendas and priorities. The sources that are available at the National Archives illustrate how government departments debated who should receive humanitarian support from the British state as well as the amount of support that recipients should receive. This thesis underlines how government departments contested the role that the state should play in

[196] Albini and Satake, 'Voices of Foreign Residents in Yokohama and Tokyo', p. 604.

the provision of humanitarian aid as well as the role that humanitarianism should play in British foreign policy.

This study focuses on the British state in light of recent trends in the historiography. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie argue that historians have overstated the role that nongovernmental organisations have played in the history of humanitarianism and have overlooked the role that other groups have played. In particular, they lament that scholars have ignored that 'governments and state bureaucracies were the most important' humanitarian actors during and after the First World War as governments supplied provisions to interned combatants, outfitted medical fieldworkers, and distributed food.[197] Trevor Burnard *et al.* agree that states started to play a more prominent role in the provision of aid towards the end of the war in response to famines and genocides.[198] Piller and Wylie conclude that historians need to pay more attention to the aid that states have provided by accessing state archives.[199] This argument explains why this thesis examines sources at the National Archives, as opposed to sources at the archives of nongovernmental organisations, as this study places the state, rather than nongovernmental organisations, at the centre of analysis.

These sources also outline the role that the British government played in the reconstruction of the Imperial University of Tokyo. The letters and telegrams that British diplomats in Tokyo exchanged with ministers in London highlight who within the government supported the donation of books as well as the factors that shaped their views. The annual reports that Sir Israel Gollancz, the secretary of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, submitted to the Foreign Office show how many books the Committee donated on behalf of the government. These sources underline the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of intellectual relief as well as the role that this particular kind of humanitarian aid played in British foreign policy.

This thesis analyses sources that are available at the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham. In particular, the archive contains letters that Edith and George Moule, two Anglican missionaries who lived in Tokyo, sent to their relatives throughout the months that followed the earthquake. These letters illustrate how the earthquake affected the Moules and the rest of the British expatriate community. These

[197] Piller and Wylie, 'Humanitarianism and the Greater War', in Piller and Wylie (eds), *Humanitarianism and the Greater War*, pp. 2, 6, 20.
[198] Burnard, Damousi, and Lester, 'Selective Humanity', in Burnard, Damousi, and Lester (eds), *Selective Humanity in the Anglophone World*, p. 19.
[199] Piller and Wylie, 'Humanitarianism and the Greater War', in Piller and Wylie (eds), *Humanitarianism and the Greater War*, p. 20.

letters likewise demonstrate how British nationals who lived in and around Tokyo and Yokohama experienced and reacted to the disaster.

This thesis also analyses newspaper articles that are available at Gale. *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Observer*, as well as *The Times* published articles about the earthquake throughout the months that followed the disaster. These articles reflect how news of the earthquake spread across the world and reached Britain in less than a day.[200] The articles underline how the British public reacted to the earthquake by donating money to the Mansion House Fund for Japan, a national fundraising appeal.

British newspapers portrayed the Japanese in contrasting ways throughout the years that followed the end of the First World War. Peter O'Connor argues that *The Daily Mail* depicted the Japanese military as a threat to peace in the Asia-Pacific. He contends that *The Daily Telegraph* shared this view and criticised the Japanese military for inciting violence in China. In contrast, *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Observer* praised the Japanese government for "modernising" China.[201] Jon Pardoe reasons that *The Times* showed a similar level of admiration for the Japanese government throughout the 1920s.[202] These examples highlight that this thesis examines a diverse range of sources that represent different political viewpoints.

This thesis does not examine any sources that are available at Japanese archives due to linguistic barriers. At the same time, this study prioritises the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake. This approach means that Japanese perspectives on the role that the British government played are beyond the scope of this thesis. The ways in which Japanese observers interpreted and reacted to the support that the British government offered present historians with an opportunity for further research.

This thesis analyses chronologically how and why three groups provided or planned to provide humanitarian aid on behalf of the British government. The second chapter outlines the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook in Tokyo and Yokohama by consulting the reports that Boulter and Leveson wrote. The third chapter examines how the Foreign Office reacted to the earthquake by analysing the letters that civil servants and ministers exchanged. The fourth chapter questions how and why the Tokyo Imperial

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[200] 'Great Earthquake in Japan', *The Observer*, 2 September 1923, p. 11.
[201] Peter O'Connor, *The English-Language Press Networks of East Asia, 1918-45* (Folkestone, 2010), pp. 165-8.
[202] Jon Pardoe, 'British Writing on Contemporary Japan, 1924-41: Newspapers, Books, Reviews, and Propaganda', in Gordon Daniels and Chushichi Tsuzuki (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume V – Social and Cultural Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 282.

University Library Committee donated books to the University by examining the reports that Gollancz submitted. The concluding chapter explains the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake and identifies avenues for further enquiry. This structure helps to highlight how and why different government departments contested the role that the state in inter-war Britain should play in the provision of humanitarian aid.

**The Second Chapter**

The second chapter investigates the role that the Royal Navy played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake between September and October 1923. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part outlines and justifies the scope and structure that underpin the chapter. The following part describes how British enclaves developed in Tokyo and Yokohama from the nineteenth century and highlights how the earthquake affected this community. The third part underlines the relief work that the crew of the *HMS Despatch*, a cruiser, undertook across these cities. The penultimate part analyses the relief work that the crew of the *HMS Hawkins*, a flagship, undertook. The chapter concludes by explaining how and why the Royal Navy offered humanitarian assistance throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake.

This chapter argues that most of the relief that the navy provided was solely for the benefit of British and other European expatriates. The crew of the *Despatch* recovered property that belonged to British as well as other European expatriates and rescued British and other European nationals who were stranded.[203] The crews of the *Despatch* and *Hawkins* provided clothes, shelter, and toiletries to British and other European nationals.[204] At the same time, the navy did not offer these services to the Japanese public. Robert Boulter and Sir Arthur Leveson prioritised expatriates over Japanese nationals due to the pressure that the pair faced from British and other European merchants in Yokohama. The Admiralty, however, envisioned that the navy should provide relief to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates, reflecting how different groups debated who should receive humanitarian support from the British state.

The chapter examines the daily reports that Boulter wrote throughout the month that followed the earthquake. He was one of two British vice-consuls in Yokohama. He became the acting consul and the most senior British diplomat in the city when William Haigh, the other vice-consul, and Ernest Holmes, the consul, died during the

[203] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[204] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714.

earthquake.[205] The reports that Boulter wrote document the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook. His reports also outline how the earthquake affected British diplomats.

His reports, though, encounter various limitations. He highlighted in the report that he wrote on 6 September, for example, that British and other European merchants in Yokohama took refuge onboard the *Despatch*.[206] Boulter, though, did not describe the conditions that the merchants faced onboard the cruiser. He did not explain how many merchants took shelter onboard the ship. He did not name any of these merchants. These factors reflect that the experiences and identities of those who received humanitarian support from the Royal Navy remain shrouded in uncertainty.

The reports that Leveson wrote likewise encounter limitations. He described the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook in the report that he submitted to Sir Oswyn Murray, the permanent secretary to the Admiralty, in late September. Leveson reported that marines who were assigned to the *Despatch* landed in Tokyo and offered food to British diplomats on 6 and 7 September.[207] Leveson, however, did not specify how many marines landed ashore or how many diplomats received food. He did not name any of the diplomats or marines. He did not outline what kind of food or how much food the marines distributed. These unanswered questions mean that the experiences and identities of the marines who undertook relief work remain unclear.

**The Third Chapter**

The third chapter investigates the role that the British Foreign Office played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake between September and November 1923. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part introduces the scope and structure that underpin the chapter. The following part outlines the diplomatic gestures that the Foreign Office made towards the Japanese government. The third part examines the financial relief that the department provided to the Japanese government and public. The penultimate part analyses how the Foreign Office planned to offer humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government. The chapter concludes by explaining how and why the Foreign Office provided diplomatic and financial support and planned to offer humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government and public.

This chapter argues that the Foreign Office offered limited diplomatic and financial support to the Japanese government and public and did not provide any humanitarian

[205] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, the Letters of Edith and George Moule, Unofficial Papers of the Church Missionary Society, the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, CMS ACC 285 C; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 6.
[206] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717.
[207] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

provisions due to the actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury. The Cabinet limited the ways in which the Foreign Office could show sympathy in response to the earthquake by preventing Lord Curzon from convening a memorial service in memory of those who had died during the disaster.[208] The Foreign Office provided a restricted amount of financial assistance because the Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from offering a loan to the Japanese government.[209] The Foreign Office did not provide any clothes, food, medicine, or other humanitarian provisions in response to the earthquake due to the actions of the Cabinet and the views of the Treasury. The opposition of the Cabinet and the Treasury meant that the Foreign Office spent no more than £535, or over £27,800 today, representing roughly one percent of the overall amount that the government spent in response to the disaster.[210] These examples show that the Cabinet and the Treasury restricted the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the overseas provision of humanitarian aid.

This chapter examines the minutes that Sir Maurice Hankey wrote when the Cabinet met to discuss the earthquake. Hankey, Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister; Sir Neville Chamberlain, Curzon, and between thirteen and sixteen other ministers attended these meetings.[211] The minutes demonstrate how different departments interpreted and debated the role that humanitarian aid should play in British foreign policy. The minutes likewise explain why the Cabinet and the Treasury restricted the role that the Foreign Office played in response to the earthquake.

The chapter analyses the letters and telegrams that civil servants and ministers at the Foreign Office exchanged with their colleagues at the Treasury. These sources reveal who within the Foreign Office believed that their department should offer humanitarian aid to the Japanese government as well as the reasons that underpinned their views. These materials illustrate why the Treasury opposed the provision of relief to the Japanese

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[208] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan – Proposed Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Proposed Memorial Service for the Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/19, p. 255.
[209] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[210] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[211] Hankey, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, CAB 23/46/19, pp. 248-55; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.

government and public. These sources highlight how the earthquake triggered a debate over spending between the two departments that lasted for nearly a year.

It is unclear who within the Treasury was responsible for some of the decisions that the department made. Sir George Barstow, a civil servant at the Treasury, for instance, underlined in a letter that he wrote in October that the Treasury would not allow the Foreign Office to offer a grant to the Japanese government.[212] Maurice Headlam, an assistant secretary at the Treasury, outlined in a letter that he sent to Sir Victor Wellesley that the Treasury would not permit the Foreign Office to donate books as well as food.[213] Barstow and Headlam did not identify who within the Treasury made these decisions. This factor means that it is not always clear who within the department opposed the provision of humanitarian aid.

**The Fourth Chapter**

The fourth chapter investigates the role that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake between the formation of the Committee in December 1923 and the dissolution of the Committee in March 1932. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part introduces the scope and structure that underpin the chapter. The following part outlines why the British Academy and the Foreign Office established the Committee. The third part examines how the Executive Board that oversaw the running of the Committee and the Foreign Office financed and structured the Committee. The penultimate part analyses how the Committee and scholars at the Imperial University of Tokyo exchanged books. The chapter concludes by explaining how and why the Committee provided books.

This chapter argues that the Committee donated books because British academics and diplomats believed that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public. Robert Nichols advised Sir Charles Eliot that the British government should offer books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese public, on the grounds that any offer of food would insult the Japanese people.[214] Eliot agreed in the belief that the demand for books had become greater than the demand for food.[215] Ramsay MacDonald decided that his government

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[212] Sir George Barstow to Ronald McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[213] Maurice Headlam to Sir Victor Wellesley, 'Professor Nichols', 31 January 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[214] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[215] Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon, 'The Needs of Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 468-9.

would donate books to the University, instead of food to the Japanese government, in the expectation that books would convey respect towards the Japanese government.[216]

The chapter examines the annual reports that Sir Israel Gollancz submitted to the Foreign Office. He was responsible for submitting requests for books to the Foreign Office and for keeping track of the number of books that the Committee had donated. His reports highlight how the Executive Board structured the Committee. His reports show how the Japanese government and Japanese diplomats in London liaised with the Committee. His reports likewise reveal how the Committee acquired and donated books.

The chapter analyses the letters and telegrams that British diplomats in Tokyo exchanged with ministers in London. These materials outline who within the Foreign Office believed that the British government should support the reconstruction of the University as well as the factors that influenced their views. These letters and telegrams illustrate how the department established and financed the Committee. These sources demonstrate how different government departments interpreted the role that the state should play in the overseas provision of intellectual relief.

There are several questions about the membership of the Committee that remain unanswered. None of the members of the Committee wrote minutes during their meetings. This factor means that the identities of most of the members remain unclear. The number of those who participated in the Committee and how often they met remains equally unclear. Although Gollancz highlighted that the members of the Executive Board met at King's College in London, he did not explain where the rest of the members held their meetings.[217]

The Committee donated books that covered art, East Asia, economics, English literature, geography, history, law, and philosophy. The Bibliography Subcommittee compiled bibliographical information about every book that the Committee donated.[218] None of these bibliographies, however, remain available to access. This factor means that the authors and titles of most of the books remain uncertain. It is equally uncertain when most of the books were written. Frederic Ferguson, a bibliographer and bookseller, identified 163 books that the Committee donated in a catalogue that he wrote in May

[216] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[217] Sir Israel Gollancz to Ramsay MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties in Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1612, p. 109.
[218] Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

1929.[219] These books, though, accounted for less than one percent of the total number that the Committee donated.[220]

There are two possible factors that could explain why the bibliographies are no longer extant. Civil servants decided throughout the 1930s which of the sources that the government had acquired or produced in response to the earthquake would be retained and which sources would be discarded. It is plausible that civil servants discarded the bibliographies on the grounds that the Committee was not a government department. Secondly, it is possible that archivists damaged or misplaced the bibliographies when they transferred the sources to the National Archives between 2003 and 2006.

**The Concluding Chapter**

The concluding chapter explains the role that the British government played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part describes the scope and structure that underpin the chapter. The following part examines how and why the British government provided humanitarian aid in Japan. The third part analyses how this thesis constitutes an original contribution to the study of humanitarianism in inter-war Britain, the study of Anglo-Japanese relations, and to the study of intellectual relief. The chapter concludes by highlighting opportunities for further research. The next chapter contributes to the study of humanitarianism by examining how the Royal Navy became the first group to provide aid in response to the earthquake on behalf of the British government.

[219] Frederic Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books Illustrative of the History of English Printing and Book Production* (London, 1929), p. 42.
[220] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, p. 42; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

## Chapter Two: The Royal Navy and the British Expatriate Community in Tokyo and Yokohama

### Introduction

Over 700 British nationals left Tokyo and Yokohama when the Great Kanto Earthquake struck and throughout the weeks that followed by boarding commercial passenger ships that carried them to Kobe. Those who travelled to Kobe stayed at the British Consulate in the city throughout September and early October 1923. Ralph Forster, the British consul in Kobe, and Sir Montague Paske-Smith, the British vice-consul in the city, wrote several reports between September and early November in which they named every British national who took refuge at the Consulate.[1] Forster and Paske-Smith wrote other reports as well in which they named over 100 British nationals who had died as a result of the disaster.[2]

The China Squadron, a group of twenty warships that patrolled the East China Sea, was responsible for all of the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook in Japan. Sir Arthur Leveson, the commander-in-chief of the squadron, dispatched four ships in reaction to the earthquake. The navy started to provide aid to the British and other European expatriates who chose to stay in Tokyo and Yokohama when the *HMS Despatch*, a cruiser, reached Yokohama on 5 September, four days after the earthquake had struck.[3] The *HMS Durban*, a cruiser, reached Kobe on 10 September and the crew helped Forster

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[1] Ralph Forster, 'British Subjects Reported Killed', 6 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered as Safe', 19 September 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 217-23; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'Britishers Registered at this Consulate-General', 25 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 103-5; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Reported Safe', 29 September 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 210-12; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered Here', 3 October 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 208-9.

[2] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Dead and Believed Killed', 22 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 126-8; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Killed in the Earthquake', 11 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 68-70; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'A Complete List of British Killed', 3 November 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 203-4.

[3] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 5 September 1923', 5 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 723.

and Paske-Smith to receive and send telegrams.[4] The *HMS Hawkins*, the flagship of the squadron, arrived in Yokohama several hours after the *Durban* had reached Kobe and the staff onboard the flagship offered shelter to British and other European nationals.[5] The *HMS Ambrose*, a supply ship, reached Yokohama on 21 September and the crew offered provisions to Japanese nationals.[6] The navy undertook relief work for almost six weeks until the squadron left Japan on 15 October.[7]

The protection of expatriates formed part of a broader strategy that the Royal Navy pursued across East Asia during the 1920s. Matthew Heaslip explains that the China Squadron pursued a policy of 'imperial policing' that aimed to defend British and other European expatriates, international trade, and British colonies against threats from inside as well as outside the British Empire. This strategy entailed raids against Chinese pirates, the evacuation of British and other European civilians from Chinese cities in the face of civil unrest, and the suppression of anticolonial dissent in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore.[8] The relief work that the navy undertook in Japan formed part of this strategy as the navy aimed to support the British and other European nationals who chose to stay in Tokyo and Yokohama after the earthquake had struck. The earthquake, however, suggests that humanitarian aid played a minor role in the strategy of imperial policing as the navy only spent roughly £11,300, the equivalent of nearly £600,000 today, in response to the disaster.[9] The navy's annual budget totalled £55,000,000, the equivalent of over £2,850,000,000 today, when the earthquake struck.[10] These sums mean that the humanitarian relief work that the squadron undertook in Japan accounted for roughly 0.02 percent of the navy's yearly budget.[11]

The role that the navy played in response to the earthquake, though, nonetheless offers numerous insights into the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the international provision of humanitarian aid. In particular, the earthquake demonstrates

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[4] Sir Arthur Leveson to Sir Oswyn Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Admiralty, the National Archives in London, ADM 1/8668/176.
[5] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Robert Boulter, 'The Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, pp. 17-24.
[6] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[7] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 18-20.
[8] Matthew Heaslip, *Gunboats, Empire, and the China Station: The Royal Navy in 1920s East Asia* (London, 2021), pp. 20, 25-7, 133.
[9] Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[10] Heaslip, *The China Station*, p. 150.
[11] Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Heaslip, *The China Station*, p. 150.

that the government played a role in the history of humanitarianism by providing relief to its own citizens. The relief work that the navy undertook in Japan shows that the British government provided humanitarian aid outside of Europe and outside of the British Empire. At the same time, most of the relief that the navy provided was exclusively for the benefit of British and other European nationals as the China Squadron prioritised expatriates over Japanese nationals. The earthquake implies that the British government played a geographically expansive, yet politically and socially restricted, role in the overseas provision of humanitarian aid.

This chapter investigates the role that the Royal Navy played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. The rest of this chapter is divided into four parts. The next part describes the British community that had developed in Tokyo and Yokohama by the early twentieth century and outlines how the earthquake affected this community. The third part examines how the crew of the *Despatch* undertook relief work in Tokyo and Yokohama and the penultimate part analyses how the crew of the *Hawkins* assisted British and other European expatriates. The final part explains the role that the navy played in response to the disaster. This chapter focuses less on the *Ambrose* and the *Durban*, and more on the *Despatch* and the *Hawkins*, because the crews of these latter two ships were responsible for most of the relief work that the squadron undertook. The structure and the level of detail that underpin this chapter help to highlight chronologically how the navy undertook relief work and underline how humanitarian aid should be interpreted as part of, rather than separate to, imperial policing.

This chapter argues that most of the humanitarian relief that the Royal Navy provided was solely for the benefit of British and other European expatriates. The crew of the *Despatch* provided clothes and toiletries to seventy British nationals, rescued at least ten expatriates who were stranded, offered shelter to merchants, provided food to British diplomats, and recovered property that belonged to expatriates.[12] The crew, however, did not offer any humanitarian assistance to the Japanese government or public. The crew of the *Hawkins* offered accommodation to at least twelve British merchants and provided medical relief to British and other European expatriates.[13] At the same time,

[12] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 6 September 1923', 6 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Robert Boulter, 'Report for 7 September, 1923', 7 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[13] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 11 September, 1923', 11 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 17-24.

the crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* provided blankets, food, medicine, and vaccines to the Japanese public.[14] These sundries, though, represent the only humanitarian support that the Japanese government or public received from the Royal Navy. These examples reflect that most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake was solely for the benefit of the Imperial University of Tokyo, the oldest university in Japan, or British expatriates.

The navy prioritised British citizens over Japanese nationals due to the views of Robert Boulter, the British acting consul in Yokohama, and Leveson. Boulter and Leveson saw the interests of expatriates as their priority in light of the pressure that the pair faced from the merchant community in Yokohama. British merchants lobbied Boulter and Leveson to arrange for the navy to provide lock-breaking services and shelter to British and other European merchants. The merchants had heard rumours that alleged that prisoners who had escaped from nearby prisons during the earthquake were looting British properties. The emphasis on the safety of British and other European nationals that underpinned imperial policing further explains why the navy prioritised expatriates.

It was not, however, a foregone conclusion that the navy would prioritise expatriates over Japanese nationals. Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, and Sir Charles Eliot, the British ambassador to Japan, argued that the British government should provide humanitarian aid to the Japanese government or public as well as to British and other European nationals.[15] The Admiralty in Whitehall ordered Leveson to offer sundries to the Japanese public on the grounds that this gesture would convince the Japanese government that the British and Japanese governments remained friends despite the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.[16] The Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot anticipated that the provision of humanitarian aid to Japanese nationals would support the diplomatic objectives of their government by promoting friendly diplomatic ties between Britain and Japan.[17] The contrast between the views of Boulter and Leveson and the views of the Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot suggest that the state in inter-war Britain was not a single,

[14] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[15] Sir Charles Eliot to Sir William Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', 13 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Victor Wellesley to Sir Norman Fisher, 'A Practical Expression of Sympathy', 9 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[16] Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[17] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.

unified humanitarian actor. The role that the navy played in response to the earthquake shows instead that the state was a contested space where different groups pursued their own agendas and debated who should receive humanitarian support from the British government.

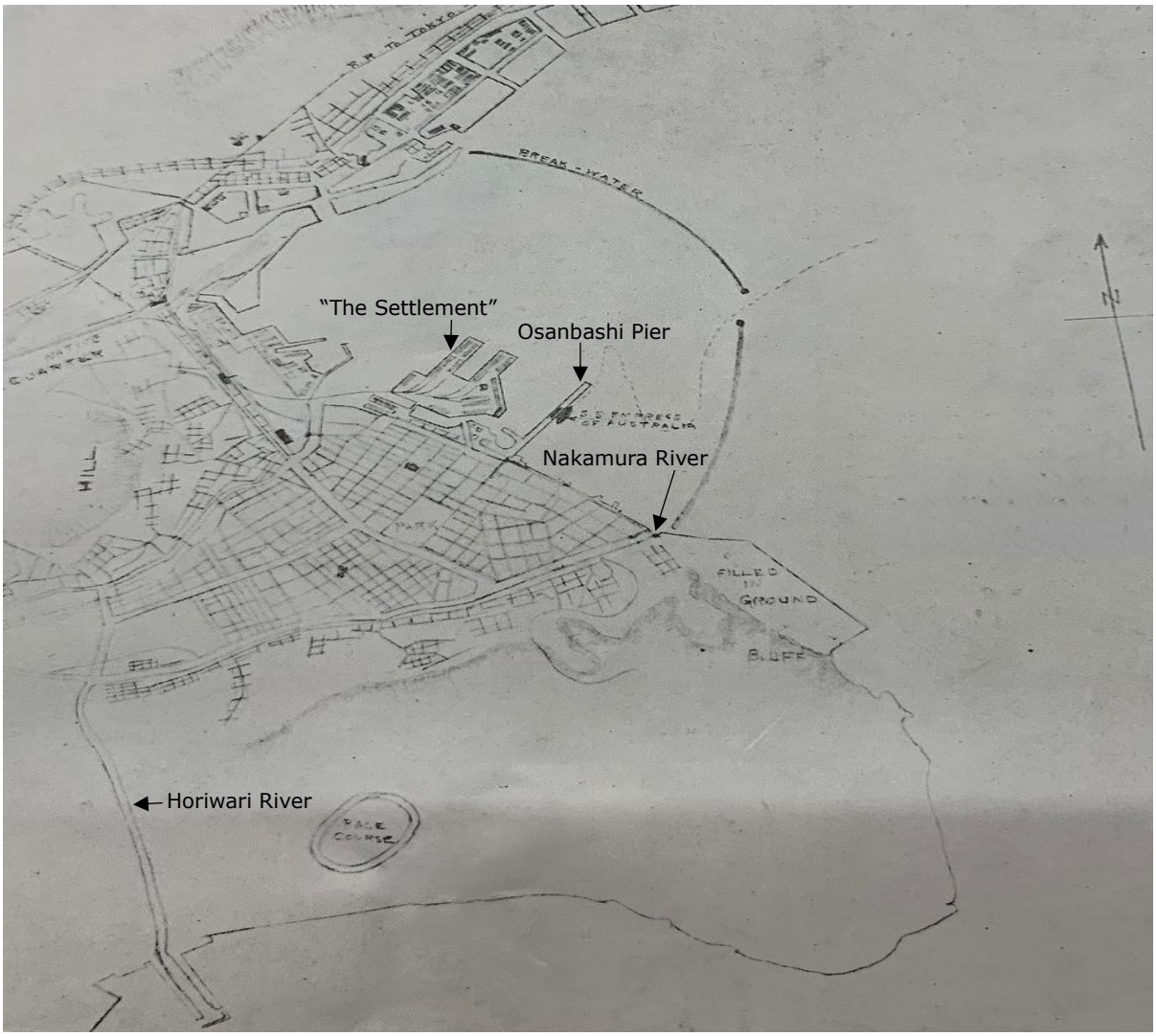
**The Great Kanto Earthquake and the British Expatriate Community in Tokyo and Yokohama**

British nationals started to settle in Japan after the British and Japanese governments signed the Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce in 1858. The treaty allowed British nationals to live, trade, and work in Hakodate, Nagasaki, and Yokohama from 1859 and in Kobe, Niigata, Osaka, and Tokyo from 1868. The treaty established diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan for the first time by allowing the British government to establish consular and diplomatic residences in Hakodate, Kobe, Nagasaki, Niigata, Tokyo, and Yokohama. The American, French, Russian, and eleven other European governments signed similar treaties with the Japanese government throughout the 1850s and the 1860s.[18]

Although the number of foreign nationals who lived in Yokohama when the earthquake struck remains uncertain, Olive Checkland nonetheless contends that the city was home to the largest British community in Japan by the early twentieth century.[19] Figure 2.1 outlines the topography of Yokohama at the time of the earthquake. John Doty, a Canadian engineer, and W. Johnston, a fellow engineer, drew this map on 12 September 1923, nearly two weeks after the earthquake had struck.[20] The forename and nationality of Johnston remain unclear. Paola Albini and Kenji Satake explain that Doty and Johnston were visiting Japan and were onboard the *RMS Empress of Australia*, a Canadian passenger ship, in Yokohama when the disaster unfolded.[21]

[18] Olive Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan, 1868-1912* (Basingstoke, 1989), pp. 3-5, 20, 92.
[19] Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan*, pp. 96-7.
[20] John Doty and W. Johnston, 'Sketch of Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, p. 83.
[21] Paola Albini and Kenji Satake, 'Voices of Foreign Residents in Yokohama and Tokyo at the Time of the 1923 Kanto Earthquake', *Journal of Disaster Research*, 18/6 (2023), p. 602.

**Figure 2.1 – The Topography of Yokohama, September 1923**




*Source: John Doty and W. Johnston, 'Sketch of Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, p. 83.*

The map illustrates that the *Empress of Australia* was docked alongside the Osanbashi Pier, the longest pier in Yokohama, when the earthquake struck.[22] Over 2,500 Chinese, Europeans, and Japanese sheltered onboard the ship when the earthquake struck and throughout the week that followed. Doty, Johnston, and those who were sheltering onboard the ship remained onboard when the ship started to sail to Kobe and left Yokohama on 8 September.[23] The dotted line next to the *Empress of Australia* represents the start of the route that the ship took on the way to Kobe. Every black and white square on the map represents a building. The map highlights the Horiwari River and the

[22] Doty and Johnston, 'Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 83.
[23] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 13-14.

Nakamura River that flow through Yokohama. The 'park' near the centre represents Yokohama Park, a public park in the centre of the city.[24]

The first British and other foreign nationals who settled in Yokohama lived from the late 1850s on an artificial island that the expatriates nicknamed "the Settlement".[25] Figure 2.1 demonstrates that the island lay in the harbour to the west of the Osanbashi Pier. The map shows that a footbridge and a separate railway bridge connected the island to the rest of Yokohama.[26] A cosmopolitan and mercantile community had developed on "the Settlement" by the time that the earthquake struck. John Dower explains that British merchants lived on the island alongside American, Russian, and other European merchants as well as with Chinese, Indian, and Japanese servants and translators. The merchants traded clocks, fans, glass, lacquerware, liquor, metals, porcelain, sugar, tea, textiles, tobacco, and watches with each other and along the shoreline with Japanese merchants. Those who settled on the island built banks, hotels, shops, telegram and telephone lines, warehouses, and a yard for livestock.[27]

Expatriates also settled from the middle of the 1870s in the south of Yokohama across a range of hills that Doty and Johnston nicknamed the 'Bluff'. This area covered the land to the east of the Horiwari River and south of the Nakamura River. The British and other foreign nationals who settled in this area lived in a row of houses along the southern bank of the Nakamura River. Other expatriates lived in cliffside villas on reclaimed ground that Doty and Johnston called 'filled in ground'.[28] British and other expatriates likewise lived beside a horse racing track that Doty and Johnston described as a 'race course'.[29] The number of British and other foreign nationals who lived on "the Bluff" and on "the Settlement" between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remains uncertain. The growth of "the Bluff" and "the Settlement" nonetheless meant that British and other expatriates lived in two enclaves in Yokohama when the earthquake struck.

Although the number of British and other foreign nationals who lived in Tokyo remains unclear, Checkland nevertheless argues that the British community in the capital was never as large as the British community in Yokohama. She explains that most of the

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[24] Doty and Johnston, 'Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 83.
[25] Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan*, p. 95.
[26] Doty and Johnston, 'Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 83.
[27] John Dower, 'Massachusetts Institute of Technology Visualising Cultures – Yokohama Boomtown: Foreigners in Treaty-Port Japan', 2008, <https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/yokohama/index.html>, accessed date: 12 January 2024.
[28] Doty and Johnston, 'Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 83; Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan*, p. 95.
[29] Doty and Johnston, 'Yokohama Bay', 12 September 1923, FO 908/6, p. 83; 'Attacked with a Sword: Englishwoman's Ordeal in Earthquake', *The Daily Mail*, 11 October 1923, p. 13.

British and other expatriates who settled in Tokyo lived in Tsukiji, a compound along the waterfront, from the late 1860s. British engineers and scholars lived and worked in the centre of the city at the Imperial University of Tokyo. British diplomats lived and worked in the west of the city at the British Embassy.[30]

British missionaries settled in Tokyo and built churches across the city. The Church Missionary Society, a group of Anglican missionaries, established St. Paul's Church in Tsukiji between 1874 and 1876. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an Anglican missionary society, built St. Hilda's, a chapel, in 1887. Sir Josiah Conder, a British architect, designed and built St. Barnabas' Church in the east of Tokyo between 1897 and 1907. A.H. Ion contends that the British missionaries who settled in Japan aimed to preserve what they saw as their cultural identity by shunning Japanese clothes and food and by eschewing contact with the Japanese public.[31] Helen Ballhatchet argues that missionaries discouraged their children from playing with Japanese children because the missionaries 'wished to preserve a distance between themselves and the Japanese'.[32]

Robert Boulter, one of two British vice-consuls in Yokohama, was working at the British Consulate in Yokohama near Yokohama Park when the earthquake struck shortly before noon on 1 September. He described his experience of the disaster in a report that he submitted to the Foreign Office on 19 December. He recalled that a piece of falling timber knocked him unconscious and he awoke several minutes later to find that the Consulate was nothing more than 'a huge pile of debris'. He spent the next two hours rescuing survivors from the wreckage with the help of 'W. Davies', the commercial secretary. The pair rescued the wife of Hugh Horne, the acting commercial counsellor, and her son; 'Kitagawa' and 'Sekido', two servants, and 'Vile', a typist. Boulter informed the Foreign Office that he, Davies, and the other five survivors left what remained of the Consulate later that afternoon when the surrounding buildings caught fire.[33]

The collapse of the Consulate resulted in ten fatalities.[34] Hugh Horne and David Waddell, an accountant, worked at the British Embassy in Tokyo and were visiting the Consulate

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[30] Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan*, pp. 96-7.
[31] A.H. Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun, Volume II – The British Protestant Missionary Movement in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, 1865-1945* (Ontario, 1993), pp. 51, 89-93; A.H. Ion, 'For the Triumph of the Cross: A Survey of the British Missionary Movement in Japan', in Gordon Daniels and Chushichi Tsuzuki (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-1900, Volume V – Social and Cultural Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 83.
[32] Helen Ballhatchet, 'British Missionaries in Meiji Japan', in Ian Nish (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume I* (Folkestone, 1994), pp. 33-4.
[33] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 6-8.
[34] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, the Letters of Edith and George Moule, Unofficial Papers of the Church Missionary Society, the

when the disaster unfolded. Boulter explained that the pair were crushed when the building collapsed. The vice-consul reported that James Lyes, a shipping clerk who worked at the Consulate, died as well. Boulter outlined that five Japanese servants who worked at the Consulate were crushed. These servants were 'T. Akamine' and 'M. Ebizawa', two domestic servants; 'M. Maruyama' and 'T. Mitsuhashi', two scribes, and 'K. Masukawa', the superintending servant.[35] Boulter became the acting consul and the most senior British diplomat in Yokohama when William Haigh, the other vice-consul, and Ernest Holmes, the consul, died.[36]

The earthquake affected other foreign diplomats too. The earthquake destroyed the French Consulate in Yokohama that had stood near the mouth of the Nakamura River. The right wing of the building collapsed when the earthquake struck and the left wing caught fire an hour later.[37] Max Kirjassoff, the American consul in Yokohama, and Paul Jenks, the American vice-consul in the city, died during the earthquake.[38]

Boulter informed the British Foreign Office that he boarded the *Empress of Australia* five hours after he had left the ruins of the British Consulate. He established a temporary consulate onboard the vessel as soon as he boarded the ship. Boulter did not specify why he chose to establish a consulate onboard this particular ship. He also did not outline why Davies and the other five survivors that the pair had rescued did not board the ship and remained onshore.[39]

Boulter stayed onboard five ships that dropped anchor in Yokohama throughout the autumn. He left the *Empress of Australia* when the ship left the city on 8 September and he established a new temporary consulate onboard the *André Lebon*, a French passenger ship.[40] He left the *André Lebon* when the ship left Yokohama three days later and he established a third makeshift consulate onboard the *HMS Hawkins*. Boulter worked alone at these temporary consulates until 'H. Brett', the British commercial secretary in Peking, and two language officers who were assigned to the *HMS Despatch* joined Boulter onboard the *Hawkins*.[41] The group left the *Hawkins* when the ship left Yokohama on 22

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Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, CMS ACC 285 C; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 6.
[35] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 6.
[36] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 6.
[37] Albini and Satake, 'Voices of Foreign Residents in Yokohama and Tokyo', p. 602.
[38] Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century* (Chapel Hill, 2024), p. 113.
[39] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 8-13.
[40] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 8 September 1923', 8 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 711.
[41] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 690.

September and Boulter, Brett, and the language officers created another makeshift consulate onboard the *Nam Sang*, a British passenger ship that was registered in Hong Kong.[42] Boulter left the *Nam Sang*, Brett, and the language officers in October when he established a fifth temporary consulate onboard the *Tai Way Foong*, another British passenger ship that was registered in Hong Kong.[43] These and other makeshift consulates allowed the British government to maintain a consular and diplomatic presence in Yokohama for almost a decade until the Consulate was rebuilt in 1931.

The earthquake destroyed the British Embassy in Tokyo. James Hoare explains that the Embassy lay in ruins until the Foreign Office started to rebuild the compound four years later in 1927. British diplomats in Tokyo lived and worked in temporary accommodation throughout the years that followed the earthquake. Some diplomats stayed in a makeshift wooden bungalow that they built in the days that followed the earthquake on the lawn of what remained of the Embassy. Hoare underlines that other diplomats stayed at the Imperial Hotel, a luxury hotel, in the centre of the city. These arrangements allowed the British government to maintain a diplomatic presence in Tokyo for almost a decade until the reconstruction of the Embassy was completed in 1932.[44]

Hundreds of British expatriates left Tokyo and Yokohama throughout September by boarding commercial passenger ships that carried them to Kobe. The expatriates who took refuge in Kobe stayed at the British Consulate in the city for several weeks. Some British nationals left Kobe towards the end of the month by boarding commercial passenger ships that carried them to Britain via Vancouver. Journalists interviewed the expatriates who left Japan as soon as the expatriates reached Britain.[45] Other British nationals stayed in Kobe and returned to Tokyo and Yokohama from the second half of October. British tabloids dispatched journalists to Kobe during October to interview the expatriates who did not return to Britain.[46]

Herbert Brackley, an aviation adviser who worked for the Japanese navy, left Kobe in late September and became the first expatriate to reach Britain when he arrived in Liverpool on 29 September. A journalist who worked for *The Manchester Guardian* interviewed Brackley when the adviser returned to his home in London later that day. The newspaper published a summary of the interview two days later. Brackley recalled that he was working with his Japanese colleagues in an office in Tokyo when the earthquake struck.

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[42] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[43] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 17.
[44] James Hoare, *Embassies in the East: The Story of the British Embassies in Japan, China, and Korea from 1859 to the Present* (Richmond, 1999), pp. 124-5, 129-32, 142.
[45] 'Eyewitness of Japan Earthquake: First British Survivor Reaches England', *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 October 1923, p. 11.
[46] 'Englishwoman's Ordeal', *The Daily Mail*, 11 October 1923, p. 13.

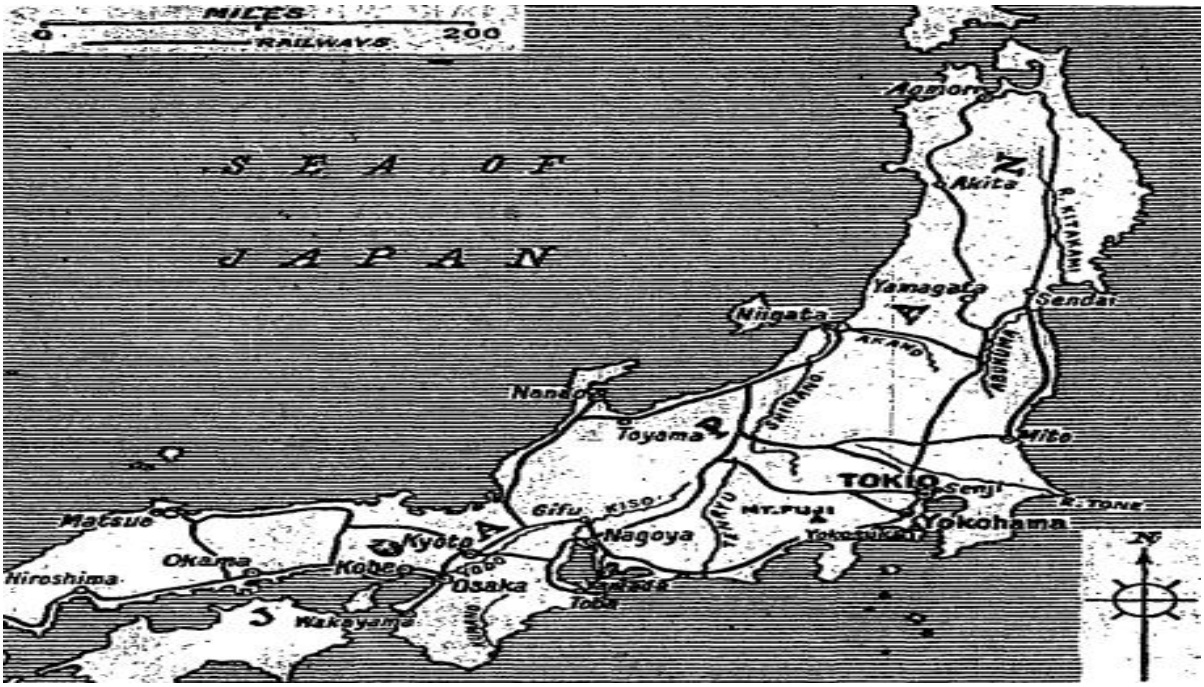
He and his colleagues left the building and the city as the disaster unfolded. He explained that they 'set out to walk to Yokohama, little dreaming that we should also find that city totally destroyed'. The group reached Yokohama several days later and Brackley left the city and his colleagues when he boarded a commercial passenger ship that carried him to Kobe.[47]

The wife of James Mollison, a retired dynamite merchant, travelled to Kobe too. A correspondent who worked for *The Daily Mail* interviewed her in Kobe on 9 October. The tabloid published a summary of the interview two days later. She was alone at her home near the horse racing track on "the Bluff" when the earthquake struck. She described how she 'fled into the garden, and succeeded in escaping onto the racecourse'. She stayed on the racing track for the next two days until she boarded the *RMS Empress of Canada*, a Canadian passenger ship, that carried her to Kobe. *The Daily Mail* explained that her husband reached the city several days later and he informed her that their son John and his wife Mary had died when the family business on "the Settlement" collapsed.[48]

The British press printed maps that allowed the British public to visualise the size of the area that the earthquake had affected. Figure 2.2 identifies twenty-three Japanese cities. The map extends from Hiroshima in the west to Sendai in the east and from Wakayama in the south to Aomori in the north. *The Manchester Guardian* printed this map on 4 September, two days after news of the earthquake had reached Britain.[49] The newspaper reported that the earthquake was felt as far west as Osaka and as far east as Sendai over a distance of over 500km. The newspaper argued that the earthquake had 'completely destroyed' Tokyo and Yokohama.[50]

[47] 'British Survivor Reaches England', *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 October 1923, p. 11.
[48] 'Englishwoman's Ordeal', *The Daily Mail*, 11 October 1923, p. 13; Mike Galbraith, 'No. 48, Yokohama', in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume X* (Folkestone, 2016), p. 104.
[49] 'Great Earthquake in Japan', *The Observer*, 2 September 1923, p. 11; 'The Japanese Earthquake', *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 September 1923, pp. 7-8.
[50] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 September 1923, p. 8.

**Figure 2.2 – The Cities, Railways, and Rivers of Japan, September 1923**




*Source: 'The Japanese Earthquake', The Manchester Guardian, 4 September 1923, p. 8.*

Figure 2.2 highlights various geographical features. The map identifies the Shinano River, the longest river in Japan; the Tone River to the north of Tokyo, and seven other rivers. The map illustrates that Mount Fuji stands to the west of Yokohama.[51] Philip Charrier argues that the British public was unfamiliar with the culture and geography of Japan during the early twentieth century.[52] This map helped to address this factor by allowing the public to visualise the geography of this faraway country.

Figure 2.2 outlines numerous railways.[53] These railways include the Chuo Line, the railway that runs between Nagoya and Tokyo to the north of Mount Fuji, and the Tohoku Line, the railway that runs between Aomori and Tokyo through Sendai. The earthquake disrupted railway services in and around Tokyo and Yokohama for nearly a fortnight.[54] This disruption meant that commercial passenger ships became the fastest mode of transport for anyone who wanted to leave Tokyo or Yokohama. The map shows that Kobe lays over 250 miles to the west of Yokohama, the equivalent of over 400km.[55] This map

[51] *Ibid*.
[52] Philip Charrier, 'Paradigms of Development: British Perspectives on Social and Economic Change in Japan, 1900-41', *Japan Forum*, 12/2 (2000), pp. 183-7.
[53] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 September 1923, p. 8.
[54] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.
[55] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 September 1923, p. 8.

allowed the British public to visualise the length of the route that British expatriates took as they travelled from Tokyo and Yokohama to Kobe.

Checkland argues that Kobe was home to the largest British community in Japan outside of Yokohama at the time of the earthquake.[56] It is plausible that those who left Tokyo and Yokohama travelled to Kobe in the hope that they would receive provisions and shelter from friends, relatives, and fellow expatriates in Kobe. The Consulate in Kobe became the nearest British consular and diplomatic residence to Tokyo and Yokohama by way of sea when the earthquake destroyed the Consulate in Yokohama and the Embassy in Tokyo. It is possible that the British nationals who left Tokyo and Yokohama travelled to Kobe in the expectation that they could take refuge at their nearest consulate. These factors could explain why expatriates travelled to Kobe as opposed to closer ports like Nagoya or Sendai.

The British expatriates who left Tokyo and Yokohama took refuge at the British Consulate in Kobe as soon as they reached the city. Ralph Forster and Sir Montague Paske-Smith named every expatriate who stayed at the Consulate in the reports that they wrote. They reported that 725 British nationals stayed at the Consulate between 6 September and 3 October.[57] The expatriates had worked in diverse vocations. Robert Nichols, the chair of English at the Imperial University of Tokyo, and Alfred Richards, a medical officer who lived in Yokohama, took refuge at the Consulate. Leonard Coote, a Christian missionary, and Eustace Strong, the chaplain of a church in Yokohama, stayed at the Consulate as well.[58]

These reports do not account for the British nationals who did not travel to Kobe and instead stayed in Tokyo and Yokohama throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake. George Moule, an Anglican missionary who lived with his wife Edith in Tokyo, informed his mother Agnes in a letter that he sent on 15 September that the couple had not travelled to Kobe.[59] Edith and George were visiting Karuizawa, a resort

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[56] Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan*, pp. 94-6.
[57] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered', 19 September 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 217-23; Paske-Smith, 'Britishers Registered', 25 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 103-5; Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Reported Safe', 29 September 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 210-12; Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered Here', 3 October 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 208-9.
[58] Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Reported Safe', 29 September 1923, FO 262/1589, p. 211.
[59] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.

town near the outskirts of Tokyo, when the disaster unfolded.[60] George outlined that they spent the next fortnight in Karuizawa before they boarded a train and returned to their home in Tokyo. He explained that they returned to Tokyo to assess the extent of the damage to their home. He described how the roof had collapsed and rainwater had flooded the bathroom, one of the bedrooms, and the corridors.[61] Edith and George nonetheless stayed in what remained of their home throughout the rest of the autumn.[62]

The couple were not the only British expatriates who stayed in Tokyo. George highlighted that Christine Dennis, a governess who was friends with Edith and George, was staying with them at what remained of their house when he sent this letter to his mother.[63] Dennis was living at the home of the British consul on "the Bluff" when the earthquake struck. George informed Agnes that Dennis left Yokohama and reached the home of the Moule family several days later.[64] George did not, however, explain how Dennis travelled to Tokyo or why she travelled to the home of the Moule family.

Forster and Paske-Smith also wrote numerous reports between early September and early November about the British nationals who had died as a result of the earthquake. The pair named 105 British nationals, including consular and diplomatic staff, who had died.[65] The reports that the pair wrote illustrate that those who had lived in Tokyo and Yokohama had worked in various vocations. Forster and Paske-Smith reported that Philip Cabeldu, a bicycle salesman; Maurice Russell, a whiskey merchant, and Thomas Thomas, a silk merchant, had died.[66] Paske-Smith explained that Elizabeth Dunstan, Annie Mary, Duffussy Michael, and Sweeney Wilfrid, four nuns, had died. The vice-consul confirmed that Haigh, Horne, Lyes, and Waddell had died at the British Consulate in Yokohama.[67] Forster outlined that John Mollison, the son of James Mollison, and 'A. Tait', a bank manager, had died as well.[68]

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[60] Edith Moule, 'Journal Eleven', 23 October 1923, the Letters of Edith and George Moule, Unofficial Papers of the Church Missionary Society, the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, CMS ACC 285 C.
[61] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.
[62] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C; Edith Moule, 'Journal Eleven', 23 October 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.
[63] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 126-8; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 11 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 68-70; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 3 November 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 203-4.
[66] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 127.
[67] Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 127-8.
[68] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459.

Forster and Paske-Smith ascertained the names of those who had died by asking those who stayed at the Consulate in Kobe if they could name any friends, neighbours, or relatives who had died during the disaster. Communications between Kobe and Yokohama started to reopen when the *HMS Durban* reached Kobe on 10 September. The crew helped Forster and Paske-Smith to receive and send telegrams from and to the *Despatch* in Yokohama.[69] The marines who were onboard the *Despatch* landed in Yokohama and identified the bodies of British nationals. The marines telegrammed the names of those who had died to Forster and Paske-Smith.[70]

The reports that the pair wrote, though, do not account for every British national who had died. Boulter lamented in the report that he wrote in December that the marines could not identify every British national who had died because 'in several cases, all that has been recovered has been a few ashes and bones'. The reports that Forster and Paske-Smith wrote do not account for those who could not be identified. Boulter predicted that additional bodies would be recovered when the clearing of debris and reconstruction started in the new year.[71] The reports that Forster and Paske-Smith wrote do not account for the bodies of any British nationals that were recovered after the consul and the vice-consul wrote these reports. These factors suggest that it is likely that the earthquake killed more than 105 British nationals.[72]

The experiences of the British community can be compared with those of the American community. Julia Irwin contends that 'a sizeable American community' had developed in and around Tokyo and Yokohama by the time that the earthquake struck. She explains that these expatriates included families, missionaries, workers at General Electric, an American conglomerate that generated electricity, and workers at Standard Oil, an American oil company. She estimates that the disaster killed seventy-eight Americans.[73] The reports that Forster and Paske-Smith wrote reflect that the British community sustained at least twenty-seven more fatalities than the American community sustained.[74]

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[69] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[70] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712.
[71] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 20.
[72] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 126-8; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 11 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 68-70; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 3 November 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 203-4.
[73] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 113.
[74] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 126-8; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 11 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 68-70; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 3 November 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 203-4; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 113.

The American government and public prioritised Japanese nationals over Americans when providing humanitarian aid in Japan. The American Red Cross Fund, a nationwide appeal that the American government and the American Red Cross established, raised $11,800,000, the equivalent of roughly £2,600,000 or approximately £135,000,000 today, in response to the earthquake.[75] The fund spent $110,000, the equivalent of roughly £24,000 or over £1,250,000 today, on the provision of relief to American citizens, representing less than one percent of the total amount that the appeal raised.[76] Erle Dickover, the American consul in Kobe, criticised his government for prioritising the Japanese government and public over expatriates.[77] In contrast, the rest of this chapter illustrates how the Royal Navy prioritised expatriates over Japanese nationals, reflecting how the American and British governments provided humanitarian aid in contrasting ways.

In summary, the earthquake affected British nationals in several ways. The collapse of the British Consulate in Yokohama caused ten fatalities.[78] The earthquake destroyed the British Embassy in Tokyo. The destruction of the Consulate and Embassy forced consular and diplomatic staff to live and work in temporary accommodation for almost a decade.[79] The earthquake killed over 100 British nationals.[80] Over 700 British expatriates left Tokyo and Yokohama by boarding commercial passenger ships that carried them to Kobe.[81] Those who stayed in Tokyo and Yokohama received humanitarian relief from the crew of the *Despatch*.

**The *HMS Despatch***

Sir Arthur Leveson highlighted how his squadron responded to the earthquake in a report that he submitted to Sir Oswyn Murray, the permanent secretary to the Admiralty, on 29

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[75] J. Charles Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns: Corporate Giving from America's Industrial Heartland following the Great Kanto Earthquake', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 21/8 (2023), pp. 54-5.
[76] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', pp. 54-5; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 117.
[77] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 127.
[78] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 6.
[79] Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 129-32, 142.
[80] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 126-8; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 11 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 68-70; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 3 November 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 203-4.
[81] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered', 19 September 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 217-23; Paske-Smith, 'Britishers Registered', 25 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 103-5; Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Reported Safe', 29 September 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 210-12; Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered Here', 3 October 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 208-9.

September 1923, four weeks after the earthquake had struck. Leveson recalled that he was onboard the *HMS Hawkins* on a tour of the Yellow Sea when the ship reached Seoul on 1 September. He explained that he instructed the crew to drop anchor in the city because he wanted to introduce himself to Makoto Saito. Korea was a Japanese colony and Saito was the governor-general. Leveson spent the night at the British Consulate in Seoul in the hope that he could speak with Saito in the coming days.[82]

The earthquake severed all communication between Korea, Tokyo, and Yokohama. The earthquake destroyed telegram and telephone lines across Tokyo and Yokohama. Masashi Kuratani contends that railways buckled and bridges and tunnels collapsed in and around the two cities, leading to the destruction of twenty-four locomotives.[83] The loss of rail, telegram, and telephone services meant that Tokyo and Yokohama were isolated from each other, the rest of Japan, and from the rest of the world until telegram services started to resume roughly a week later.[84]

News of the earthquake nevertheless spread across the world in less than a day. The Funabashi Transmitting Station, a radio station that the Japanese navy maintained near Tokyo, and the Iwaki Radio Telegraph Station, a commercial radio station to the north of the Kanto Plain, transmitted distress signals when the earthquake struck.[85] Radio stations in China, the United States, and across the rest of Japan intercepted these signals. Journalists across the world used these distress signals to publish newspaper articles about the earthquake.[86] The following chapter outlines how the British press covered the news of the disaster. Newspapers were the only source in Britain that offered any information about the earthquake until the Royal Navy established direct communications with Yokohama roughly a week after the earthquake had struck.[87] The British government and public throughout the first week of September only knew that an earthquake had struck Tokyo and Yokohama due to the reports that featured in the press.

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[82] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[83] Masashi Kuratani, 'Disaster Relief Operations by the Imperial Japanese Navy and the US Navy in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake: Focusing on the Activities of the Onsite Commanders of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the US Navy', *Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force Staff College Review*, 1/2 (2012), pp. 6-7.
[84] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[85] Natsuko Chubachi, Atsushi Kawauchi, Soraya Ono, Yuichi Ono, and Ken Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake and U.S.-Japan Relations: Japanese Students' Thank-You Letters Sent to the United States and their Implications for International Disaster Risk Reduction Cooperation', *Journal of Disaster Research*, 20/1 (2025), p. 64.
[86] 'Great Earthquake', *The Observer*, 2 September 1923, p. 11.
[87] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

Everything that the British government and public knew or thought that they knew about the earthquake throughout the week that followed the disaster came from the press.[88] The lack of direct communication with Tokyo and Yokohama meant that the government could not verify the safety or whereabouts of any British nationals in these cities. The government and public were unaware that the earthquake had killed over 100 British nationals.[89] The government and public were likewise unaware that hundreds of expatriates were leaving Tokyo and Yokohama and were taking refuge in Kobe. The government did not know that the earthquake had destroyed the British Consulate in Yokohama and the British Embassy in Tokyo. The government also did not know that consular and diplomatic staff were staying in temporary accommodation.

News of the earthquake reached Leveson in less than a day. He explained to Murray that shortly before noon on 2 September 'newspaper leaflets on sale in Seoul conveyed the first news of an earthquake in Japan'.[90] The following chapter examines how news of the earthquake reached Britain at the same time when *The Observer* became the first national newspaper in Britain to report on the disaster.[91] These factors demonstrate that the British government and public as well as Leveson and the China Squadron learned at the same time that an earthquake had struck Tokyo and Yokohama.

Leveson informed Murray that newspapers were the only source in Seoul that offered any information about the earthquake. Leveson and his crew only knew that an earthquake had struck due to the reports that featured in the press. The commander-in-chief reported that everything that he and his crew knew or thought that they knew about the earthquake throughout the days that followed the disaster came from the press.[92] These factors mean that Leveson and his crew knew as much as the British government and public knew.

Leveson sent a telegram to the *HMS Despatch* several hours after news of the earthquake had reached him. He instructed the crew 'to prepare for sea as soon as possible and [to] leave for Yokohama'. The cruiser left Shanghai the following morning on 3 September and reached Yokohama two days later.[93] Everything that the crew of the

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[88] Robert Vansittart to Lord Stamfordham, 'Message of Sympathy to Japan', 3 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 456.
[89] Forster, 'British Subjects Killed', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Paske-Smith, 'British Dead', 22 September 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 126-8; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 11 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 68-70; Paske-Smith, 'British Killed', 3 November 1923, FO 262/1589, pp. 203-4.
[90] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[91] 'Great Earthquake', *The Observer*, 2 September 1923, p. 11.
[92] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[93] *Ibid*.

*Despatch* knew or thought that they knew about the earthquake when they arrived in Japan had come from what Leveson had read in newspapers in Seoul.

Leveson explained that he ordered the crew of the *Despatch* to sail to Yokohama because he wanted the crew to establish direct communications with British expatriates in the city. He argued that 'the most important need was to get a ship to Yokohama as soon as possible in order to establish communication'.[94] Leveson, though, did not express any interest in the report that he wrote in establishing communications with the Japanese government. This disinterest reflects that Leveson saw the interests of the British expatriate community as his main priority.

Robert Boulter met with Robert Hamilton, the captain of the *Despatch*, onboard the cruiser shortly after the ship had reached Yokohama on 5 September. Boulter summarised the course of this meeting in a report that he wrote later that day. He described to the captain how British expatriates in Yokohama tended to store their valuables in safes that they kept in their businesses and homes. Boulter underlined that the earthquake had forced British nationals to leave their safes behind when they left the city. He feared that the disaster could have damaged the contents of the safes. He informed Hamilton that the recovery of these safes was 'of considerable importance, as the actual livelihood of some of the British community may depend upon the contents'.[95]

Boulter asked Hamilton if his crew could recover the safes. Boulter proposed that the marines who were onboard the *Despatch* could land in Yokohama and open safes that belonged to British expatriates. The marines would store any valuables that they recovered onboard the cruiser. Boulter reported that Hamilton accepted this request and 'promised the necessary men'.[96] At the same time, Boulter did not ask Hamilton if the marines could provide any assistance to the Japanese public. This contrast suggests that Boulter envisioned that the Royal Navy should prioritise the possessions of expatriates over Japanese nationals.

Boulter and Hamilton recognised that the marines could not land without permission from the Japanese government. The pair agreed that Boulter would ask Asakichi Yasukouchi for permission to land.[97] Yasukouchi was the governor of Kanagawa, the prefecture that covers Yokohama and the surrounding towns and villages. Boulter sent a telegram to Yasukouchi later that evening. He asked Yasukouchi to allow 'marines to be landed at Yokohama … to assist British subjects at this port in opening and securing the

[94] *Ibid*.
[95] Boulter, '5 September', 5 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 726.
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] *Ibid*.

contents of the safes left on the remains of their property'.[98] The speed with which Boulter sent this telegram further suggests that he saw the recovery of British property as an urgent priority.

Yasukouchi sent a telegram to Boulter the following day on 6 September. Boulter summarised the contents of the message in a report that he wrote later that day. He reported that Yasukouchi had granted permission 'for working parties to be landed from *HMS Despatch* to assist British subjects in the protection and recovery of their property'.[99] The speed with which Yasukouchi replied to Boulter and accepted his request implies that the governor had few reservations about British marines landing ashore. This example likewise shows how the Japanese government exerted at least some influence over the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook as the marines landed only after they had received permission from Yasukouchi.

Boulter highlighted that British and other European merchants took refuge onboard the *Despatch* shortly after Yasukouchi had replied.[100] Boulter did not specify how many traders stayed onboard the vessel. This example nonetheless illustrates that the crew of the *Despatch* provided humanitarian support in response to the earthquake by offering shelter to British and other European expatriates. This example demonstrates that the state in inter-war Britain played a role in the overseas provision of humanitarian relief by offering assistance to British and other European expatriates.

Various merchants stayed in Yokohama throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake. Basil Washington, the captain of the *HMS Durban*, outlined why British and other European merchants stayed in Yokohama in a report that he wrote when he reached Kobe on 10 September. He had learned from telegrams that he had received from the crew of the *Despatch* that British and other European merchants were staying in Yokohama to salvage what remained of their businesses. Those who sheltered onboard the *Despatch* were staying in Yokohama to salvage what remained of their properties and to verify the safety and whereabouts of their employees.[101]

Japanese merchants also stayed in Tokyo and Yokohama throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake. Satoshi Fujimura and Yasuhiro Shimizu argue that merchants who worked at Kanematsu, a Japanese trading firm that imported wool from Australia,

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[98] Robert Boulter to Asakichi Yasukouchi, 'Parties of Seamen and Marines', 5 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 681.
[99] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717.
[100] *Ibid*.
[101] Basil Washington to Sir Arthur Leveson, 'Business Community of Yokohama', 10 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 652.

stayed in Tokyo to verify the safety and whereabouts of their relatives and workers.[102] The crew of the *Despatch*, however, did not offer accommodation to any Japanese merchants. This example exemplifies that most of the humanitarian relief that the Royal Navy provided was solely for the benefit of British and other European expatriates.

A party of marines who were assigned to the *Despatch* rowed to and landed in Tokyo on 6 and 7 September. Leveson described the relief work that they undertook in the report that he submitted to Murray. Leveson reported that the marines distributed food amongst British diplomats in the city.[103] This example shows that the relief work that the navy undertook was politically and socially restricted as the marines did not offer any food to Japanese nationals.

The first party of marines that landed in Yokohama landed in the morning on 7 September, only a day after they had received permission from Yasukouchi. Boulter accompanied the marines ashore and he described the landing in a report that he wrote later that day. Boulter and the marines rowed along the Nakamura River and landed at what remained of the British Consulate, nearly a week after the building had collapsed. He underlined that the marines identified and buried the bodies of the consular staff who had died during the earthquake. He explained that the seamen recovered ten bodies. Boulter lamented that identification was challenging because the bodies were 'too decomposed to handle'. In particular, he bemoaned how he could only identify William Haigh 'by his keys'.[104]

The marines who landed in Yokohama spent much of their time throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake searching for the bodies of British nationals. The marines continued to identify and bury the remains of British expatriates until the Royal Navy left Japan on 15 October. Boulter highlighted in the report that he submitted to the Foreign Office in December that 'the remains of approximately fifty British subjects have been buried at Yokohama'. He outlined that the marines buried the bodies where they found them because debris blocked the roads that led to the cemetery on "the Bluff". He reasoned that the marines made it 'possible to give many at least the comfort of knowing that their dead relatives and friends had received Christian burial'.[105]

The crew of the *Despatch* also offered assistance to the British expatriates who had taken refuge onboard the *RMS Empress of Australia*. Boulter was working at the

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[102] Satoshi Fujimura and Yasuhiro Shimizu, 'Accounting in Disaster and Accounting for Disaster: The Crisis of the Great Kanto Earthquake', *Accounting, Business, and Financial History*, 20/3 (2010), p. 305.
[103] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[104] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712.
[105] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 19-24.

temporary consulate that he had established onboard the passenger ship when the crew of the *Despatch* distributed provisions amongst the British expatriates who were onboard the passenger ship during the afternoon on 7 September. He described in the report that he wrote later that day how the crew of the *Despatch* provided 'liberal and much needed supplies of clothing [and] toilet articles' to seventy British nationals.[106] This example illustrates how the British government provided humanitarian support to its own citizens.

Boulter estimated that over 2,500 people were onboard the *Empress of Australia* when the crew of the *Despatch* distributed clothes and toiletries. He recalled that nearly half of those who were onboard the passenger ship were Europeans. He underlined that over 700 Chinese were onboard, representing roughly twenty-eight percent of those who were onboard. He explained that approximately 600 Japanese were onboard, accounting for almost a quarter of those who were onboard.[107] The British expatriates who received supplies from the crew of the *Despatch* represented less than three percent of those who were onboard the *Empress of Australia*.[108] This figure reflects that the Royal Navy only provided limited aid to the Japanese public as the crew of the *Despatch* did not offer any provisions to the Chinese, Japanese, or other Europeans who were onboard the passenger ship.

The merchants who had boarded the *Despatch* established a committee onboard the cruiser in the evening on 7 September. Boulter reported that three British and five other European merchants sat on the committee. He outlined that the committee lobbied British marines to land in Yokohama and recover safes that belonged to British and other European expatriates as soon as possible.[109] This lobbying helps to explain why Boulter and the crew of the *Despatch* prioritised the interests of British and other European nationals above those of the Japanese public.

Sir Charles Eliot, however, argued that the navy should provide aid to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates. He recalled in a letter that he sent to Sir William Tyrrell, the deputy permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, on 13 September that he was on leave in Britain when the earthquake struck. Eliot highlighted that he had read numerous reports in the British press about the support that the American navy had provided to the Japanese government and public. At the same time, he lamented that he had read few reports about any support that the Royal Navy had offered. He warned Tyrrell that

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[106] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714.
[107] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 13.
[108] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 13.
[109] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712.

diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the Royal Navy did not provide any humanitarian relief to the Japanese government or public.[110]

Lord Curzon agreed with Eliot. Sir Victor Wellesley, the head of East Asian policy at the Foreign Office, outlined Curzon's views in a memorandum that Wellesley sent to Sir Norman Fisher, the permanent secretary to the Treasury, on 9 October. Curzon recognised that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended less than two months earlier. He proposed that the British government should offer humanitarian aid to the Japanese government as well as to expatriates to convince the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations.[111] Curzon and Eliot supported the provision of relief to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates in the belief that humanitarian aid could play a role in British foreign policy by promoting cordial diplomatic ties with other countries. In contrast, Boulter and the merchants who boarded the *Despatch* urged the China Squadron to prioritise expatriates over Japanese nationals out of fear that the earthquake could have damaged safes that belonged to British and other European nationals. This contrast demonstrates that the state in inter-war Britain was not a single, unified humanitarian actor as Boulter, Curzon, and Eliot disagreed over who should receive humanitarian support.

The merchants who boarded the *Despatch* established a committee because they had heard various rumours. Boulter reported that these rumours alleged that several houses in Yokohama that belonged to British expatriates were ransacked when the earthquake struck. He reasoned that these allegations and fears of further looting explained why the committee lobbied marines to recover their property as soon as possible.[112] These rumours also explain why Boulter asked Hamilton if marines could land in Yokohama as soon as the *Despatch* arrived in the city.

At least two houses that belonged to British nationals were ransacked during the earthquake. George Moule summarised in the letter that he sent to his mother towards the middle of September how Christine Dennis had watched as the home of the British consul on "the Bluff" was looted. Dennis informed Moule that 'escaped bands of prisoners … robbed the house' and forced her to leave the building.[113] Kuratani describes how hundreds of prisoners across Tokyo and Yokohama escaped during the earthquake when

[110] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[111] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[112] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 712-13.
[113] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.

nine prisons caught fire or collapsed.[114] Moule concluded that Dennis 'lost all her possessions' during the robbery.[115]

The wife of James Mollison recalled that her home was looted as well. She informed the journalist who interviewed her in Kobe in early October that 'convicts who had escaped from a gaol nearby' stormed her house on "the Bluff". *The Daily Mail* reported that 'one ruffian … rushed at Mrs Mollison with a drawn sword' and forced her to escape through her garden. She lamented that the looters 'seized everything of value'.[116] The experiences of Dennis and Mollison demonstrate that the rumours that reached Boulter and the merchants who were onboard the *Despatch* were far from groundless.

The second party of marines who landed in Yokohama landed on "the Settlement" on 8 September under pressure from the committee that the merchants who were onboard the *Despatch* had established the night before. Boulter described the relief work that the marines undertook in a report that he wrote later that day. Eighty marines landed ashore. Boulter outlined that they opened safes that belonged to British and other European nationals and stored the valuables that they recovered onboard the *Despatch*.[117] The marines continued to open safes until the Royal Navy left Japan in October.[118]

British marines did not recover any safes that belonged to Asians. Boulter highlighted that the marines were tasked 'with the object of assisting all nationalities, other than Oriental, to secure the contents of their safes'.[119] "Oriental" is a xenophobic slur that has been used to denote Asians and Asian cultures and societies since at least the nineteenth century. Boulter did not explain why the marines were ordered not to assist Asians or who gave this instruction. This order nevertheless illustrates how the relief work that the navy undertook was restricted on racial grounds to British and other European nationals.

The Royal Navy also offered support to British and other European nationals who were stranded in towns and villages to the west of Yokohama. Boulter underlined in the report that he submitted to the Foreign Office in December that 'ten or twelve' British and other European expatriates became stranded in Chigasaki, Ninomiya, and Oiso when the earthquake struck. He explained that a group of sailors who were assigned to the

[114] Kuratani, 'The 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 18.
[115] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, CMS ACC 285 C.
[116] 'Englishwoman's Ordeal', *The Daily Mail*, 11 October 1923, p. 13.
[117] Boulter, '8 September', 8 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 710.
[118] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 18.
[119] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712.

*Despatch* left Yokohama on 9 September and rowed to these towns and villages. The sailors returned to Yokohama with the expatriates the following day.[120]

The evacuation of British and other European nationals from Chigasaki, Ninomiya, and Oiso constitutes one of several examples that demonstrate how the British military protected British and other European civilians across Asia during the 1920s. James Cable estimates that British and other international battleships and merchant ships evacuated over 213,000 people from the Turkish city of Izmir during the Greco-Turkish War in September 1922.[121] The Royal Air Force evacuated civilians from the Iraqi city of Sulaymaniyah during a Kurdish uprising that took place between October and December 1922. Matthew Heaslip describes this event as 'the world's first ever airlift evacuation of civilians'. The crew of *HMS Teal*, a British gunboat, and the crews of two merchant ships evacuated missionaries and other foreign nationals from the Chinese city of Chengdu amidst a famine in June 1925.[122] The ability to protect British and other European nationals across Asia helped to project British military power on the world stage and reflects how the British military treated humanitarian relief as an instrument of imperialism. The relief work that the navy undertook in Japan and elsewhere across Asia illustrates how the provision of humanitarian relief supported the strategy of imperial policing by assisting British and other European expatriates.

In summary, all of the relief work that the crew of the *Despatch* undertook was solely for the benefit of British and other European nationals. The crew rescued expatriates who were stranded, provided food to British diplomats, identified and buried the bodies of British nationals, recovered property that belonged to expatriates, offered shelter to merchants, and provided clothes and toiletries to British expatriates.[123] At the same time, the crew did not offer any humanitarian aid to the Japanese government or public. It was not, though, a foregone conclusion that the crew would prioritise British and other European nationals over Japanese nationals. Curzon and Eliot argued that the British government should provide relief to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates in the belief that humanitarian aid could support the diplomatic objectives of the British state.[124] In contrast, Boulter and the merchants who boarded the *Despatch* lobbied the

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[120] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[121] James Cable, 'Naval Humanitarianism', *International Relations*, 11/4 (1993), p. 339.
[122] Heaslip, *The China Station*, pp. 127-32.
[123] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Boulter, '8 September', 8 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 710; Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 11, 19-24.
[124] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.

China Squadron to prioritise British and other European nationals over Japanese nationals. This contrast highlights that the state in inter-war Britain was a contested humanitarian space where different groups competed for influence.

**The *HMS Hawkins***

The *HMS Hawkins* arrived in Yokohama almost a week after the *HMS Despatch* had reached the city. Sir Arthur Leveson described how he and the rest of the crew of the *Hawkins* responded to the earthquake in the report that he submitted to Sir Oswyn Murray in late September 1923. Leveson reported that he and the rest of his crew left Seoul in the morning on 3 September. The ship dropped anchor at Incheon later that afternoon as he had arranged to meet Makoto Saito.[125]

The pair ate lunch onboard the *Hawkins*. Leveson asked Saito for his advice on 'the best means of rendering assistance' in response to the earthquake.[126] It is likely that Leveson asked Saito for advice because the governor-general had become the most senior representative of the Japanese government that Leveson could speak with after the earthquake had severed communications between Tokyo, Yokohama, and Korea. Leveson did not outline the advice that Saito provided in the report that the commander-in-chief submitted to Murray. This meeting nevertheless demonstrates that Leveson allowed Saito and the Japanese government to play an advisory role in shaping the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook in Japan.

Leveson and the *Hawkins* left Korea later that evening and they reached Shanghai two days later on 5 September. He recalled that he instructed the *Hawkins* to sail to Shanghai because he saw 'the provision of our own wireless telegram communication between Yokohama and Shanghai' as an urgent priority. Leveson expected that he would receive a telegram from the crew of the *Despatch* as soon as they reached Yokohama. He planned to share the information that he hoped that this telegram would contain with the British expatriate community in Shanghai in the assumption that the British nationals who lived in the city had friends and relatives in Yokohama.[127] His decision to sail to Shanghai, rather than to Yokohama, reflects that Leveson saw the interests of British expatriates as his main priority.

Leveson received a telegram from the crew of the *Despatch* as soon as he reached Shanghai. He did not outline the contents of the telegram in the report that he submitted to Murray. This factor means that the contents of the telegram remain unclear. Leveson

[125] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[126] *Ibid*.
[127] *Ibid*.

immediately forwarded the telegram to the Admiralty in London.[128] The disruption of telegram and telephone services across Tokyo and Yokohama meant that the telegrams that the *Despatch* and the *Hawkins* exchanged became the only way through which Leveson could receive and send messages from and to these cities. The telegram that he received from the *Despatch* was the first direct communication that he, the Admiralty, and the rest of the government in Whitehall received from Tokyo and Yokohama after the earthquake had struck. It is likely that the telegram influenced much of what Leveson, the Admiralty, and the rest of the British government knew or thought that they knew about the earthquake.

The Admiralty replied to Leveson the following morning on 6 September. The department instructed him 'to purchase medical stores, rice, and other foodstuffs' in Shanghai. The Admiralty ordered Leveson to sail to Yokohama and offer these provisions to the Japanese navy. The Admiralty assumed that the Japanese navy would distribute these supplies amongst the Japanese public.[129] These orders did not explain who within the Admiralty had decided that the Royal Navy should provide humanitarian provisions to the Japanese public. These orders did not specify which foodstuffs and medical supplies Leveson should procure or the amount that he should purchase. This lack of detail suggests that the Admiralty allowed him to determine the content and volume of the aid that the *Hawkins* carried to Yokohama.

Lord Curzon explained why the Admiralty had instructed Leveson to provide food and medicine to the Japanese public in a memorandum that the foreign secretary wrote over two months later on 9 November.[130] The next chapter analyses how the Cabinet discussed the contents of this memorandum throughout three meetings that took place between 13 and 16 November, roughly a month after the Royal Navy had left Japan. Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet secretary, wrote minutes during these meetings. The minutes show that Hankey, Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister; Sir Neville Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer; Curzon, and between thirteen and sixteen other ministers attended these meetings.[131]

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[128] *Ibid*.
[129] *Ibid*.
[130] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, pp. 438-9.
[131] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/26, p. 327; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/27, p. 340; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/28, p. 353.

The Admiralty reasoned that the British government needed to convey sympathy in response to the earthquake. Curzon explained that the Admiralty anticipated that the provision of food and medicine to the Japanese public would highlight what the department saw as the sympathy of the British government 'in a striking and suitable manner'. The Admiralty recognised that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended in August, roughly two weeks before the earthquake struck. Curzon outlined that the Admiralty believed that as 'the Anglo-Japanese Alliance has recently ended, we should seize the opportunity of showing that we still regard the Japanese as our friends' by offering relief and showing sympathy.[132] This memorandum demonstrates that the Admiralty ordered Leveson to offer food and medicine to the Japanese public in the belief that humanitarian aid could help to define the post-Alliance relationship by promoting friendly diplomatic relations between the former allies.

The Admiralty paid close attention to the role that the American navy played in response to the earthquake. Curzon reported that the Admiralty estimated that the American navy spent $650,000, the equivalent of roughly £143,000 or over £7,400,000 today, on the provision of humanitarian aid to Japanese nationals.[133] This sum was over twelve times larger than the amount that the Royal Navy spent in response to the disaster.[134] Curzon underlined that the Admiralty understood that relations between the American and Japanese governments were almost hostile when the earthquake struck due to disagreements over immigration and shipbuilding. Curzon highlighted that the Admiralty feared that 'among Japanese, the sympathy [and aid] lavished upon them by a nation which is often regarded as an antagonist will be contrasted with the more modest efforts of their [former] ally'.[135] This passage illustrates that the Admiralty instructed Leveson to offer provisions out of fear that the post-Alliance relationship would be damaged if the Japanese public surmised that the British government had shown less sympathy than the American government. This memorandum shows that the Admiralty paid meticulous attention to the aid that the American government provided on the grounds that American aid threatened British diplomatic interests in Japan, reflecting how diplomatic strategy and humanitarianism were closely intertwined.

This memorandum suggests that the Admiralty agreed with Curzon and Sir Charles Eliot that the Royal Navy should offer aid to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates. Eliot argued in September that diplomatic relations would be harmed if the British government did not offer any humanitarian assistance to the Japanese government or

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[132] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[133] *Ibid*.
[134] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[135] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.

public.[136] Sir Victor Wellesley outlined in October that Curzon believed that the provision of relief to the Japanese government would convince the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of cordial diplomatic relations.[137] These examples demonstrate how different groups within the British government envisioned that humanitarian aid should play a role in British foreign policy by promoting friendly diplomatic ties with other countries.

The views that the Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot expressed can be understood within a broader diplomatic context. Patricia Clavin argues that the formation of the League of Nations after the end of the First World War 'multilateralised' British foreign policy. The League represented a move away from the bilateral alliances that had defined international diplomacy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in favour of agreements between multiple states that covered disarmament, organised labour, and other transnational issues.[138] The end of the Alliance formed part of this transition as the British and Japanese governments replaced their bilateral military alliance with a multilateral relationship with seven other states that revolved around the Four-Power, Five-Power, and Nine-Power Treaties. The Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot hoped that the provision of aid to Japanese nationals would convince the Japanese government that this transition from a bilateral to a multilateral relationship did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations.

The role that the Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot anticipated that humanitarian aid should play in British foreign policy can be described as an example of catastrophic diplomacy. Julia Irwin defines this concept as the study of how humanitarian aid that donors have provided in response to wars, earthquakes, and other natural disasters has shaped the history of relations between states.[139] Natsuko Chubachi *et al.* explain that this field also entails the study of how recipients and the ways in which they have reacted to aid have influenced diplomatic history.[140] Irwin and Frank Kaser propose that states developed what the pair call 'humanitarian policies' from the first decade of the twentieth century. They define a 'humanitarian policy' as the principle that the provision of relief overseas can advance the diplomatic and political objectives of a state.[141] The Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot formulated a humanitarian policy in response to the earthquake that revolved

[136] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[137] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[138] Patricia Clavin, 'The Ben Pimlott Memorial Lecture, 2019: Britain and the Making of Global Order after 1919', *Twentieth Century British History*, 31/3 (2020), p. 343.
[139] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[140] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 63.
[141] Frank Kaser, 'A Civilised Nation: Japan and the Red Cross, 1877-1900', *European Review of History*, 23/2 (2016), p. 27; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.

around the belief that the provision of aid to Japanese nationals could support the diplomatic objectives of the British state.

Matthew Heaslip and other historians argue that relations between the Japanese navy and the Royal Navy were strained when the earthquake struck. Heaslip suggests that the distrust that grew between the navies during and after the First World War resulted in an arms race, as the Japanese navy built forty-five warships between 1919 and 1923.[142] Antony Best reasons that this arms race led the Admiralty in Whitehall to conclude that the Japanese navy constituted a threat to the security of the British Empire.[143] Yoichi Hirama maintains that this assessment also reflected the view amongst the officers at the Admiralty that the activities that the Japanese navy had undertaken during the war illustrated that the Japanese navy could not be trusted.[144] Ian Gow contends that this suspicion meant that the possibility of a war with Japan was at the centre of the plans that the Admiralty formulated throughout the 1920s.[145]

The role that the Royal Navy played in response to the earthquake, though, challenges these assessments. The memorandum that Curzon wrote demonstrates that the Admiralty instructed Leveson to offer food and medicine to the Japanese public because the department supported friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.[146] The Admiralty was willing to trust the Japanese navy with the distribution of provisions as the department ordered Leveson to allow the Japanese navy to exercise complete control over the distribution of the provisions that he had obtained.[147] These factors imply that relations between the navies were less antagonistic and more nuanced than Best, Gow, Heaslip, and Hirama suggest.

Leveson spent most of his time in Shanghai on 6 September meeting with the heads of British shipping firms. He outlined in the report that he submitted to Murray at the end of the month that he asked the representatives if their companies could dispatch passenger ships to Kobe. Leveson had learned from the telegram that he had received from the crew of the *Despatch* that British and other European expatriates were taking refuge in Kobe. He expected that the ships would carry these expatriates to Hong Kong

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[142] Heaslip, *The China Station*, pp. 26-7.
[143] Antony Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: An Examination into Historical Mythmaking', *The Historical Journal*, 49/3 (2006), pp. 818-19.
[144] Yoichi Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the First World War', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 61.
[145] Ian Gow, 'The Royal Navy and Japan, 1921-41', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 114.
[146] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[147] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

or Shanghai.[148] It is plausible that he assumed that some expatriates would want to sail to Hong Kong in the expectation that the British colony would provide a safe refuge.

The size of the British enclave in Shanghai might explain why Leveson assumed that some of those who had taken shelter in Kobe would want to travel to Shanghai. Heaslip explains that most of the British nationals who lived in China during the 1920s resided in Shanghai. He estimates that over 5,300 British expatriates lived in the city in 1920. This figure meant that the British enclave was the largest European community in the city.[149] It is possible that Leveson anticipated that some of those who had taken refuge in Kobe would want to travel to Shanghai in the belief that they could stay with friends, relatives, or other fellow expatriates.

The meetings that Leveson held in Shanghai were part of a wider pattern of engagement between the state in inter-war Britain and third parties that shaped humanitarian relief work. The government, for example, worked with the Save the Children Fund in response to the Volga Famine by donating tinned beef and lime juice to the organisation in March 1922.[150] Tehila Sasson interprets this collaboration as an example of the 'mixed economy'. She defines this concept as the cooperation between companies, intergovernmental organisations, nongovernmental organisations, and states that became the foundation for the overseas provision of humanitarian relief from the early twentieth century.[151] Leveson did not explain in the report that he submitted to Murray whether any companies dispatched commercial passenger ships to Kobe as a result of these meetings. The meetings nonetheless show how the Royal Navy aimed to protect British expatriates by establishing a mixed economy of aid that entailed cooperation with private companies.

Leveson also proposed that the Admiralty should contact shipping firms in London. He advised the Admiralty on 6 September that the department should ask the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, a British firm that ran passenger services across the Asia-Pacific, to dispatch two passenger ships to Kobe. Leveson envisioned that the ships would carry British and other European expatriates who were taking refuge in Kobe to Hong Kong or Shanghai.[152] Although it is unclear if the Admiralty contacted the company, this proposal nevertheless reflects that Leveson continued to prioritise

[148] *Ibid*.
[149] Heaslip, *The China Station*, pp. 103-4.
[150] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire* (Oakland, 2022), p. 47.
[151] Tehila Sasson, 'From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), p. 533.
[152] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

expatriates despite the order that he had received from the Admiralty to procure food and medicine for the Japanese public.

This example suggests that the Admiralty in Whitehall and Leveson disagreed over the role that the China Squadron should play in response to the earthquake. The memorandum that Curzon wrote demonstrates that the Admiralty believed that the squadron should provide humanitarian relief to Japanese nationals as well as to British and other European expatriates.[153] In contrast, Leveson agreed with Robert Boulter that the squadron should prioritise expatriates. This contrast reflects that the Royal Navy was not a single, unified humanitarian actor as the Admiralty and Leveson contested who should receive humanitarian support from the British state.

The squadron worked with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company throughout the 1920s. The squadron asked the company to dispatch a passenger ship to the Chinese city of Guangzhou amidst civil unrest in July 1925. The ship that the company dispatched evacuated sixty children and women and carried these expatriates to Hong Kong.[154] It is plausible that Leveson and the squadron chose to work with this particular company when protecting British and other European nationals because the company was familiar with East Asia and owned ships across the region.

Leveson delegated the order to procure provisions to his crew. The crew of the *Hawkins* spent most of their time in Shanghai purchasing food and medicine. Leveson informed Murray that the crew purchased medicine, 2,148 jars of Bovril (a beef extract), 32,340 lbs of flour, 8,480 tins of milk, 205,000 lbs of rice, and 3,000 tins of soup.[155] Leveson did not explain why the crew purchased these particular provisions as opposed to other foodstuffs. In comparison, the crew of the *Vega*, a passenger ship that the American navy had requisitioned, offered 2,220,000 lbs of flour to the Japanese public, nearly seventy times more than the amount that the crew of the *Hawkins* offered.[156] This comparison demonstrates that the Royal Navy provided a comparatively small amount of aid to the Japanese public.

Leveson instructed Henry Grace, the commodore of the base that the China Squadron maintained in Hong Kong, to procure provisions as well. Leveson ordered Grace on 6 September to instruct the crew of the *HMS Ambrose* to purchase provisions in Hong Kong. The *Ambrose* would then sail to Yokohama and the crew would offer the provisions

[153] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[154] Heaslip, *The China Station*, p. 127.
[155] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[156] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; J. Charles Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently: Humanitarianism as Diplomacy following Japan's 1923 Earthquake', *Diplomatic History*, 43/4 (2019), p. 742.

to the Japanese navy. Leveson assumed that the Japanese navy would distribute the provisions amongst the Japanese public. Grace complied with this order and the crew of the *Ambrose* purchased blankets, flour, medicine, and vaccines. Leveson reported that the *Ambrose* left Hong Kong three days later on 9 September.[157]

The orders that Leveson issued to Grace lacked detail. The commander-in-chief did not specify which supplies the crew of the *Ambrose* should purchase. He did not underline the amount of provisions that the crew should obtain. This lack of guidance suggests that Leveson allowed Grace and the crew of the *Ambrose* to determine the content and volume of the aid that the ship carried to Yokohama. The Admiralty likewise allowed Leveson to determine the content and volume of the supplies that the *Hawkins* carried. These examples imply that onsite commanders, like Grace and Leveson, rather than the Admiralty in Whitehall were responsible for shaping the humanitarian aid that the Royal Navy provided overseas.

Doctors and nurses boarded the *Hawkins* in the evening on 6 September. Leveson described the doctors and nurses in the report that he submitted to Murray. Leveson reported that the group consisted of 'two civilian doctors and three nurses'. He explained that the group planned to offer their medical services to the Japanese public in Yokohama.[158]

The Japanese Red Cross had dispatched doctors and nurses to Britain almost a decade earlier. Two doctors, an interpreter, twenty-two nurses, and a secretary cared for wounded soldiers at a makeshift hospital in Netley, a village near Southampton, for a year during the First World War. Gordon Daniels and Hiroko Tomida argue that the Japanese government asked the Japanese Red Cross to dispatch this group to Britain in the belief that the professionalism of the group would enhance Japanese prestige on the world stage.[159] It is possible that the doctors and nurses who boarded the *Hawkins* planned to reciprocate the goodwill that the Japanese Red Cross had shown in Britain. This comparison demonstrates that Britain and Japan were both practitioners as well as recipients of humanitarian aid. This comparison also illustrates that the war and the earthquake led to a reciprocal exchange of medical relief between Britain and Japan during the early twentieth century.

Leveson and the *Hawkins* left Shanghai on 7 September and reached Yokohama three days later.[160] The crew transferred the food and medicine that they had purchased to the

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[157] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[158] *Ibid*.
[159] Gordon Daniels and Hiroko Tomida, 'Medical Ambassadors: Japanese Red Cross Nurses in Britain, 1915-16', *Social Innovation Research*, 4/1 (2009), pp. 102-3.
[160] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

Japanese navy as soon as the ship reached Yokohama on 10 September.[161] Leveson did not outline in the report that he submitted to Murray how the Japanese navy distributed these provisions amongst the Japanese public. The provisions nonetheless show that the Royal Navy offered at least some humanitarian aid to the Japanese public in response to the earthquake.

Asakichi Yasukouchi met the doctors and nurses who had travelled onboard the *Hawkins* as soon as the ship arrived in Yokohama. Boulter attended the meeting and described the meeting in a report that he wrote the following day. He reported that Yasukouchi informed the group that 'their lack of familiarity with the Japanese language … would render difficult the use of them to attend [to the] Japanese'. Yasukouchi advised that the group should leave Yokohama and sail to Kobe to care for British and other European expatriates. Boulter explained that the doctors and nurses accepted this advice and left Yokohama onboard the *André Lebon* on 11 September, the day after they had arrived in Yokohama.[162] This example shows that the Japanese public received only limited assistance from the Royal Navy in part because the Japanese government restricted the aid that the China Squadron provided due to concerns over linguistic barriers.

British merchants took refuge onboard the *Hawkins* on 11 September. Boulter described the merchants in the report that he submitted to the Foreign Office in December. He estimated that between twelve and twenty traders took shelter onboard the ship. He explained that the merchants had been staying onboard the *André Lebon* and were forced to find alternative accommodation when the passenger ship left Yokohama.[163] The crew of the *Hawkins* did not, however, offer accommodation to any Japanese merchants, underlining how the relief work that the navy undertook was politically and socially restricted to British and other European nationals.

The merchants who took refuge onboard the *Hawkins* criticised Leveson. Boulter underlined that the traders voiced 'considerable dissatisfaction' because they believed that Leveson could accommodate more merchants onboard. Boulter dismissed what he lambasted as 'the hostile criticism' of Leveson and sympathised with him. Boulter argued that Leveson could not offer additional accommodation due to 'how little vacant space there is on a modern cruiser'. Boulter also recognised that Leveson had allowed him to establish a temporary consulate onboard the ship and the acting consul did not want to appear ungrateful by criticising Leveson.[164] The views that the merchants expressed

[161] *Ibid*.
[162] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1.
[163] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 17-24.
[164] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 24.

nonetheless underline how the recipients of humanitarian support have responded to the assistance that they have received.

Leveson responded to this criticism on 13 September. Boulter outlined how Leveson responded in a report that Boulter wrote later that day. He reported that Leveson planned to appease the merchants by providing additional accommodation elsewhere. Leveson sent telegrams to Butterfield and Swire, Jardine, Matheson and Company, and to the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, three British investment firms in Hong Kong. He asked the companies to dispatch passenger ships to Yokohama in the hope that British traders would take refuge onboard the ships.[165] This plan further illustrates how the Royal Navy aimed to protect British expatriates and undertake relief work by establishing a mixed economy of aid that involved private companies.

Leveson did not explain in the report that he sent to Murray whether any of these companies dispatched ships to Yokohama. One part of his plan that remains clear, however, is that Leveson did not ask these firms if they could provide shelter for Japanese merchants. This factor reflects that most of the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook was solely for the benefit of British and other European expatriates. The criticism that Leveson received from the British merchants who stayed onboard the *Hawkins* helps to explain why he prioritised the interests of expatriates.

Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, the Japanese prime minister and foreign minister, sent a telegram to Sir Charles Palairet, the chargé d'affaires at what remained of the British Embassy in Tokyo, several hours after Leveson had contacted companies in Hong Kong. Yamamoto informed Palairet that the China Squadron should not approach Tokyo. The prime minister explained that there was 'a great congestion of Japanese boats' in Tokyo due to the relief work that the Japanese navy was undertaking. He reasoned that the congestion made it 'a matter of difficulty to guarantee safe navigation' for any foreign vessel that approached Tokyo. Yamamoto advised that the crew of any foreign ship that planned to dock at Tokyo should drop anchor at Yokohama instead. He asked Palairet, the most senior diplomat at the British Embassy, to 'bring the above to the notice of any British warships which may be coming to Tokyo'.[166] This request explains why most of the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook took place in Yokohama and further highlights how the Japanese government restricted this relief work.

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[165] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 13 September, 1923', 13 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 683.
[166] Gonnohyoe Yamamoto to Sir Charles Palairet, 'The Water Channel', 13 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 352.

The final British warship reached Japan on 21 September when the *Ambrose* arrived in Yokohama roughly three weeks after the earthquake had struck. Leveson informed Murray why the ship took almost a fortnight to sail from Hong Kong to Yokohama. Leveson contended that the ship 'was delayed considerably by bad weather' that forced the crew to drop anchor at the Chinese city of Xiamen. The ship was further delayed when the vessel refuelled at the Chinese island of Pingtan.[167] The crew transferred the blankets, flour, medicine, and vaccines that they had purchased in Hong Kong to the Japanese navy as soon as the *Ambrose* reached Yokohama. The Japanese navy distributed the provisions amongst the Japanese public.[168] These provisions further demonstrate that the Japanese public received at least some aid from the Royal Navy.

Sir Frederick Butler, the head of overseas trade at the Foreign Office, explained in a letter that he sent to Sir Norman Fisher on 17 June 1924 how much money the navy spent in response to the earthquake. Butler reported that the navy spent £11,363, one shilling, and six pence, the equivalent of over £590,000 today.[169] This sum represents nearly one third of the overall amount that the British government spent in response to the disaster.[170] Butler highlighted that the crew of the *Ambrose* spent £1,772, five shillings, and nine pence, or over £90,000 today, on blankets, accounting for roughly sixteen percent of the total amount that the navy spent.[171] He did not, though, outline how the China Squadron spent the rest of the money.

In summary, most of the humanitarian relief work that the crew of the *Hawkins* undertook was solely for the benefit of British and other European expatriates. Leveson met with representatives of several shipping firms in Shanghai to arrange transportation for British and other European nationals who were taking refuge in Kobe. He advised the Admiralty to ask shipping companies in London to provide transportation as well.[172] At least twelve British merchants took shelter onboard the *Hawkins*.[173] The ship carried two doctors and three nurses who provided medical assistance to British and other European

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[167] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[168] *Ibid*.
[169] Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[170] Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[171] Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[172] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[173] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 17-24.

expatriates in Kobe. Leveson asked three investment companies in Hong Kong to provide additional accommodation for British merchants in Yokohama.[174]

At the same time, the crew of the *Hawkins* provided only a limited amount of aid to the Japanese public. The doctors and nurses who travelled onboard the *Hawkins* did not provide any medical relief to the Japanese public on the advice of Yasukouchi.[175] The crew did not offer any shelter to Japanese merchants. The crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* nonetheless provided blankets, food, medicine, and vaccines that the Japanese navy distributed amongst the Japanese public.[176] These provisions, however, represent the only humanitarian assistance that the Japanese public received from the Royal Navy.

The crew of the *Hawkins* prioritised British and other European nationals due to the views of Leveson. He showed more interest in arranging accommodation and transportation for expatriates than he showed in the provision of aid to the Japanese public due to the pressure that he faced from the merchant community in Yokohama. In contrast, the Admiralty in Whitehall concurred with Curzon and Eliot that the navy should assist Japanese nationals as well as expatriates. This contrast exemplifies how different groups within the government contested the role that the state in inter-war Britain should play in the provision of humanitarian aid.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, most of the humanitarian relief that the Royal Navy provided in response to the earthquake was solely for the benefit of British and other European expatriates. The crew of the *HMS Despatch* provided clothes and toiletries to seventy British nationals, offered food to British diplomats, and rescued at least ten expatriates who were stranded.[177] The crew provided shelter to merchants, recovered property that belonged to British and other European expatriates, and identified and buried the bodies of fifty British nationals.[178] At the same time, the crew did not offer any humanitarian aid to the Japanese government or public, underlining how the relief work that the navy undertook was politically, racially, and socially restricted to British and other European nationals.

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[174] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[175] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1.
[176] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[177] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[178] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '8 September', 8 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 710; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 19-24.

The crew of the *HMS Hawkins* also prioritised expatriates over Japanese nationals. Although the crew offered shelter to at least twelve British merchants, the crew did not provide shelter to any Japanese merchants.[179] The ship carried two doctors and three nurses from Shanghai to Yokohama.[180] The doctors and nurses, though, left Yokohama and provided medical relief to British and other European nationals who had taken refuge in Kobe. The crews of the *HMS Ambrose* and *Hawkins* offered blankets, Bovril, flour, medicine, milk, rice, soup, and vaccines to the Japanese public in Yokohama.[181] These sundries, however, represent the only humanitarian support that the Japanese public received from the Royal Navy. The role that the navy played in response to the disaster helps to illustrate how most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided was solely for the benefit of the Imperial University of Tokyo or British expatriates.

The navy prioritised British expatriates over Japanese nationals due to the actions and views of Robert Boulter and Sir Arthur Leveson. Boulter asked Robert Hamilton if his crew could recover the contents of safes that belonged to British nationals as soon as the *Despatch* arrived in Yokohama.[182] At the same time, Boulter did not ask Hamilton if his crew could recover the contents of safes that belonged to Japanese or other Asians. Leveson ordered his crew to sail to Shanghai, rather than to Yokohama, when the *Hawkins* left Korea because he believed that the navy needed to restore communications between British expatriates in China and Yokohama as soon as possible.[183] He showed more interest throughout his time in Shanghai in arranging transportation for British and other European nationals who had taken refuge in Kobe than he showed in procuring food and medicine for the Japanese public. He showed more interest during his time in Yokohama in arranging accommodation for British merchants than he showed in the possibility of offering shelter to Japanese merchants.

Boulter and Leveson prioritised the interests of the British community due to the pressure that the pair faced from the merchant community in Yokohama. Boulter asked Hamilton if British marines could land as quickly as possible because the acting consul was aware that prisoners who had escaped from nearby jails had ransacked British houses on "the Bluff". These attacks and fears of further looting led the merchants who were sheltering onboard the *Despatch* to establish a committee that lobbied British marines to recover safes that belonged to British and other European nationals as

[179] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[180] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[181] *Ibid*.
[182] Boulter, '5 September', 5 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 726.
[183] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

quickly as possible.[184] The criticism that Leveson received from the merchants who took shelter onboard the *Hawkins* led the commander-in-chief to consider additional accommodation elsewhere. These examples show how British merchants shaped the relief work that the navy undertook in Japan as well as the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of humanitarian aid.

It was not, however, a foregone conclusion that the navy would prioritise expatriates. Sir Charles Eliot argued that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the British government did not offer humanitarian relief to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates.[185] The Admiralty and Lord Curzon agreed that the government should provide relief to Japanese nationals as well as to expatriates to convince the Japanese government that friendly diplomatic relations would continue despite the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.[186] The relief work that the navy undertook in Japan suggests that onsite figures, like Boulter and Leveson, played a larger role than government departments in Whitehall played in shaping the humanitarian aid that the British state provided overseas.

The role that the Royal Navy played in reaction to the earthquake highlights how humanitarian aid was a part of imperial policing. Matthew Heaslip argues that the protection of British and other European nationals was central to imperial policing.[187] The crew of the *Despatch* supported expatriates by offering shelter to merchants in Yokohama, distributing clothes and toiletries amongst British nationals, and by rescuing Europeans who were stranded in Chigasaki, Ninomiya, and Oiso.[188] The crew of the *Hawkins* protected expatriates by providing accommodation to merchants in Yokohama and by carrying doctors and nurses who offered medical relief to expatriates in Kobe.[189] These examples reflect that the navy protected British and other European nationals by undertaking humanitarian relief work. The emphasis on the safety of British and other European civilians that underpinned imperial policing helps to further explain why the China Squadron prioritised expatriates when undertaking relief work in Japan.

The Japanese government and navy also shaped this relief work. Makoto Saito advised Leveson how the China Squadron should provide assistance in response to the

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[184] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 712.
[185] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[186] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[187] Heaslip, *The China Station*, pp. 126-32.
[188] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[189] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 11.

earthquake. British marines only landed in Yokohama after Asakichi Yasukouchi had given them permission. The doctors and nurses who travelled onboard the *Hawkins* left Yokohama because Yasukouchi had advised them to sail to Kobe.[190] The crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* did not undertake any relief work in Tokyo on the advice of Gonnohyoe Yamamoto.[191] The crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* allowed the Japanese navy to distribute the food and medicine that the Royal Navy had purchased in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The Japanese government restricted this relief work due to linguistic barriers and shipping congestion. Yasukouchi advised the doctors and nurses who had travelled onboard the *Hawkins* to offer their services to British and other European expatriates, rather than to the Japanese public, because the doctors and nurses were unfamiliar with the Japanese language.[192] Yamamoto prevented the crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* from undertaking relief work in Tokyo because he was worried about congestion in Tokyo Bay.[193] These examples show that the Royal Navy prioritised expatriates in part due to the restrictions that the Japanese government imposed.

The Japanese government and navy also shaped the relief work that the American navy undertook in response to the earthquake. The American navy requisitioned forty-nine commercial passenger ships and dispatched these ships along with seven destroyers to Tokyo and Yokohama.[194] These ships carried over 1,700 tonnes of flour, over 1,300 barrels of lime and miso, and over 11,700 boxes of butter, cookies, crackers, herring, macaroni, sardines, tinned beef, vegetables, and wine.[195] The Japanese navy distributed these supplies amongst the Japanese public. Julia Irwin contends that the American navy allowed the Japanese navy to exercise complete control over the distribution of these provisions in the hope that this gesture would convey equality, respect, and trust between Japan and the United States.[196] It is plausible that the China Squadron allowed the Japanese navy to oversee the distribution of the supplies that the crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* purchased in Hong Kong and Shanghai for similar reasons. Although the American navy and the Royal navy provided different amounts of aid, this

[190] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1.
[191] Yamamoto to Palairet, 'The Water Channel', 13 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 352.
[192] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1.
[193] Yamamoto to Palairet, 'The Water Channel', 13 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 352.
[194] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', pp. 65-7.
[195] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 742; Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', pp. 65-7.
[196] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 122.

comparison illustrates that the two navies nevertheless approached the distribution of aid amongst Japanese nationals in a similar way.

Phillips O'Brien and other historians maintain that relations between the Royal Navy and the Japanese navy were unfriendly when the earthquake struck. O'Brien contends that the Admiralty warned throughout and after the First World War that the expansion of the Japanese navy threatened British naval supremacy.[197] Ian Nish argues that ministers feared that the Japanese navy would attack British colonies and Dominions.[198] Erik Goldstein reasons that the Cabinet was likewise worried that the expansion of the Japanese navy would exacerbate the arms race between Britain, Japan, and the United States that had started during the war.[199]

The cooperation that took place between the Royal Navy and the Japanese navy in response to the earthquake, though, suggests that relations between the navies were at least somewhat cooperative. The crews of the *Ambrose* and *Hawkins* provided blankets, clothes, food, medicine, and vaccines to the Japanese navy.[200] The China Squadron allowed the Japanese navy to exercise complete control over the distribution of these provisions. The memorandum that Curzon wrote two months after the earthquake had struck underlines that the Admiralty aimed to encourage cordial diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.[201] These factors imply that relations between the navies were less hostile and more nuanced than Goldstein, Nish, and O'Brien suggest.

The memorandum demonstrates that the Admiralty saw humanitarian aid as a diplomatic tool. Curzon explained that the Admiralty believed that the provision of food and medicine to the Japanese public would convey what the department saw as the sympathy of the British government. The Admiralty reasoned that this gesture would show the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations. The Admiralty hoped that the provision of aid would prevent the Japanese government and public from surmising that their former British ally had shown less sympathy than the United States.[202] This memorandum shows that the

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[197] Phillips O'Brien, 'Britain and the End of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Phillips O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-22* (London, 2004), pp. 281-2.
[198] Ian Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance, 1920-30', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 255-6.
[199] Erik Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Washington Conference', in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability, and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Ilford, 1994), pp. 14-16.
[200] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[201] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[202] *Ibid*.

Admiralty envisioned that aid should play a role in British foreign policy and had formulated what Frank Kaser and Irwin would describe as a 'humanitarian policy'.[203]

The humanitarian relief work that the navy undertook in Japan supported the diplomatic and imperial objectives of the British state. The provision of clothes, medical relief, shelter, and toiletries in Yokohama supported the imperial objectives of the state by protecting British and other European nationals in line with the emphasis on the safety of expatriates that underpinned imperial policing. At the same time, the China Squadron provided food and medicine to the Japanese public because the Admiralty anticipated that these provisions would support the diplomatic objectives of the state by conveying sympathy in response to the earthquake. The actions of Boulter and Leveson, though, suggest that the welfare of expatriates played a more prominent role than diplomatic aspirations played in the humanitarianism of onsite figures.

Leveson contacted various companies throughout the weeks that followed the earthquake. He asked shipping firms in Shanghai to provide transportation for the expatriates who had taken shelter in Kobe. He proposed that the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company should dispatch passenger ships to Kobe.[204] Leveson asked Butterfield and Swire, Jardine, Matheson and Company, and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation to provide accommodation for the British merchants who stayed in Yokohama.[205] These examples reflect that the navy aimed to protect British and other European nationals by establishing what Tehila Sasson would call a 'mixed economy' of aid that involved cooperation between private companies and the British state.[206] The following chapter analyses how the Foreign Office likewise established a mixed economy of aid by working with private aid partnerships and intergovernmental organisations throughout the autumn that followed the disaster.

[203] Kaser, 'A Civilised Nation', p. 27; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[204] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[205] Boulter, '13 September', 13 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 683.
[206] Sasson, 'The Russian Famine', p. 533.

## Chapter Three: The British Foreign Office and the Great Kanto Earthquake

### Introduction

Sir Victor Wellesley, the head of East Asian policy at the British Foreign Office, sent a letter to Sir Norman Fisher, the permanent secretary to the Treasury, on 9 October 1923. Wellesley underlined that Lord Curzon, the foreign secretary, believed 'that we should seize the opportunity of showing that we still regard the Japanese as our friends' by providing humanitarian assistance to the Japanese government. Wellesley estimated that the American government and public had spent $5,000,000 on the provision of humanitarian aid in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake, the equivalent of roughly £1,100,000 or over £57,300,000 today. He contended that Curzon feared that 'the apparent discrepancy between American expressions of sympathy and our own' would damage relations between the British and Japanese governments unless the Foreign Office offered humanitarian relief.[1]

The Foreign Office was engrossed by diplomatic developments in Europe when the earthquake struck. Peter Yearwood argues that the Foreign Office was preoccupied throughout September with a territorial dispute that was unfolding between the Greek and Italian governments over Corfu. The Foreign Office was also preoccupied with an economic and territorial dispute that was escalating between the Belgian, French, and German governments over the Ruhr.[2] These diplomatic crises threatened the fragile peace that had been established in Europe less than five years earlier at the end of the First World War. The severity of these crises meant that Curzon did not consider how the Foreign Office should respond to the earthquake until late September, almost a month after the disaster had unfolded.[3]

The Foreign Office nonetheless reacted to the earthquake in three ways. Firstly, the department aimed to convey sympathy towards the Japanese government by making various diplomatic gestures throughout September and early October. Secondly, the Foreign Office provided financial relief to the Japanese government and public by donating money to the Japanese government and to public appeals. Finally, Curzon questioned how the British government could provide humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government throughout October and November.

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[1] Sir Victor Wellesley to Sir Norman Fisher, 'A Practical Expression of Sympathy', 9 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[2] Peter Yearwood, *Guarantee of Peace: The League of Nations in British Policy, 1914-25* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 243, 277.
[3] Lord Stamfordham to Lord Curzon, 'Japanese Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.

This chapter investigates the role that the Foreign Office played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake throughout the autumn that followed the disaster. In particular, this chapter questions who within the department supported the provision of humanitarian aid to the Japanese government as well as the factors that shaped their views. This chapter describes what the Foreign Office provided in response to the earthquake, such as cash donations. This chapter highlights how much money the department spent in reaction to the disaster.

This chapter argues that the Foreign Office offered limited diplomatic and financial support and did not provide any humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government and public due to the actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury. The Cabinet restricted the ways in which the Foreign Office could convey sympathy by preventing Curzon from convening a memorial service in memory of the Japanese, British, and other foreign nationals who had died during the earthquake.[4] The Foreign Office only provided limited financial relief because the Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from offering a loan to the Japanese government.[5] The Foreign Office did not provide any blankets, clothes, food, medicine, or other supplies due to the decisions of the Cabinet and the opposition of the Treasury. The actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury meant that the Foreign Office offered little more than a few diplomatic gestures and a few donations to fundraising appeals. Most of the aid that the government provided was for the benefit of expatriates and the Imperial University of Tokyo, the oldest university in Japan, because the Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from offering provisions to the Japanese government.

This argument demonstrates that the state in inter-war Britain was not a single, unified humanitarian actor. This chapter illustrates that the Foreign Office envisioned that the government should play a proactive role in the provision of aid in the belief that relief could promote friendly diplomatic relations with other countries. In contrast, the Treasury restricted the role that the state played because the department believed that the government could not afford to spend money in response to the earthquake. This conflict between the diplomatic aspirations of the Foreign Office and the economic concerns of the Treasury suggests that humanitarian aid played a contested role in British foreign policy. This chapter highlights that the British state was a contested space

[4] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan – Proposed Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Proposed Memorial Service for the Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/19, p. 255.
[5] Sir Otto Niemeyer to Sir Neville Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

where government departments debated whether the British government should offer humanitarian relief to the governments and citizens of other countries. The first and final chapters analyse these contributions to the literature in further detail.

The rest of this chapter is divided into four parts. The next part outlines the diplomatic gestures that the Foreign Office made towards the Japanese government. The third part examines how the department offered financial relief to the Japanese government and public. The penultimate part analyses how Curzon planned to provide humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government. The chapter concludes by explaining the role that the Foreign Office played in response to the earthquake. The structure and the level of detail that underpin this chapter help to underline chronologically how diplomats and ministers in Whitehall reacted to the disaster.

**Diplomatic Gestures**

The earthquake severed communications in and around Tokyo and Yokohama. Masashi Kuratani describes how the earthquake destroyed telegraph and telephone lines and disrupted rail services across these cities.[6] The loss of rail, telegram, and telephone services meant that Tokyo and Yokohama were isolated from each other, the rest of Japan, and from the rest of the world until telegram services started to resume roughly a week later. J. Charles Schencking contends that the loss of communications meant that people throughout the rest of Japan and across the wider world could not verify what was happening in Tokyo or Yokohama throughout the days that followed the disaster.[7]

News of the earthquake nonetheless reached Britain in a roundabout way. The Funabashi Transmitting Station, a radio station that the Japanese navy maintained near Tokyo, and the Iwaki Radio Telegraph Station, a commercial radio station to the north of the Kanto Plain, transmitted distress signals when the earthquake struck.[8] Radio stations in China, the United States, and across the rest of Japan intercepted these signals. Journalists listened to these signals and published reports in American, Chinese, and Japanese newspapers about what they thought had unfolded in Tokyo and Yokohama. The

[6] Masashi Kuratani, 'Disaster Relief Operations by the Imperial Japanese Navy and the US Navy in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake: Focusing on the Activities of the Onsite Commanders of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the US Navy', *Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force Staff College Review*, 1/2 (2012), p. 6.
[7] J. Charles Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923', 2013, <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>, accessed date: 30 January 2020.
[8] Kuratani, 'The 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 7; Natsuko Chubachi, Atsushi Kawauchi, Soraya Ono, Yuichi Ono, and Ken Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake and U.S.-Japan Relations: Japanese Students' Thank-You Letters Sent to the United States and their Implications for International Disaster Risk Reduction Cooperation', *Journal of Disaster Research*, 20/1 (2025), p. 64.

*Associated Press* and *Reuters* forwarded these reports to newspaper companies in Britain.[9]

News of the disaster reached Britain on 2 September 1923, the day after the earthquake had struck. *The Observer* became the first newspaper in Britain to publish an article about the earthquake when the newspaper reported that a 'great earthquake' had set Tokyo and Yokohama ablaze.[10] The disaster became a major news story when tabloids reported on the earthquake from 3 September. The front page of *The Daily Express* highlighted that Tokyo and Yokohama 'have been laid in ruins by one of the most appalling earthquake disasters in the history of the world'.[11] *The Daily Mail* estimated that the earthquake had caused 100,000 fatalities and had displaced 200,000 people.[12] In contrast, *The Daily Mirror* argued that the earthquake had killed 11,000 people across an area that covered 400km between Osaka and Tokyo.[13]

The staff at the Foreign Office wrote about the earthquake as news continued to reach Britain. Robert Vansittart, the private secretary to Lord Curzon, sent a telegram about the earthquake to Lord Stamfordham, the private secretary to the king, on 3 September. Vansittart lamented that he and his colleagues had received 'no news … beyond what has appeared in [the] press'.[14] This telegram illustrates that newspapers were the only source in Britain that offered any information about the earthquake throughout the days that followed the disaster. The staff at the Foreign Office only knew that an earthquake had struck Tokyo and Yokohama due to the reports that featured in the press. This telegram suggests that everything that Vansittart and his colleagues knew or thought that they knew about the earthquake came from newspapers.

The staff at the Foreign Office hoped that they could obtain further information by speaking with Japanese diplomats at the Japanese Embassy in London. Alexander Leeper, the assistant private secretary to Curzon, visited the Embassy during the morning on 3 September. He described his visit in a report that he handed to Sir William Tyrrell, the deputy permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, later that afternoon. Leeper recalled that he had planned to ask Gonsuke Hayashi, the Japanese ambassador,

[9] 'Great Earthquake in Japan', *The Observer*, 2 September 1923, p. 11; 'Japan's Largest Cities Laid Waste by Great Earthquake', *The Daily Mirror*, 3 September 1923, p. 2.
[10] 'Great Earthquake', *The Observer*, 2 September 1923, p. 11.
[11] 'Terrible Japanese Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Express*, 3 September 1923, p. 1.
[12] 'Tokyo and Yokohama in Ruins', *The Daily Mail*, 3 September 1923, p. 9.
[13] 'Great Earthquake', *The Daily Mirror*, 3 September 1923, p. 2.
[14] Robert Vansittart to Lord Stamfordham, 'Message of Sympathy to Japan', 3 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 456.

if 'the Embassy had any further news from Tokyo'.[15] Harumi Goto-Shibata argues that Hayashi had supported the continuation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and 'never spoke ill of Japan's [former] ally'. Goto-Shibata explains that Hayashi was popular amongst British diplomats because they saw him as a reliable source for information about Japan and the Japanese government.[16] The ambassador, though, was busy eating lunch when Leeper visited the Embassy.[17]

Leeper spoke with a diplomat called 'Mr. Miyazaki' instead. Leeper did not mention Miyazaki's forename or his position at the Embassy in the report that he handed to Tyrrell. Miyazaki informed Leeper that the Embassy could not provide any information about the earthquake because the earthquake had severed communications between Tokyo, Yokohama, and the Embassy.[18] The meeting that took place between the two diplomats demonstrates that the staff at the Embassy and the staff at the Foreign Office were in a similar position.

Leeper concluded his visit by informing Miyazaki and the rest of the staff at the Embassy that the British government offered sympathy. Leeper explained to Tyrrell that he had 'express[ed] the sympathy which His Majesty's Government feels at the disaster'.[19] Leeper did not underline why he conveyed this sympathy or outline how Miyazaki and the other Japanese diplomats responded. This display of sympathy nevertheless constitutes the first diplomatic gesture that the staff at the Foreign Office made in response to the earthquake.

Sir Charles Eliot, the British ambassador to Japan, offered sympathy as well. He conveyed what he described as his 'personal sympathy' to Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, the Japanese prime minister and foreign minister, in a telegram that Eliot sent on 12 September, several days after telegram services in Tokyo had started to resume. Eliot was on leave in Britain when the earthquake struck and he was returning to Tokyo via Cairo when he sent this telegram. He informed Yamamoto that 'the energy and patriotism of the Japanese nation will enable Japan to successfully overcome' the

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[15] Alexander Leeper to Sir William Tyrrell, 'The Japanese Embassy', 3 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 455.
[16] Harumi Goto-Shibata, 'Hayashi Gonsuke: Leading the Way to the Washington Conference', in Ian Nish (ed.), *Japanese Envoys in Britain, 1862-1964: A Century of Diplomatic Exchange* (Folkestone, 2007), pp. 140-1.
[17] Leeper to Tyrrell, 'The Japanese Embassy', 3 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 455.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*.

disaster.[20] Shigeru Murashima argues that Eliot had supported the continuation of the Alliance and promoted friendly diplomatic ties between the countries on the grounds that the British government needed to deter the Japanese government from allying with other European governments.[21] Yamamoto had been in office for less than two weeks when he received this telegram as he was supposed to enter office on the day that the earthquake struck.[22] These factors suggest that it is possible that Eliot showed sympathy in the hope that this gesture would encourage friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and the new Japanese government.

Eliot sent a letter to Tyrrell the following day on 13 September. Eliot recalled that he had read various articles in Britain about the humanitarian aid that the United States navy was distributing in Japan. He questioned if the British government was providing relief as well.[23] This letter suggests that Eliot was unaware that the Royal Navy had provided food and medicine to the Japanese public in Yokohama three days earlier.[24] He argued that the British government should convey sympathy towards the Japanese government by offering humanitarian aid on the grounds that 'the Japanese are a temperamental race and remember kindness shown to them'. He warned Tyrrell that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the Japanese government surmised that 'we really are doing nothing' in response to the earthquake.[25] This letter implies that Eliot offered sympathy to Yamamoto in the belief that the post-Alliance relationship would be harmed if the Japanese government concluded that the British government had not shown any sympathy.

Curzon agreed with Eliot that the British government should convey sympathy towards the Japanese government. Curzon shared how he planned to respond to the earthquake with Stamfordham. Stamfordham summarised this plan in a telegram that he sent to

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[20] Sir Charles Eliot to Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, 'Personal Sympathy', 12 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 353.
[21] Shigeru Murashima, 'The Opening of the Twentieth Century and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1895-1923', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 189.
[22] J. Charles Schencking, '1923 Tokyo as a Devastated War and Occupation Zone: The Catastrophe One Confronted in Post-Earthquake Japan', *Japanese Studies*, 29/1 (2009), p. 116.
[23] Sir Charles Eliot to Sir William Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', 13 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[24] Sir Arthur Leveson to Sir Oswyn Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Admiralty, the National Archives in London, ADM 1/8668/176.
[25] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

Curzon on 22 September, three weeks after the earthquake had struck.[26] Curzon had proposed that the Foreign Office should hold a memorial service at St. Paul's Cathedral on 12 October in memory of the Japanese, British, and other foreign nationals who had died as a result of the earthquake.[27] He had suggested that Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister; Sir Neville Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer, and every other member of the Cabinet should attend. Stamfordham recalled that Curzon had described this diplomatic gesture as 'the best means' of conveying sympathy.[28]

Curzon had shown an interest in Japan throughout his career. He visited the country twice between 1887 and 1894 and he wrote numerous articles and books about the Japanese economy, government, media, and military. Ian Nish contends that successive British governments saw Curzon as one of Britain's most prominent 'experts' on Japan throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Curzon had supported the continuation of the Alliance after the end of the First World War on the grounds that the Alliance helped to maintain peace in the Pacific.[29] Erik Goldstein argues that the foreign secretary believed that the Alliance allowed the British government to restrain Japanese ambitions in China as well as Japanese shipbuilding.[30] Zoltan Buzas reasons that Curzon hoped that the continuation of the Alliance would prevent a war between Japan and the United States.[31]

Japan had fought in the war as an ally of Britain. Over 300 Japanese marines and two cruisers helped the Royal Navy to suppress a mutiny in the British colony of Singapore in February 1915. The Japanese navy dispatched twelve destroyers and a cruiser to Malta between April 1917 and November 1918 to protect the British colony as well as allied ships.[32] Mark Connelly suggests that most of the memorial services that took place in inter-war Britain were held in memory of the allied, British, colonial, and Dominion

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[26] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[27] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460; Hankey, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, CAB 23/46/19, p. 255.
[28] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[29] Ian Nish, 'Lord Curzon', in Antony Best and Hugh Cortazzi (eds), *British Foreign Secretaries and Japan, 1850-1990: Aspects of the Evolution of British Foreign Policy* (Folkestone, 2018), pp. 133-4, 138, 140-1.
[30] Erik Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Washington Conference', in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-2: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability, and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Ilford, 1994), p. 7.
[31] Zoltan Buzas, 'The Colour of Threat: Race, Threat Perception, and the Demise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *Security Studies*, 22/4 (2013), p. 594.
[32] Yoichi Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the First World War', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 57-60.

troops who had died during the war.[33] It is possible that Curzon planned to draw attention to the wartime connections with Japan by honouring those who had died during the earthquake with a memorial service in the same way that the British public honoured fallen soldiers. Yoichi Hirama contends that the British government, media, and public 'quickly forgot' about the role that the Japanese military had played in the war as soon as the conflict ended.[34] It is plausible, though, that Curzon anticipated that a memorial represented the best way to express sympathy in response to the earthquake because he believed that this gesture would show that his government had not forgotten these wartime connections.

Memorial services were commonplace in inter-war Britain. Yvonne Inall and Jenny Macleod estimate that nearly 1,000,000 British, colonial, and Dominion soldiers died during the First World War.[35] Adrian Gregory explains that local communities across Britain built memorials throughout the years that followed the conflict and held services at these memorials every Armistice Day in memory of the soldiers who had died.[36] The government convened similar memorial services at the Cenotaph in Whitehall and at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey from November 1920. It is possible that Curzon believed that a memorial service would convey sympathy by treating those who had died during the earthquake with the same level of respect as those who had died during the war.

Ministers debated the possibility of holding a memorial service when the Cabinet convened on 26 September. Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet secretary, wrote minutes during the meeting. The minutes show that Hankey, Baldwin, Chamberlain, Curzon, and thirteen other ministers attended. The agenda demonstrates that Curzon started the meeting by outlining how the Foreign Office had responded to the territorial dispute over Corfu that had unfolded between the Greek and Italian governments. He then explained how the German government was paying war reparations to the Belgian, British, and French governments.[37] The minutes illustrate that the earthquake and the memorial service were not high on the agenda because Curzon was preoccupied with diplomatic crises in Europe. It is also likely that he did not see the memorial or the earthquake as a

[33] Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory, and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916-39* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 165-72.
[34] Hirama, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Chapman, Gow, and Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume III*, p. 67.
[35] Yvonne Inall and Jenny Macleod, 'A Century of Armistice Day: Memorialisation in the Wake of the First World War', *Mortality*, 25/1 (2020), p. 51.
[36] Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day, 1919-46* (Oxford, 1994), p. 103.
[37] Hankey, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, CAB 23/46/19, pp. 248-55.

priority because almost a month had passed since the earthquake had struck by the time that he discussed the disaster with the Cabinet.

Curzon broached the subject of the memorial service towards the middle of the meeting. The Cabinet rejected his proposal and concluded that the memorial service would not take place.[38] John Naylor contends that the minutes that Hankey wrote whenever the Cabinet met offer a general summary of the decisions that ministers reached rather than a verbatim transcript of who said what during each meeting.[39] This factor means that Hankey did not specify who within the Cabinet opposed the memorial service or who supported the proposal. The dismissal of the memorial service nevertheless shows that the Cabinet restricted the ways in which the Foreign Office could convey sympathy to the Japanese government.

Curzon sent a telegram to Stamfordham several hours after the Cabinet had rejected the memorial service. Curzon underlined that his fellow ministers would not allow him to convene a memorial service on 12 October because they were worried that the service would clash with other events. In particular, his colleagues outlined that the service would clash with the annual opening of the courts. Ministers also highlighted that they were planning to meet with Stanley Bruce, the Australian prime minister; William Cosgrave, the Irish prime minister, and William King, the Canadian prime minister, on the day of the memorial. Ministers were likewise preparing to meet with William Massey, the prime minister of New Zealand; Jan Smuts, the prime minister of South Africa, and William Warren, the prime minister of Newfoundland.[40] This telegram suggests that the Cabinet was not necessarily opposed to the suggestion that the Foreign Office should hold a memorial service. The Cabinet was opposed, though, to the date that Curzon had chosen for the service.

Curzon explained why his colleagues would not allow him to reschedule the memorial to a later date. He informed Stamfordham that his fellow ministers 'felt that at the distance of time at which the ceremony would take place its affect might be somewhat discounted'.[41] This telegram shows that the Cabinet did not dispute what Curzon saw as

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[38] Hankey, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, CAB 23/46/19, p. 255.
[39] John Naylor, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Hankey, Maurice Pascal Alers, First Baron Hankey', 2008, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33683?rskey=FFfIMu&result=2>, accessed date: 3 August 2023.
[40] Lord Curzon to Lord Stamfordham, 'Question of Proposed Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[41] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.

the need to offer sympathy to the Japanese government. The Cabinet instead disputed his argument that a memorial service constituted the best way of conveying this sympathy as the service would have taken place over a month after the earthquake had struck. The Cabinet prevented Curzon from rescheduling the memorial to a later date on the grounds that too much time had passed since the earthquake had struck for the service to convey sympathy in an effective way.

The dismissal of the memorial service explains why the plans for the memorial were left unfinished. Curzon did not outline why he planned to convene the service in a Christian site of worship when Japan is not a Christian country. He did not explain why he planned to hold the memorial on 12 October. He did not clarify whether the service would have been open to the wider public. He did not specify whether he would have invited Hayashi and other Japanese diplomats to the event. It is likely that Curzon never discussed the memorial service with the clergy at St. Paul's Cathedral as the Cathedral Archives, the archive that the cathedral maintains, does not hold any sources that contain references to the proposed memorial.

The Cabinet was preparing for the tenth Imperial Conference when ministers debated the possibility of holding a memorial service. The Imperial Conferences were a series of international summits that the British and Canadian governments hosted between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ministers from Australia, Britain, Canada, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, New Zealand, and South Africa attended the conferences to discuss the defence and foreign policy of the British Empire. The British government hosted the tenth Imperial Conference in Whitehall between 1 October and 8 November. Baldwin, Chamberlain, Curzon, and five other ministers represented the British government at the conference.[42] Bruce, Cosgrave, King, Massey, Smuts, and Warren attended too. It is plausible that Curzon could not reschedule the memorial service to an earlier date because the service would have coincided with the opening of the conference.

Baldwin chaired the conference. He opened the summit on 1 October, a month after the earthquake had struck, by delivering a speech to the other attendees. *The Japan Times and Mail*, an English-language newspaper in Japan, published a transcript of the speech three days later. The newspaper reported that Baldwin started his speech by offering his 'profound sympathy' to the Japanese government. He then underlined what the newspaper described as his 'admiration for the indomitable energy manifested by Japan at the unprecedented calamity'.[43] This speech demonstrates that Curzon was not the

[42] Hankey, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, CAB 23/46/19, p. 255.
[43] 'British Chief Admires Spirit of Japanese', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.

only member of the Cabinet who believed that the British government should convey sympathy in response to the earthquake.

Baldwin spoke about the diplomatic relationship between Britain and Japan. He acknowledged that the Alliance had ended only a few weeks before the earthquake had struck. He contended that the end of the Alliance had resulted in 'more cordial relations' between the two governments.[44] He did not explain how the end of the Alliance had resulted in friendlier diplomatic relations. His speech nonetheless suggests that Baldwin expressed sympathy in the belief that this diplomatic gesture would reflect that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan. His speech marks the first time that the prime minister commented publicly on the post-Alliance relationship. His speech also represents the first time that he spoke publicly about diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan after he had entered office nearly five months earlier.

The rest of the attendees at the conference unanimously passed a resolution as soon as Baldwin had delivered his speech. *The Japan Times and Mail* published a copy of the resolution two days later. The resolution explained that 'the premiers and delegates of Great Britain [and] the Dominions … express their profound sympathy with Japan'. The attendees outlined their admiration for what they saw as 'the patriotic fervour and indominable energy manifested by the Japanese nation'.[45] The resolution illustrates that the rest of the attendees endorsed the speech that Baldwin had delivered. The resolution likewise shows that the British government was not alone in offering sympathy as diplomatic representatives from the Dominions made similar diplomatic gestures.

The *Rikken Seiyukai*, the largest party in the Japanese Diet, passed a resolution in response to the speech that Baldwin had delivered a day later on 2 October. *The Japan Times and Mail* printed a copy of the resolution the following day. The resolution argued that the party was 'much impressed with the profound sympathy [that Baldwin had] shown to the Japanese people'. Chuzo Mitsuchi, a member of the party and a former Japanese Cabinet secretary, informed the newspaper that his party 'felt a great debt of gratitude' for the sympathy that Baldwin had displayed.[46]

Yamamoto sent a telegram to Baldwin roughly a week later on 8 October. Yamamoto thanked Baldwin for the 'touching message of sympathy' that he had delivered at the conference. Yamamoto contended that the speech had 'deeply moved the Japanese nation in their great distress'. He concluded that the speech had demonstrated that

[44] 'British Chief', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.
[45] 'Empire Meet Sympathetic Toward Japan', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 3 October 1923, p. 1.
[46] 'Empire Meet', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 3 October 1923, p. 1.

Britain was 'the old and never-failing ally of Japan'.[47] This particular passage suggests that Yamamoto offered gratitude to Baldwin because the Japanese premier concurred with his British counterpart that the end of the Alliance should not constitute the end of cordial diplomatic relations between their countries.

Buzas and other historians argue that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan became strained when the Alliance ended. Buzas reasons that the end of the Alliance resulted in alienation between the governments.[48] Matthew Heaslip concurs that relations became less cooperative.[49] Antony Best explains that the Admiralty in Whitehall and members of Parliament criticised the Japanese government and military throughout the 1920s.[50]

The earthquake, though, shows that British diplomats and Japanese politicians continued to pursue close diplomatic relations between their countries after the Alliance had ended. Eliot conveyed sympathy in the telegram that he sent to Yamamoto on the grounds that relations between the governments would be damaged if the British government did not show any sympathy in response to the earthquake.[51] Baldwin offered sympathy in the speech that he delivered at the Imperial Conference in the hope that this gesture would demonstrate that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations.[52] Mitsuchi, Yamamoto, and the *Rikken Seiyukai* reciprocated by showing their gratitude towards Baldwin because they agreed with him that cordial relations between their governments should continue despite the end of the Alliance.[53] These examples suggest that the post-Alliance relationship was friendlier than Best, Buzas, and Heaslip contend.

In summary, the Foreign Office made several diplomatic gestures towards the Japanese government in response to the earthquake. Leeper offered sympathy to the diplomats at the Japanese Embassy in London only a day after news of the disaster had reached Britain.[54] Eliot showed sympathy to Yamamoto in the telegram that the ambassador sent

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[47] Gonnohyoe Yamamoto to Stanley Baldwin, 'My Sincere Thanks', 8 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 547.
[48] Buzas, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance', pp. 600-1.
[49] Matthew Heaslip, *Gunboats, Empire, and the China Station: The Royal Navy in 1920s East Asia* (London, 2021), pp. 112-13.
[50] Antony Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: An Examination into Historical Mythmaking', *The Historical Journal*, 49/3 (2006), pp. 818-19.
[51] Eliot to Yamamoto, 'Personal Sympathy', 12 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 353; Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[52] 'British Chief', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.
[53] 'Empire Meet', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 3 October 1923, p. 1; Yamamoto to Baldwin, 'Sincere Thanks', 8 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 547.
[54] Leeper to Tyrrell, 'The Japanese Embassy', 3 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 455.

towards the middle of September.[55] Baldwin likewise expressed sympathy during the speech that he delivered at the tenth Imperial Conference in early October.[56]

The Cabinet, though, restricted the ways in which the Foreign Office could show sympathy. Curzon proposed in late September that the Foreign Office should convene a memorial service in memory of the Japanese, British, and other foreign nationals who had died as a result of the earthquake. He reasoned that this diplomatic gesture constituted the best way of conveying sympathy.[57] The Cabinet, however, dismissed his proposal because ministers were worried that the date that Curzon had chosen for the service would clash with other events. Ministers also contended that too much time had passed since the earthquake had struck for the memorial service to be an effective way of showing sympathy.[58] The actions and views of the Cabinet meant that the Foreign Office could offer little more than a few diplomatic gestures and a few donations to fundraising appeals in response to the earthquake.

**Financial Relief**

The Mansion House Fund for Japan was the largest public appeal that was established in Britain in response to the earthquake. Sir Edward Moore, the lord mayor of London, launched the appeal at Mansion House, his official residence in London, on 4 September 1923, two days after news of the earthquake had reached Britain.[59] *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Times* endorsed and reported on this national appeal throughout the autumn.[60] The appeal ran for roughly three and a half months until 21 December. The public donated £259,205 in cash and £2,795 worth of blankets, clothes, food, and medicine. The appeal raised a total of £262,000, or over £13,600,000 today, in cash, food, and other supplies.[61]

The scale of the Mansion House Fund challenges the interpretation of Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie. Piller and Wylie argue that states were the largest providers of humanitarian aid during the First World War and throughout the years that followed. They explain that governments funded and outfitted medical fieldworkers, distributed

[55] Eliot to Yamamoto, 'Personal Sympathy', 12 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 353.
[56] 'British Chief', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.
[57] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[58] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[59] 'Direct News from Tokyo', *The Daily Mail*, 5 September 1923, p. 10.
[60] Sir Edward Moore, 'Mansion House Fund for Japan', *The Times*, 5 September 1923, p. 11; 'News from Tokyo', *The Daily Mail*, 5 September 1923, p. 10; 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.
[61] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.

food, resettled civilians, and provided supplies to interned civilians and combatants.[62] The Mansion House Fund, however, challenges this assessment as the appeal raised over seven times more than the total amount that the British government spent in response to the earthquake.[63] This comparison suggests that in inter-war Britain the public, rather than the state, was the largest provider of humanitarian relief. This comparison highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the role that states have played in the history of humanitarian aid that neither overlooks, nor exaggerates, the scale of this role.

Moore wrote an article in *The Times* on 5 September, the day after he had launched the appeal. He explained that he had created the fund to 'evince in a practical way the sympathy' that he believed that the British public should show towards Japan.[64] He did not outline why the public should offer sympathy. This article nonetheless demonstrates that Stanley Baldwin, Lord Curzon, Sir Charles Eliot, and Alexander Leeper were not the only ones in Britain who aimed to convey sympathy in response to the earthquake.

The appeal aimed to provide financial relief to the Japanese government and to British expatriates in Japan as well as humanitarian provisions to the Japanese public. Moore donated most of the money that the appeal raised to the Japanese government. He transferred most of the cash to Gonsuke Hayashi. Hayashi then forwarded the money to his government in Tokyo. The Japanese government received a total of £205,000, the equivalent of nearly £10,700,000 today, from the Mansion House Fund. This sum means that the Japanese government received nearly four-fifths of the money and provisions that the British public donated to the appeal.[65]

Moore donated the rest of the cash to British expatriates.[66] The previous chapter examines how over 700 British nationals left Tokyo and Yokohama when the earthquake

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[62] Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie, 'Humanitarianism and the Greater War', in Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (eds), *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914-24* (Manchester, 2023), p. 6.
[63] Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[64] Moore, 'Mansion House Fund', *The Times*, 5 September 1923, p. 11.
[65] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.
[66] *Ibid*.

struck and throughout September by boarding commercial passenger ships that sailed to Kobe.[67] The expatriates who sailed to Kobe received £43,000 from the fund, nearly four times more than the amount that the Royal Navy spent in response to the earthquake.[68] The previous chapter also analyses how Herbert Brackley, an aviation adviser, and other expatriates who had travelled to Kobe left Japan and returned to Britain via Vancouver from late September.[69] The expatriates who returned to Britain received £3,525 from the fund. British expatriates received an overall total of £46,525, or over £2,400,000 today. This sum means that British expatriates received roughly eighteen percent of the money and provisions that the British public donated to the appeal.[70]

Moore donated all of the provisions that the fund received to the Japanese public. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that 338 anonymous donors provided supplies rather than money. The newspaper outlined that these provisions included blankets, clothes, cocoa, disinfectant, milk, port, quilts, surgical dressings, and wool. Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the former British ambassador to Austria-Hungary, carried the provisions to the office that Nippon Yusen, a Japanese shipping firm, maintained in London and the company shipped the supplies to Tokyo and Yokohama free of charge. It is plausible that Bunsen supported the appeal due to his previous connections with Japan, as he had worked at the British Legation in Tokyo roughly thirty years earlier between 1891 and 1894. The provisions that the Japanese public received from the Mansion House Fund were worth £2,795, the equivalent of nearly £150,000 today.[71]

*The Daily Mail* published a list every week throughout the autumn in which Moore named every donor who had provided five pounds or more to the fund. These lists illustrate that corporations made the largest donations. Lloyd's of London, an insurance broker, made

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[67] Ralph Forster, 'British Subjects Reported Killed', 6 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 459; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered as Safe', 19 September 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 217-23; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'Britishers Registered at this Consulate-General', 25 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 103-5; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Reported Safe', 29 September 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 210-12; Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Registered Here', 3 October 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 208-9.
[68] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[69] 'Eyewitness of Japan Earthquake: First British Survivor Reaches England', *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 October 1923, p. 11.
[70] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.
[71] *Ibid*.

the largest donation when the firm provided £10,000, the equivalent of over £520,000 today.[72] This donation reflects that Lloyd's of London spent nearly as much money as the Royal Navy spent in response to the earthquake.[73] Arbuthnot Lathan, Barclays, Hambros, H.S. Lefevre, Kleinwort, Lloyds, the London City and Midland Bank, the National Provincial and Union Bank, Panmure Gordon, Samuel Montague and Company, and Westminster Bank, eleven banks, donated £8,580 in total, almost £450,000 today. Prudential, the Sedgwick Group, and the Willis Group, three insurance brokers, provided a combined total of £2,600, or over £135,000 today. The Imperial Tobacco Company, a firm that manufactured and continues to sell cigarettes, and the United Alkali Company, a firm that produced industrial chemicals, donated a combined total of £2,100, the equivalent of almost £110,000 today.[74]

The armament industry also donated money to the Mansion House Fund. Vickers, a company that built battleships, donated £1,605, or nearly £85,000 today. Armstrong, a company that manufactured ammunition, cranes, mining equipment, warships, and weapons, provided £1,000, the equivalent of over £50,000 today.[75] Armstrong and Vickers had traded with the Japanese government for several decades as Armstrong had started to sell ammunition, firearms, and warships to the government in 1865 and Vickers had started to sell battleships to the government in 1900. Marie Conte-Helm argues that this trade 'provided important custom' for Armstrong and Vickers throughout the early twentieth century.[76] It is possible that the companies donated money to the Mansion House Fund in recognition of the ties that they had developed with Japan.

Staff at the Foreign Office donated money as well. *The Daily Mail* reported on 17 September that Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, an advisor on Japanese affairs at the Foreign Office, and his wife Nancy had donated twenty-five pounds, or over £1,300 today, to the Mansion House Fund.[77] Ian Nish contends that Frank's colleagues within the Foreign Office saw him as 'an expert in Anglo-Japanese relations' because he had lived in Japan between 1913 and 1918 and he wrote novels about the British expatriate community in Japan. Nish outlines that Frank believed that the British government needed to maintain cordial relations with the Japanese government after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had

[72] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.
[73] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[74] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.
[75] *Ibid*.
[76] Marie Conte-Helm, 'Armstrong's, Vickers, and Japan', in Ian Nish (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume I* (Folkestone, 1994), pp. 94-8, 105.
[77] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.

ended.[78] It is plausible that Frank and Nancy donated money in the hope that the appeal and their donation would encourage friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan after the Alliance had ended a few weeks earlier. Their donation illustrates that the Foreign Office provided at least some financial relief to the Japanese government. At the same time, this donation shows that the Foreign Office only provided limited financial relief as this donation accounted for less than a thousandth of the overall amount that the appeal raised.[79]

The Mansion House Fund showcases how in inter-war Britain the overseas provision of aid entailed cooperation between diverse groups. The fund received donations from the armament industry, banks, the Foreign Office, insurance brokers, manufacturers, and the public. This collaboration can be interpreted as an example of what Tehila Sasson describes as the 'mixed economy' of aid. She defines this concept as the cooperation between companies, governments, and intergovernmental as well as nongovernmental organisations that became the foundation for the global provision of relief from the early twentieth century.[80] The money that Frank and Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin donated to the Mansion House Fund shows how the British state provided relief overseas by working with this mixed economy.

The fund was not the only appeal that Europeans established in response to the earthquake. The Chelcicky Peace Society, a group of Christian pacifists in Czechoslovakia, sent a letter to the Secretariat of the League of Nations, the body that administered the League, on 4 September, three days after the earthquake had struck. The society proposed that 'the League ought to take the initiative for [establishing] a general international relief' fund in response to the disaster. The League accepted this suggestion two days later and created an appeal on 6 September.[81]

Robert Cecil, the head of the British delegation at the League, described the appeal in a report that he wrote on 14 September. He outlined that the appeal urged the representatives of national delegations in Geneva to donate money. The League used these donations to purchase food, medicine, tents, and other supplies. The International

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[78] Ian Nish, '"In One Day have I Lived Many Lives": Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, Novelist and Diplomat', in Ian Nish (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume I* (Folkestone, 1994), pp. 159-61, 164-5, 167.
[79] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.
[80] Tehila Sasson, 'From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), p. 533.
[81] The Chelcicky Peace Society to the Secretariat of the League of Nations, 'The Great Catastrophe', 4 September 1923, Earthquake in Japan, League of Nations Secretariat: Health and Social Questions Section, the League of Nations Archive in Geneva, R 679/12/30666.

Committee of the Red Cross distributed these provisions amongst the Japanese public in Tokyo and Yokohama.[82]

Cecil donated ten pounds of government money, as opposed to his own personal money, to the appeal on 14 September, the equivalent of over £500 today. He underlined in the report that he wrote later that day that he made this donation in the expectation that 'other delegations will undoubtedly subscribe' as well.[83] This report illustrates that Cecil donated money because he wanted to prevent the British delegation from becoming the only delegation that did not offer any money in response to the earthquake. This donation demonstrates that the Foreign Office provided at least some financial relief to the Japanese public. The size of this donation, however, shows that the department only provided limited financial relief as this donation was 100 times smaller than the donation that Armstrong made to the Mansion House Fund.[84]

Cecil paid close attention to the amount of relief that the British government provided overseas throughout the early 1920s. He cofounded the Imperial War Relief Fund, a public appeal that raised money in Britain and across the Dominions on behalf of humanitarian causes in continental Europe, in March 1920. Emily Baughan argues that he cofounded the appeal in part because he was worried that the British government was providing a limited amount of aid overseas. He lobbied the government to provide relief in response to the Volga Famine, one of the deadliest famines in Russian history, in September 1921 on the grounds that the government should provide as much aid as the American government.[85] These examples highlight that Cecil believed that the British government needed to provide as much relief as the rest of the international community. This factor helps to explain why he wanted to prevent the British delegation in Geneva from becoming the only delegation that did not donate any money in response to the earthquake. Cecil's report reflects that British diplomats monitored how the rest of the world reacted to the earthquake out of fear that the relief that Japan received from the rest of the international community could threaten British diplomatic interests.

British and Japanese diplomats played a prominent role in the League. The British and Japanese governments were two of the four permanent members of the Council of the League, the body that oversaw and could veto the decisions that the rest of the League made. Thomas Burkman explains that Kikujiro Ishii, the head of the Japanese

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[82] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.
[85] Emily Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund and the All British Appeal: Commonwealth, Conflict, and Conservatism within the British Humanitarian Movement, 1920-5', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), pp. 846-52.

delegation, was the president of the Council on multiple occasions.[86] Inazo Niitobe, a Japanese colonial administrator, was the undersecretary-general of the League at the time of the earthquake.

Japanese diplomats in Geneva appealed to the League for assistance throughout the months that followed the earthquake. Niitobe urged the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, the branch of the League that was responsible for providing assistance to libraries, scholars, students, and universities, to support the rebuilding of the Imperial University of Tokyo. Yoshinao Kozai, the president of the University, asked Sir Eric Drummond, the secretary-general of the League, to endorse the reconstruction of the University. Tomas Irish explains that the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation reacted to these requests in February 1924 by issuing an appeal that called on the international community to donate books to the University.[87] These examples and the appeal that the League established at the request of the Chelcicky Peace Society illustrate that the League played an active role in response to the earthquake.

Sir Vincent Caillard, the finance director at Vickers, proposed several days after Cecil had donated money to the appeal in Geneva that the Foreign Office should provide a loan to the Japanese government. Sir Otto Niemeyer, the head of finance at the Treasury, described this proposal in a letter that he sent to Sir Neville Chamberlain on 20 September. Niemeyer explained that Caillard had suggested that the Foreign Office should offer £10,000,000, the equivalent of over £520,000,000 today. Caillard anticipated that the Japanese government would spend this loan on the reconstruction of Tokyo and Yokohama.[88] This loan would have been worth over 850 times more than the amount that the Royal Navy spent in response to the earthquake.[89]

The letter that Niemeyer sent to Chamberlain is the only extant source that provides any information about the loan that Caillard envisioned. This factor means that it is unclear when exactly Caillard proposed that the Foreign Office should offer a loan. It is equally unclear why he believed that the loan should be worth £10,000,000 as opposed to a larger or smaller sum.[90] J. Charles Schencking estimates that the American government spent $9,000,000 in response to the earthquake, the equivalent of almost £2,000,000,

[86] Thomas Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914-38* (Honolulu, 2008), pp. 156-60.
[87] Tomas Irish, *Feeding the Mind: Humanitarianism and the Reconstruction of European Intellectual Life, 1919-33* (Cambridge, 2024), p. 183.
[88] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[89] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[90] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

or roughly £103,000,000 today.[91] The British government would have spent over five times more than the American government spent if the Foreign Office had offered the loan that Caillard had proposed to the Japanese government.[92]

It is possible that his connection with Vickers can explain why Caillard made this proposal. The value of the trade that Vickers had established in Japan declined throughout and after the First World War as the company sold fewer battleships to the Japanese government. Conte-Helm outlines that the value of this trade declined to some extent because the growth of the Japanese shipbuilding industry allowed the government to build battleships instead of purchasing them from overseas.[93] American competitors further harmed this trade as the United States replaced the British Empire as the main trading partner of Japan during the year that the earthquake struck.[94] Schencking argues that American steel mills, manufacturers, and other corporations donated money to the Japanese public in response to the earthquake in the hope of encouraging further trade between Japan and the United States.[95] It is plausible that Caillard reached a similar conclusion and advised the Foreign Office to offer a loan to the Japanese government to curry favour with the Japanese and help revive the trade that Vickers had established in Japan. It is possible that Vickers donated money to the Mansion House Fund for similar reasons.

Niemeyer held considerable influence at the Treasury. Susan Howson contends that he was the 'principal advisor' to Chamberlain.[96] Chamberlain had been in office for less than a month when the earthquake struck and he had no prior experience of working in the Treasury. These factors meant that the new chancellor depended on Niemeyer for his advice and knowledge. The inexperience of Chamberlain enabled Niemeyer to shape the decisions that the chancellor and the Treasury made at the time of the earthquake.

Niemeyer underlined why the Treasury could not allow the Foreign Office to offer a loan of this magnitude to the Japanese government in the letter that he sent to Chamberlain

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[91] J. Charles Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently: Humanitarianism as Diplomacy following Japan's 1923 Earthquake', *Diplomatic History*, 43/4 (2019), p. 733.
[92] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 733.
[93] Conte-Helm, 'Armstrong's, Vickers, and Japan', in Nish (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume I*, p. 104.
[94] Christina Davis, 'Linkage Diplomacy: Economic and Security Bargaining in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *International Security*, 33/3 (2009), p. 159.
[95] J. Charles Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns: Corporate Giving from America's Industrial Heartland following the Great Kanto Earthquake', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 21/8 (2023), p. 56.
[96] Susan Howson, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Niemeyer, Sir Otto Ernst', 2008, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-31501?rskey=uoOBDX&result=1>, accessed date: 27 July 2023.

on 20 September. Niemeyer warned that the British government would face a deficit in the coming financial year. He reasoned that the impending deficit meant that the Foreign Office could not offer loans to any foreign governments. He advised Chamberlain that the loan that Caillard had proposed was a case of 'money which you haven't got'.[97]

Secondly, Niemeyer argued that the Foreign Office could only afford to provide a loan of the magnitude that Caillard envisioned if the government raised the average rate of income tax. Niemeyer estimated that the Foreign Office could only cover the cost of the loan if the government raised the average rate of income tax by two pence for every pound. This change would have represented an increase of nearly one percent in the average rate of income tax. Niemeyer did not explain why he assumed that the government would raise the rate of income tax as opposed to a different tax or why the average rate of income tax would increase by two pence for every pound. He nevertheless cautioned that the provision of a loan to the Japanese government 'would cost the British taxpayer very dear[ly]'.[98]

Thirdly, Niemeyer contended that the loan would be incompatible with the fiscal policy of the Treasury. He reminded Chamberlain that this policy revolved around two principles. Niemeyer outlined that the first principle was 'not to make government loans to foreign countries'. He contended that it was 'inconceivable' that the Treasury should forsake this principle by allowing the Foreign Office to offer a loan to the Japanese government. The second principle called on the Treasury to repay the outstanding debts that the British government had accrued during the First World War.[99] Matthew Heaslip estimates that the government spent over £300,000,000, or over £16,000,000,000 today, on debt repayments in 1920-1, accounting for over a fifth of the national budget.[100] Niemeyer concluded that the government should repay these debts instead of offering loans to foreign governments.[101]

The Foreign Office did not provide any loans to the Japanese government in response to the earthquake. It is uncertain how Chamberlain and the rest of the staff at the Treasury responded to the letter that Niemeyer wrote. The influence that Niemeyer held at the Treasury, however, suggests that it is plausible that he was responsible for preventing the Foreign Office from providing a loan to the Japanese government. The dismissal of the loan underlines that the Foreign Office only provided limited financial relief to the Japanese government due to the actions and views of the Treasury.

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[97] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[98] *Ibid*.
[99] *Ibid*.
[100] Heaslip, *The China Station*, p. 28.
[101] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

Eliot nevertheless agreed with Caillard that the Foreign Office should provide money to the Japanese government. Hikokichi Ijuin, the Japanese foreign minister, underlined that Eliot had donated money in a telegram that the minister sent to Sir Charles Palairet, the chargé d'affaires at what remained of the British Embassy in Tokyo, on 24 October. Ijuin recalled that Eliot had donated £500 to the Japanese government several days earlier, the equivalent of over £26,000 today. Ijuin asked Palairet to inform Eliot that the Japanese government had received his donation with 'heartfelt gratitude'. Ijuin explained that his government would spend the donation on the procurement and distribution of food, medicine, and other supplies.[102] Eliot had warned Sir William Tyrrell over a month earlier that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the Japanese government concluded that the British government had not shown any sympathy.[103] It is possible that Eliot donated money in the belief that this donation would encourage cordial diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan by conveying sympathy towards the Japanese government.

This donation represents the largest sum of money that any representative of the British government spent in response to the earthquake. Eliot donated twenty times more than Frank and Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin had donated to the Mansion House Fund.[104] Eliot donated fifty times more than Cecil had donated to the appeal that the League of Nations had established.[105] The three donations demonstrate that the Foreign Office offered at least some financial relief to the Japanese government and public. At the same time, these donations show that this relief was limited as the department only spent £535, or almost £28,000 today, in response to the earthquake, less than a thousandth of the amount that the American government spent.[106]

In summary, the Foreign Office provided financial relief to the Japanese government and public in three ways. Frank and Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin provided financial relief to the Japanese government by donating twenty-five pounds to the Mansion House Fund.[107] It is plausible that the couple made this donation in the hope that the appeal and their donation would encourage friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan after the Alliance had ended only a few weeks earlier. Cecil provided financial relief to the

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[102] Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[103] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[104] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[105] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[106] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 733.
[107] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.

Japanese public by donating ten pounds to the appeal that the League of Nations had established. He made this donation in the expectation that other delegations would donate as well.[108] Eliot provided financial relief to the Japanese government by donating £500.[109] It is possible that he made this donation in the belief that this gesture would support friendly relations between the British and Japanese governments by conveying sympathy.

These examples illustrate how the state in inter-war Britain engaged with private aid partnerships. The Foreign Office supported a public appeal when Frank and Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin donated money to the Mansion House Fund. The department engaged with an intergovernmental organisation when Cecil provided money to the appeal that the League of Nations had created. The government received advice from the armament industry when Caillard suggested that the Foreign Office should offer a loan to the Japanese government. These examples show how the international provision of financial relief involved a mixed economy of aid that entailed cooperation between companies, intergovernmental organisations, the public, and the state.

The Foreign Office nonetheless provided only limited financial relief to the Japanese government and public due to the actions and views of the Treasury. Caillard proposed that the Foreign Office should provide £10,000,000 to the Japanese government in the form of a loan. The Foreign Office, though, did not provide any loans to the Japanese government. The influence that Niemeyer held at the Treasury and the views that he shared with Chamberlain suggest that it is plausible that Niemeyer was responsible for preventing the Foreign Office from offering a loan to the Japanese government. He argued that the British government could not afford to provide loans to foreign governments in the face of an impending deficit. He likewise contended that the loan that Caillard envisioned would necessitate a rise in the rate of income tax and would be inconsistent with the fiscal policy of the Treasury.[110] The opposition of the Treasury meant that the Foreign Office could offer little more than a few diplomatic gestures and a few donations to fundraising appeals in response to the earthquake.

**Humanitarian Provisions**

Staff at the Foreign Office continued to consider how the British government should respond to the earthquake over a month after the disaster had unfolded. Sir Victor Wellesley sent a letter on the subject to Sir Norman Fisher on 9 October 1923. Wellesley explained that Lord Curzon had decided that the Foreign Office would offer £100,000, or

[108] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[109] Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[110] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

roughly £5,200,000 today, to the Japanese government in the form of a grant, a hundredth of the loan that Sir Vincent Caillard had proposed.[111] Curzon anticipated that the Japanese government would spend the grant on the procurement and distribution of clothes, medicine, and other humanitarian provisions. He envisioned that the Japanese government would spend the grant freely with no conditions or terms attached.[112]

In contrast, the Royal Navy responded to the earthquake by prioritising British and other European expatriates. The previous chapter demonstrates that Robert Boulter, the British acting consul in Yokohama, and Sir Arthur Leveson, the commander-in-chief of the warships that sailed to Japan, prioritised expatriates over Japanese nationals amidst pressure from the merchant community in Yokohama. Wellesley's letter, though, illustrates that Curzon argued that the British government should also offer humanitarian aid to the Japanese government.[113] These chapters reflect that the state in inter-war Britain was not a single, unified humanitarian actor, but was instead a contested space where different groups debated who should receive humanitarian support from the government.

Curzon contended that the Foreign Office should provide a grant in the hope that humanitarian aid would convey sympathy towards the Japanese government. Wellesley reminded Fisher that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended only a few weeks earlier. Wellesley explained that Curzon 'considers it most important at this moment … that we should seize the opportunity of showing that we still regard the Japanese as our friends and [continue to] value their friendship' by expressing sympathy.[114] This letter suggests that Curzon reasoned that humanitarian relief should play an active role in British foreign policy by promoting friendly diplomatic ties with other countries. In particular, he maintained that aid could help to define the post-Alliance relationship by conveying sympathy and by convincing the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations. Wellesley's letter highlights that Curzon believed that diplomatic strategy and humanitarianism were closely intertwined.

The grant did not mark the first time that Curzon had proposed that the Foreign Office should offer sympathy in response to the earthquake. He had suggested over two weeks earlier that the department should show sympathy towards the Japanese government by convening a memorial service in memory of the Japanese, British, and other foreign

[111] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[112] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] *Ibid*.

nationals who had died during the earthquake.[115] The Cabinet rejected this proposal in late September because ministers were worried about the date that Curzon had chosen for the service.[116] The letter that Wellesley sent to Fisher in early October implies that Curzon planned to hold a memorial service in the belief that the post-Alliance relationship would be damaged if the Foreign Office did not offer sympathy.[117] Curzon argued that the Foreign Office should offer a grant to the Japanese government only after his fellow ministers had dismissed the memorial service. This factor suggests that it is possible that Curzon saw the grant as an alternative to the memorial service.

Curzon was not the only diplomat who believed that the British government should offer humanitarian aid and sympathy to the Japanese government. Sir Charles Eliot had warned Sir William Tyrrell during the middle of September that the post-Alliance relationship would be harmed if the British government did not offer any aid or sympathy to the Japanese government.[118] This comparison reflects that Curzon and Eliot held similar views on the role that the British government should play in response to the earthquake. The staff at the Foreign Office recognised these similarities as Wellesley informed Fisher that Curzon 'shares Sir C. Eliot's anxiety' about the role that the government was playing in response to the disaster.[119] This passage demonstrates that the letter that Eliot sent to Tyrrell must have been circulated amongst the rest of the staff at the Foreign Office if Curzon and Wellesley knew about the views that Eliot had expressed. The letters that Eliot and Wellesley wrote illustrate that Curzon and Eliot saw the provision of humanitarian aid to foreign governments as a diplomatic tool.

Curzon also contended that the Foreign Office should offer a grant to the Japanese government in light of the humanitarian provisions that the American government and public had provided and were continuing to provide in Japan.[120] J. Charles Schencking underlines that British diplomats paid meticulous attention to the volume of relief that the American government and public offered.[121] Wellesley explained to Fisher that Curzon estimated that the American government and public spent $5,000,000 on the distribution of blankets, food, and other supplies amongst Japanese nationals throughout the fortnight that followed the earthquake.[122] This sum was the equivalent of roughly

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[115] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[116] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[117] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[118] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[119] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[120] *Ibid*.
[121] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', p. 750.
[122] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.

£1,100,000 or over £57,000,000 today. The American government and public spent within a fortnight almost thirty times more than the British government spent in response to the earthquake throughout the decade that followed the disaster.[123]

Wellesley reported that Curzon recognised that relations between the American and Japanese governments were almost hostile when the earthquake struck owing to disagreements over immigration and shipbuilding. Wellesley explained that Curzon saw the humanitarian provisions that the American government and public had provided and were continuing to provide in Japan as an 'American expression of sympathy'. Wellesley informed Fisher that Curzon was 'concerned at the apparent discrepancy between American expressions of sympathy and our own'. Curzon reasoned that the British government should offer provisions to the Japanese government on the grounds that diplomatic relations would be damaged if the Japanese concluded that the British government had shown less sympathy than the Americans had shown.[124] This argument illustrates that British diplomats paid close attention to how the American government and public reacted to the earthquake out of fear that American aid threatened British diplomatic interests.

Curzon also proposed that the Foreign Office should provide a grant to the Japanese government in light of the humanitarian provisions that the Dominions had provided and were continuing to provide in Japan. Wellesley outlined that Curzon estimated that the Australian government and public spent £240,000, or roughly £12,500,000 today, throughout the month that followed the earthquake on the distribution of clothes and food amongst expatriates and Japanese nationals.[125] This sum means that the Australian government and public spent within one month almost as much money as the Mansion House Fund for Japan raised over three and a half months.[126] Curzon likewise recognised that the Canadian public donated $100,000, the equivalent of roughly £22,000 or nearly £1,150,000 today, throughout the month that followed the disaster to an appeal in Montreal that distributed food amongst expatriates and Japanese nationals.[127] This sum

[123] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[124] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[125] *Ibid*.
[126] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.
[127] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.

means that the Canadian public spent almost twice as much as the Royal Navy spent in response to the earthquake.[128]

Curzon drew comparisons between the Australian, British, and Canadian governments. Wellesley highlighted that Curzon was alarmed that the amount of humanitarian aid that the Australian and Canadian governments had provided was beyond 'comparison with the efforts made' by the British government. Wellesley reported that the Australian government had spent £60,000, or over £3,100,000 today, in response to the earthquake.[129] This sum was more than five times higher than the amount that the British government had spent by the time that Wellesley wrote this letter.[130] He informed Fisher that Curzon believed that the Foreign Office should offer humanitarian aid to the Japanese government as it was 'essential that His Majesty's Government should not lag behind the governments of British Dominions'.[131]

The Treasury responded to the request for a grant in late October. Sir George Barstow, a civil servant at the Treasury, outlined the decision that his colleagues had reached in a letter that he sent to Ronald McNeill, the parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, on 24 October. Barstow contended that the Treasury did 'not feel able to sanction Lord Curzon's proposal' and would not allow the Foreign Office to provide a grant to the Japanese government.[132] This letter illustrates that the Foreign Office did not provide any humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government because the Treasury prevented Curzon from offering a grant. Sir Otto Niemeyer had criticised the possibility of providing a loan to the Japanese government over a month earlier on the grounds that the British government could not afford to offer money in the face of an impending deficit.[133] It is plausible that the Treasury prevented Curzon from providing a grant to the Japanese government for similar reasons. Barstow's letter demonstrates how the Treasury restricted the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of humanitarian aid by preventing the Foreign Office from offering relief to foreign governments.

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[128] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[129] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[130] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[131] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[132] Sir George Barstow to Ronald McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[133] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

The Foreign Office reacted to the decision that the Treasury had reached when Wellesley sent a letter to Fisher on 9 November, over two months after the earthquake had struck. Wellesley outlined that Curzon continued to support the grant despite the opposition of the Treasury and wanted the department 'to reconsider their refusal to sanction' the proposal.[134] Wellesley underlined that Curzon had written a memorandum a few hours before Wellesley wrote this letter.[135] The memorandum summarised why Curzon believed that the Foreign Office should provide a grant to the Japanese government.[136] Wellesley reported that Curzon planned to send copies of the memorandum to every other member of the Cabinet and would discuss the grant when the Cabinet next met.[137] The letters that Barstow and Wellesley wrote highlight that the state in inter-war Britain was not a unified humanitarian actor as Curzon and the Treasury debated whether the British government should offer humanitarian aid to the Japanese government. The memorandum that Curzon wrote shows that he was prepared to allow the Cabinet to resolve this impasse.

Wellesley enclosed a copy of the memorandum inside the letter that he sent to Fisher. Curzon argued in the memorandum that the Foreign Office should offer £100,000 to the Japanese government in the form of a grant. He anticipated that the Japanese government would spend the money on the procurement and distribution of clothes, food, medicine, and other supplies. He proposed that the Japanese government would spend this money freely with no conditions or terms attached.[138] The memorandum illustrates that Curzon had not made any changes to his proposal despite the opposition of the Treasury. It is possible that the memorandum marked the first time that his fellow ministers heard about the grant.

Curzon explained that the British government should provide humanitarian aid to the Japanese government on the grounds that aid would convey sympathy in response to the earthquake. He reminded his fellow ministers that the Alliance had ended only three months earlier. Curzon argued that the grant would show sympathy towards the Japanese government and would reflect 'that we still regard the Japanese as our friends and that we [continue to] value their friendship' despite the end of the Alliance. He

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[134] Sir Victor Wellesley to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Their Refusal', 9 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[135] Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, pp. 438-9; Wellesley to Fisher, 'Their Refusal', 9 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[136] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, pp. 438-9.
[137] Wellesley to Fisher, 'Their Refusal', 9 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[138] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.

warned that the post-Alliance relationship would be damaged if the Japanese government surmised that the British government had not conveyed as much sympathy as the American government and public had conveyed. Curzon likewise underlined that the British government needed to show more sympathy than the governments of the Dominions had shown.[139] The memorandum demonstrates that his rationale behind the grant had not changed since Wellesley had first informed Fisher about the proposal a month earlier.

The memorandum constitutes an example of what Julia Irwin describes as 'catastrophic diplomacy'. She defines this concept as the study of how the humanitarian relief that donors have provided in reaction to wars, earthquakes, and other natural disasters has influenced diplomatic history.[140] Natsuko Chubachi *et al.* argue that this field also entails the study of how recipients and the ways in which they have reacted to the relief that they have received have shaped the history of relations between states.[141] Frank Kaser and Irwin propose that states formulated a 'humanitarian policy', the principle that states can advance their diplomatic and political objectives by providing humanitarian aid overseas, from the early twentieth century.[142] Curzon envisioned that the provision of aid in the form of a grant to the Japanese government would advance the diplomatic objectives of the British government by showing that the governments remained friends despite the end of the Alliance.[143] His memorandum suggests that the foreign secretary had formulated a humanitarian policy by the early 1920s as he saw the provision of aid as a diplomatic tool.

Curzon described how much money the governments of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand had spent in response to the earthquake. Figure 3.1 shows the amount of money that the governments of Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand had spent in response to the disaster by the time that Curzon wrote this memorandum. He reported that the Australian government had spent £60,000, the Canadian government had spent £30,000, or over £1,500,000 today, and the government of New Zealand had spent £25,000, or roughly £1,300,000 today.[144] The British Foreign Office spent £535 and the Royal Navy spent £11,363, one shilling, and six pence.[145] These two sums meant

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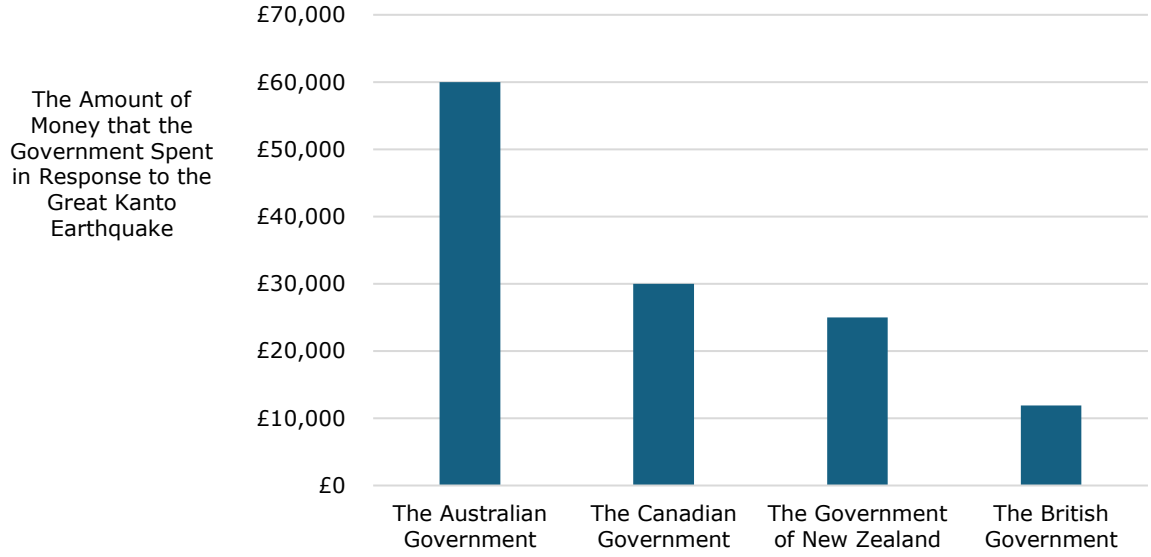
[139] *Ibid*.
[140] Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century* (Chapel Hill, 2024), pp. 129-30.
[141] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 63.
[142] Frank Kaser, 'A Civilised Nation: Japan and the Red Cross, 1877-1900', *European Review of History*, 23/2 (2016), p. 27; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[143] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[144] *Ibid*.
[145] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24

that the British government had spent £11,898, one shilling, and six pence, or over £620,000 today, by the time that Curzon wrote this memorandum. This sum accounted for less than half the amount that the government of New Zealand had spent.[146] Curzon informed the Cabinet that the grant should be set to the value of £100,000 on the grounds that the British government needed to provide more humanitarian provisions than any of the governments of the Dominions had provided.[147]

**Figure 3.1 - The Amount of Money that the Governments of Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand Spent in Response to the Great Kanto Earthquake between 1 September and 9 November 1923**




*Sources: Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', The Daily Mail, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.

[146] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.

[147] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.

Curzon concluded by asking his fellow ministers to submit his request for a grant to Parliament. He argued that the Cabinet should resolve the impasse that had arisen between himself and the Treasury by allowing Parliament to vote on the grant. He highlighted that Parliament had not sent any message to the Japanese government in response to the earthquake. Curzon advised his fellow ministers that a vote in favour of the grant would enable Parliament and the British government to 'place on record … [their] sympathy with the government and people of Japan'. He recognised that more than two months had passed since the earthquake had struck by the time that he wrote this memorandum. He contended that the sympathy that a vote in Parliament would convey towards the Japanese government would be 'all the more enduring for being made rather late in the day'.[148] The memorandum suggests that Curzon was confident that Parliament would vote in favour of the grant as he did not consider the possibility that Parliament could vote against the proposal.

The Cabinet debated the contents of the memorandum and the grant throughout three meetings that took place during the middle of November. Sir Maurice Hankey wrote minutes during each meeting. The minutes show that between seventeen and nineteen ministers attended each meeting. Stanley Baldwin chaired and Sir Neville Chamberlain attended each meeting. Curzon, though, only attended the first two meetings.[149]

The Cabinet discussed numerous subjects throughout these meetings. Stuart Ball explains that Baldwin had decided on 12 November, the day before he chaired the first meeting, that he would dissolve Parliament in the coming days and hold a general election in December.[150] This decision meant that the election was at the top of the agenda throughout these meetings.[151] Farming was also near the top of the agenda as ministers debated subsidising arable land, introducing a minimum wage for farm

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[148] *Ibid*.
[149] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[150] Stuart Ball, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Baldwin, Stanley, First Earl Baldwin of Bewdley', 2019, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30550?rskey=mTmSs6&result=1>, accessed date: 27 June 2023.
[151] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, pp. 328-9; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, pp. 341-2; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, pp. 354-6.

workers, and exempting exports of oats from tax.[152] The economy likewise featured prominently as ministers debated subsidising the production of beer, the deficit in the national budget, and removing the tax on cinemas.[153] The minutes that Hankey wrote demonstrate that the memorandum that Curzon wrote and his request for a grant were at the bottom of the agenda throughout these meetings.[154] It is plausible that the Cabinet did not see the memorandum or the grant as a priority because roughly two and a half months had passed since the earthquake had struck by the time that these meetings took place.

The first meeting took place on 13 November. Hankey reported that the Cabinet decided that 'it would not be practicable' to submit the grant to Parliament. He explained that the Cabinet agreed that Parliament would not have the time to debate and vote on the grant before Baldwin dissolved Parliament at the end of the week.[155] The minutes that Hankey wrote reflect that the Cabinet did not dispute what Curzon saw as the need to show sympathy in response to the earthquake or his belief that humanitarian aid constituted the best way of conveying sympathy. The Cabinet instead disputed his argument that the Cabinet should submit the grant to a vote in Parliament because ministers believed that the impending dissolution rendered this option infeasible. His fellow ministers had prevented Curzon from arranging a memorial service in response to the earthquake roughly one and a half months earlier due to the date that he had chosen for the service.[156] The memorial and the grant illustrate that the Foreign Office did not offer any humanitarian provisions and only provided limited diplomatic support to the Japanese government because the Cabinet was opposed to the timing of these proposals.

The Cabinet devised an alternative to the grant during the first meeting in November. Ministers concluded that the Foreign Office should spend £100,000, the same amount that Curzon had envisioned that the department would have spent on the grant, on the procurement of food.[157] The Cabinet decided that the Foreign Office would allow the Japanese government to decide which foodstuffs the Foreign Office could and could not

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[152] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 331; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 342; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, pp. 360-1.
[153] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, pp. 331-7; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 356.
[154] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[155] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[156] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[157] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.

purchase. The Foreign Office would then donate the food to the Japanese government 'as a gift from the British government'.[158] This plan shows that his fellow ministers agreed with Curzon that the Foreign Office should offer humanitarian aid to Japanese nationals.

There were, however, two differences between the gift of food and the grant. Curzon had anticipated that the Japanese government would have spent the grant with no conditions or terms attached.[159] In contrast, the Cabinet proposed that the Foreign Office would spend this money on the acquisition of food in consultation with the Japanese government. Ministers decided that the Foreign Office, rather than the Japanese government, should spend the money on the grounds that foreign governments could not spend any money that the British government had provided without prior approval from Parliament.[160] Secondly, Curzon had assumed that the Japanese government would have spent the grant on the procurement and distribution of blankets, clothes, food, medicine, and other supplies.[161] In comparison, the Cabinet specified that the Foreign Office should only purchase and donate food.[162] Hankey did not outline why the Cabinet made this distinction.

The second meeting took place the following day on 14 November. Hankey outlined that Chamberlain argued that the British government could not afford to purchase and donate food as 'there was no fund from which the proposed purchase could be made'.[163] Sir Otto Niemeyer had expressed a similar opinion nearly two months earlier. Niemeyer had reasoned that the Treasury could not allow the Foreign Office to offer a loan to the Japanese government in the face of an impending deficit.[164] This comparison shows that the Foreign Office did not provide any provisions and only offered limited financial relief to the Japanese government because the Treasury maintained that the British government could not afford to spend any money. The disagreement that arose between Chamberlain and Curzon over the earthquake demonstrates that the state in inter-war Britain played a contested role in the history of humanitarianism as ministers debated who should receive humanitarian support from their government.

The earthquake did not mark the first time that Chamberlain opposed the overseas provision of aid. He advised Parliament in September 1921 that the British government should not offer relief in response to the Volga Famine. He reasoned that the government could not afford to spend money on international relief in the face of high levels of

[158] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[159] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[160] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[161] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[162] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[163] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[164] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

domestic poverty. Emily Baughan argues that 'in the sphere of humanitarian relief, the Conservative government was prepared to surrender their perceived role as a world leader to the United States' during the years that followed the First World War.[165] Curzon, however, maintained that his government needed to provide aid in response to the earthquake to prevent the Japanese government from concluding that the British government had shown less sympathy than the American government.[166] The disagreement that arose between Chamberlain and Curzon over the earthquake shows that Conservatives contested the role that humanitarian aid should play in British foreign policy more than Baughan suggests.

Ministers held the final meeting two days later on 16 November. The minutes that Hankey wrote for this meeting illustrate that the Cabinet agreed with Chamberlain that the British government could not afford to purchase and donate food to the Japanese government. At the same time, the Cabinet agreed with Curzon that the Foreign Office should convey sympathy in response to the earthquake by offering humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government. Ministers concluded that they would resolve this impasse by submitting the gift of food to a vote in Parliament as soon as Parliament had reconvened after the general election.[167] This decision meant that the Foreign Office could not provide any humanitarian aid until Parliament had reconvened in the new year, over four months after the earthquake had struck. Although ministers were unwilling to submit the grant to Parliament, they were willing to submit the gift of food to Parliament in light of the opposition of Chamberlain.[168]

Curzon explained the decision that his fellow ministers had reached in his absence in a letter that he sent to Eliot four days later on 20 November. Curzon informed Eliot that the Cabinet had concluded that the Foreign Office should spend £100,000 on the acquisition of food in consultation with the Japanese government. The Foreign Office would donate this food to the Japanese government as a gift from the British government. Curzon outlined that the Cabinet intended to submit this plan to a vote in Parliament in January, two months after Curzon wrote this letter.[169] It is plausible that this letter marked the first time that Eliot and other British diplomats in Japan learned

[165] Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund', p. 853.
[166] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[167] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[168] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[169] Lord Curzon to Sir Charles Eliot, 'British Contribution to Earthquake Relief', 20 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

that their colleagues in Whitehall were considering how the Foreign Office could provide humanitarian support to the Japanese government.

Curzon questioned in this letter if the Foreign Office should offer food to the Japanese government. He recognised that his department could not procure any food until Parliament had reconvened. He asked Eliot 'whether, in view of this unavoidable delay, the effect which the gift will produce in Japan will be sufficient to justify the expense'.[170] This letter illustrates that Curzon had started to doubt by late November whether humanitarian provisions would constitute an effective way of conveying sympathy by the time that Parliament had reconvened. This doubt led him to question if what he saw as the diplomatic merits of humanitarian aid would outweigh the financial costs. The Cabinet had prevented Curzon from holding a memorial service almost two months earlier partly because ministers felt that too much time had passed since the earthquake had struck for the service to convey sympathy in an effective way.[171] The letter that Curzon sent to Eliot suggests that the foreign secretary had developed similar doubts about the gift of food.

Eliot replied two days later in a letter that he sent to Curzon on 22 November. Eliot informed Curzon that he had discussed the gift of food with Kiichiro Hiranuma, the Japanese minister of justice, a few hours earlier. It is possible that this conversation marked the first time that a representative of the Japanese government learned that the British Foreign Office was considering whether to provide humanitarian aid to the Japanese government. Eliot recalled that Hiranuma had 'stated on his own account that Japan did not need provisions or materials'. Eliot explained that Hiranuma had advised that the British government could instead support the reconstruction of the Imperial University of Tokyo.[172] This letter demonstrates that the British government only donated books to the University after the Cabinet and the Treasury had discouraged the Foreign Office from providing food to the Japanese government. The following chapter investigates how the British government donated books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public.

In summary, the Foreign Office did not provide any humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government or public due to the actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury. Curzon lobbied his government to provide provisions to the Japanese government throughout October and November. He proposed in early October that the

[170] Curzon to Eliot, 'Earthquake Relief', 20 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[171] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[172] Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon, 'British Contribution to Earthquake Relief Work', 22 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

Foreign Office should provide £100,000 to the Japanese government in the form of a grant. He envisioned that the Japanese government would spend this money on the procurement and distribution of blankets, clothes, food, medicine, and other supplies.[173] The Treasury rejected this plan in late October.[174] Curzon asked the Cabinet in early November to resolve the impasse that had arisen between himself and the Treasury by submitting his request for a grant to a vote in Parliament.[175] His fellow ministers agreed instead that the Foreign Office would spend £100,000 on the acquisition of food in consultation with the Japanese government.[176]

Chamberlain, though, argued during the middle of November that the British government could not afford to purchase and donate food.[177] This argument persuaded his fellow ministers that they should submit the gift of food to a vote in Parliament.[178] This decision meant that the Foreign Office could not provide any humanitarian provisions until Parliament had reconvened in the new year. This factor caused Curzon to doubt whether what he saw as the diplomatic merits of the gift of food would justify the financial cost by the time that Parliament had reconvened.[179] Eliot discussed these doubts with Hiranuma in late November and the Japanese minister advised that the British government should support the rebuilding of the Imperial University of Tokyo instead.[180] Most of the aid that the government provided in response to the earthquake was for the benefit of British expatriates and the University because Hiranuma, the Cabinet, and the Treasury opposed the provision of food to the Japanese government.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Foreign Office provided limited diplomatic and financial support and did not provide any humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government and public due to the actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury. The Foreign Office offered limited diplomatic support to the Japanese government by making several diplomatic gestures throughout September and early October 1923. Alexander Leeper conveyed sympathy towards Japanese diplomats when he visited the Japanese Embassy in London.[181] Sir Charles Eliot offered sympathy in a telegram that he sent to Yamamoto.[182] Eliot sent this telegram in the belief that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan

[173] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[174] Barstow to McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[175] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[176] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[177] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[178] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[179] Curzon to Eliot, 'Earthquake Relief', 20 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[180] Eliot to Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 22 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[181] Leeper to Tyrrell, 'The Japanese Embassy', 3 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 455.
[182] Eliot to Yamamoto, 'Personal Sympathy', 12 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 353.

would be harmed if the British government did not convey any sympathy in response to the earthquake.[183] Stanley Baldwin expressed sympathy for the Japanese government during the speech that he delivered at the tenth Imperial Conference. His speech suggests that Baldwin expected that his expression of sympathy would underline that the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did not represent the end of cordial diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.[184]

Various Japanese politicians responded to these diplomatic gestures throughout October. The *Rikken Seiyukai* thanked Baldwin for the speech that he had delivered at the Imperial Conference by passing a resolution. Chuzo Mitsuchi informed the *Japan Times and Mail* that his party passed this resolution to show that the party was grateful for the sympathy that Baldwin had expressed.[185] Yamamoto thanked Baldwin by sending a telegram.[186] Hikokichi Ijuin offered his gratitude to Eliot when the ambassador donated money to the Japanese government towards the end of the month.[187] These examples demonstrate that British diplomats expressed sympathy and Japanese politicians reciprocated by showing gratitude. The messages that the diplomats and politicians exchanged suggest that this reciprocal exchange took place because British diplomats as well as Japanese politicians believed that relations between their governments should remain friendly despite the end of the Alliance.

These diplomatic gestures imply that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan remained friendly throughout the months that followed the end of the Alliance. Several historians have reached the same conclusion. Ian Nish contends that relations between the governments remained cooperative.[188] Neville Bennett argues that the British government showed 'considerable empathy' towards the Japanese government when the American government forbade Japanese migrants from entering the United States from May 1924.[189] David Steeds concludes that 'a good deal of sentiment' remained between the British and Japanese governments after the Alliance had ended.[190]

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[183] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[184] 'British Chief', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.
[185] 'Empire Meet', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 3 October 1923, p. 1.
[186] Yamamoto to Baldwin, 'Sincere Thanks', 8 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 547.
[187] Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[188] Ian Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance, 1920-30', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 275.
[189] Neville Bennett, 'White Discrimination against Japan: Britain, the Dominions, and the United States, 1908-28', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 3/2 (2001), p. 101.
[190] David Steeds, 'Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1902-23: A Marriage of Convenience', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 221.

The Cabinet nevertheless restricted the ways in which the Foreign Office could convey sympathy in response to the earthquake. Lord Curzon proposed in late September that the Foreign Office should convene a memorial service in memory of the Japanese, British, and other foreign nationals who had died during the earthquake. He reasoned that this gesture would represent the most effective way of conveying sympathy towards the Japanese government.[191] His fellow ministers, though, rejected this proposal on the grounds that the memorial service would clash with the annual opening of the courts. Ministers highlighted that they were planning to meet with Stanley Bruce, William Cosgrave, William King, William Massey, Jan Smuts, and William Warren on the day that Curzon had chosen to hold the memorial. The Cabinet also warned that too much time had passed since the earthquake had struck for the memorial service to constitute an effective way of showing sympathy.[192] Although ministers did not dispute what Curzon saw as the need to convey sympathy, ministers nonetheless prevented him from holding a memorial service due to the timing of his proposal.

The Foreign Office provided limited financial relief to the Japanese government and public throughout September and October. Frank and Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin donated twenty-five pounds to the Mansion House Fund for Japan.[193] Robert Cecil offered ten pounds to the appeal that the League of Nations established. He explained that he made this donation in the belief that the British delegation should not be the only delegation at Geneva that did not donate any money.[194] Eliot provided £500 to the Japanese government.[195] The letter that he sent to Sir William Tyrrell in September implies that it is possible that Eliot made this donation to discourage the Japanese government from concluding that the British government had not shown any sympathy.[196] These donations show that the Foreign Office spent £535, the equivalent of over £27,000 today, representing roughly one percent of the total amount that the government spent in response to the disaster.[197]

The Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from providing any additional financial relief. Sir Vincent Caillard proposed in September that the Foreign Office should offer

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[191] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[192] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[193] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.
[194] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[195] Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[196] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[197] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

£10,000,000 to the Japanese government in the form of a loan.[198] The loan would have been worth over 270 times more than the overall amount that the British government spent in response to the earthquake.[199] Sir Otto Niemeyer criticised this proposal on the grounds that the government could not afford to provide a loan of this magnitude in the face of an impending deficit. He reasoned that the loan would necessitate a rise in the average rate of income tax. He argued that the government should repay the debts that it had accumulated during the First World War instead of offering loans to foreign governments.[200]

The earthquake demonstrates how the British state engaged with private aid partnerships. The government supported a public appeal when Frank and Nancy Ashton-Gwatkin donated money to the Mansion House Fund. This particular appeal shows how the armament industry, banks, the government, insurance brokers, manufacturers, and the public worked together in inter-war Britain to provide humanitarian aid overseas. The Foreign Office worked with an intergovernmental organisation when Cecil provided money to the appeal that the League of Nations had created. The government received advice from a private company when Caillard proposed that the Foreign Office should offer a loan to the Japanese government. These examples illustrate how the state engaged with a mixed economy of aid that entailed a plethora of diverse groups.

The actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury also prevented the Foreign Office from providing any humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government. The Treasury prevented Curzon from offering £100,000 in the form of a grant to the Japanese government in late October.[201] Curzon had envisioned that the Japanese government would have spent this money on the acquisition and distribution of blankets, clothes, food, medicine, and other supplies.[202] The Cabinet agreed instead during the middle of November that the Foreign Office would spend £100,000 on the procurement and donation of food to the Japanese government.[203] Sir Neville Chamberlain, however, convinced his fellow ministers that this plan should be subjected to a vote in Parliament as soon as Parliament had reconvened.[204] This decision meant that the Foreign Office

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[198] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[199] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[200] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[201] Barstow to McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[202] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[203] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[204] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.

could not offer any provisions to the Japanese government until January, leading Kiichiro Hiranuma to advise that the British government should support the reconstruction of the Imperial University of Tokyo instead.[205] Most of the aid that the government provided in response to the earthquake was for the benefit of British expatriates and the University in part because the Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from offering provisions to the Japanese government.

The Japanese government would have played a proactive role in shaping the humanitarian aid that it would have received from the Foreign Office. Curzon anticipated that the Japanese government would have been free to spend the grant that he proposed in early October with no conditions or terms attached.[206] The Cabinet agreed during the middle of November that the Japanese government would decide which foodstuffs the Foreign Office could and could not purchase.[207] The Japanese government would have exercised complete control over the kind of provisions that it would have received in each of these proposals. Tehila Sasson explains that the recipients of humanitarian aid often shape the aid that they receive.[208] These examples support this view by showing that the Cabinet and Curzon planned to treat the Japanese government as an active participant, rather than as a passive recipient, in the provision of humanitarian relief.

The Japanese government played an active role in shaping the humanitarian support that it received from the American government. Cyrus Woods, the American ambassador to Japan, helped the Japanese government to submit requests for blankets, clothes, nails, timber, and tinned fish to the American government. He convinced his government that the American navy should only provide provisions that the Japanese government had requested.[209] Julia Irwin suggests that Woods hoped that he could promote equality, respect, and trust between Japan and the United States by treating the Japanese government as an active participant in the provision of humanitarian aid.[210] It is possible that Curzon and the Cabinet were prepared to allow the Japanese government to choose which humanitarian provisions that it would have received from the British government for similar reasons.

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[205] Eliot to Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 22 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[206] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[207] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[208] Emily Baughan, Eleanor Davey, Bronwen Everill, Matthew Hilton, Kevin O'Sullivan, and Tehila Sasson, 'History and Humanitarianism: A Conversation', *Past and Present*, 241 (2018), p. 20.
[209] Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently', pp. 739-43, 746-8.
[210] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 122.

Curzon lobbied his government to provide provisions to the Japanese government because he saw humanitarian aid as a diplomatic tool. He argued that the Foreign Office should offer aid in the belief that this display of sympathy would convince the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of cordial diplomatic relations. He warned that the post-Alliance relationship would be damaged if the Japanese government surmised that the British government had offered less sympathy than the American government and public had shown. Curzon reasoned that the British government needed to provide more humanitarian provisions than the governments of the Dominions had provided.[211] These views reflect that he believed that humanitarian aid should play a role in British foreign policy as well as in the post-Alliance relationship.

These views can be interpreted within a broader diplomatic context. Patricia Clavin argues that the formation of the League of Nations during the years that followed the end of the First World War 'multilateralised' British diplomacy. She explains that the League represented a move away from the bilateral military alliances that had underpinned international diplomacy throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in favour of agreements between multiple states.[212] The end of the Alliance in August 1923 formed a part of this wider move towards multilateral diplomacy. The end of the Alliance marked the end of a bilateral military relationship that had lasted for over twenty years. The Alliance was superseded by the Four-Power, Five-Power, and Nine-Power Treaties that the British and Japanese governments signed alongside seven other governments during the Washington Conference that took place between November 1921 and February 1922. Curzon envisioned that the provision of humanitarian relief would convey to the Japanese government that this transition from bilateral to multilateral diplomacy did not mean that the two governments were no longer friends.

Curzon monitored how the governments of the Dominions reacted to the earthquake. He estimated that the Australian government spent £60,000, the Canadian government spent £30,000, and the government of New Zealand spent £25,000 on the distribution of clothes, food, and other supplies amongst expatriates and Japanese nationals.[213] The three governments had spent a combined total of £115,000, or almost £6,000,000 today, by November, over three times the overall amount that the British government spent in response to the earthquake throughout the decade that followed the disaster.[214]

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[211] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, pp. 438-9.
[212] Patricia Clavin, 'The Ben Pimlott Memorial Lecture, 2019: Britain and the Making of Global Order after 1919', *Twentieth Century British History*, 31/3 (2020), p. 343.
[213] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[214] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB

J. Charles Schencking laments that historians 'know … little about how members of the international community viewed, interpreted, or responded' to the earthquake.[215] These examples help to address this lacuna by highlighting how governments across the world reacted to the disaster.

The earthquake shows that Curzon had formulated what Frank Kaser and Irwin would describe as a 'humanitarian policy'.[216] Curzon maintained that the provision of aid would convey to the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not necessarily mark the end of friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan. He reasoned that humanitarian relief would help to protect this relationship by dissuading the Japanese government from concluding that the British government had shown less sympathy than the American government and public had shown.[217] These examples illustrate that Curzon believed that the provision of humanitarian aid to foreign governments could advance the diplomatic objectives of the British state.

In contrast, the Treasury opposed the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Japanese government. The department dismissed the grant that Curzon had requested in October and Chamberlain informed his fellow ministers in November that the British government could not afford to purchase and donate food to the Japanese government.[218] These examples underline how the Treasury restricted the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of humanitarian aid. The debate between the Foreign Office and the Treasury over the amount of money that the government should spend in response to the earthquake suggests that humanitarian aid played a contested role in British foreign policy. This debate reflects that the British state was not a unified humanitarian actor as government departments debated whether the government should offer humanitarian relief to foreign governments. This debate shows instead that the British state was a contested space where government departments debated who should receive humanitarian support from the state. The following chapter demonstrates how this impasse between the Foreign Office and the Treasury lasted for nearly a year and delayed the donation of books to the Imperial University of Tokyo.

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24/162/50, p. 439; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[215] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', p. 54.
[216] Kaser, 'A Civilised Nation', p. 27; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[217] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, pp. 438-9.
[218] Barstow to McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.

## Chapter Four: The Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee and the Donation of Books to the Imperial University of Tokyo

### Introduction

On 4 October 1923, Yoshinao Kozai, the president of the Imperial University of Tokyo, informed Sir Charles Palairet, the British chargé d'affaires, that the Great Kanto Earthquake had destroyed 700,000 books at his University, representing the University's entire collection.[1] The British Foreign Office reacted by establishing the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in cooperation with the British Academy, the national academy for the arts, humanities, and social sciences in Britain, in December 1923. The Committee was a panel of British academics who were responsible for donating books to the University on behalf of the British government. Although the Committee was not a division of the Foreign Office or a government department, the Committee nevertheless received financial support from the Foreign Office. The Committee had donated 41,700 books by the time that it dissolved itself in March 1932.[2] These books replaced nearly six percent of the books at the University that the earthquake had destroyed.[3] The Foreign Office spent £25,000, the equivalent of roughly £1,300,000 today, on behalf of the Committee, over double the amount that the Royal Navy spent in response to the earthquake.[4]

The members of the Committee formed an Executive Board that oversaw the running of the Committee. The members of the Board held meetings at King's College in London.[5] Lord Balfour, the president of the British Academy and a former prime minister, sat on the Board as the chair of the Committee. Sir Israel Gollancz, the secretary of the British Academy, sat on the Board as the secretary of the Committee. Sir Charles Wakefield, an industrialist and a philanthropist who invested in the oil industry, sat on the Board as the honorary treasurer of the Committee. The presidents of the Antiquarian Booksellers, the national association for antiquarian books; the Booksellers' Association, the national

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[1] Yoshinao Kozai to Sir Charles Palairet, 'The Library of the Imperial University', 4 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 570-1.
[2] Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[3] Kozai to Palairet, 'The Library', 4 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 570; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[4] Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[5] Sir Israel Gollancz to Ramsay MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties in Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1612, p. 109.

federation of booksellers, and the Publishers' Association, the national association of publishers, sat on the Board as well.[6]

The books that the Committee donated constitute an example of intellectual relief. Tomas Irish defines "intellectual relief" as the provision of humanitarian assistance to academics, academic institutions, students, or writers. Intellectual relief can involve the provision of clothes, food, or other provisions to academics, students, or writers. Intellectual relief can also entail the provision of equipment, literature, or money to libraries, universities, or other academic institutions.[7] The books that the Committee donated represent an example of the latter type of intellectual relief.

Intellectual relief featured prominently in the international provision of humanitarian aid throughout the years that followed the end of the First World War. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an American think tank, spent $200,000 between December 1920 and June 1928 on the reconstruction of a library in the French city of Reims after the library had sustained damage during the war. This sum was the equivalent of roughly £44,000, or almost £2,300,000 today.[8] Irish explains that the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, a branch of the League of Nations, provided intellectual relief across Europe throughout the 1920s. The International Committee donated books to academies and universities as well as food to scholars and students in Austria and Hungary between November 1922 and June 1925.[9]

Intellectual relief was tied to liberal, inter-war internationalism. Emily Baughan defines this ideology as 'the belief that peoples [across the world] were becoming ever more politically, economically, and culturally interdependent and that mutual peace and prosperity would best be achieved through cooperation and arbitration'. Internationalism revolved around the principle that the pursuit of cooperation, friendship, and goodwill between the peoples and governments of the world would achieve international peace.[10] Helen McCarthy argues that internationalists saw themselves as citizens of a global community and they believed that they and their governments held responsibilities

[6] Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[7] Tomas Irish, 'The "Moral Basis" of Reconstruction? Humanitarianism, Intellectual Relief, and the League of Nations, 1918-25', *Modern Intellectual History*, 17/3 (2020), p. 769.
[8] Steven Witt, 'Inter-war Internationalism and the Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', *Libraries: Culture, History, and Society*, 4/1 (2020), p. 9.
[9] Irish, 'The "Moral Basis" of Reconstruction?', pp. 789-92.
[10] Emily Baughan, '"Every Citizen of Empire Implored to Save the Children!" Empire, Internationalism, and the Save the Children Fund in Inter-war Britain', *Historical Research*, 86/231 (2013), p. 119.

within this community.[11] She outlines that internationalists in Britain envisioned that an informed and mobilised public would promote disarmament, support for the League of Nations, and a transparent foreign policy that would be subjected to public scrutiny.[12] Internationalists espoused what they described as "enlightened patriotism", the belief that loyalty to the international community was compatible with loyalty to their own nation.[13] Intellectual relief built on and reinforced this ideology as scholars hoped that the provision of aid to academics, libraries, students, universities, and writers would promote friendship and goodwill between the peoples and nations of the world.[14]

Internationalists tended to focus on promoting cooperation between diplomats and other elites. Susan Pedersen explains that 'internationalism was enacted, institutionalised, and performed' at the League of Nations in Geneva. Those who travelled to the League were often academics, diplomats, politicians, or other elites, imbuing internationalism with a bourgeois cosmopolitanism.[15] Intellectual relief built on and reinforced this elitism by prioritising scholars over the wider public. American fieldworkers, for example, established what they called "intelligentsia kitchens" across Austria and Poland from 1921. These kitchens did not offer food to the wider public as they only offered food to university professors.[16] The books that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee donated demonstrate that the British government provided aid to elites in response to the earthquake as the Committee prioritised the Imperial University of Tokyo over the wider Japanese public.

Historians are yet to question the role that states played in the provision of intellectual relief during this period. This chapter addresses this lacuna by investigating the role that the Committee played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. In particular, this chapter outlines who within and who outside of the British government supported the Committee as well as the factors that influenced their views. This chapter highlights the obstacles that the Committee encountered and explains how these challenges delayed the donation of books. This chapter also analyses how the Committee engaged with

[11] Helen McCarthy, 'The League of Nations, Public Ritual, and National Identity in Britain, c.1919-56', *History Workshop Journal*, 70 (2010), p. 110.
[12] Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship, and Internationalism, c.1918-45* (Manchester, 2011), p. 16.
[13] McCarthy, 'The League of Nations, Public Ritual, and National Identity in Britain', p. 112.
[14] Tammy Proctor, 'The Louvain Library and US Ambition in Inter-war Belgium', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 50/2 (2015), p. 148; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 9.
[15] Susan Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations', *American Historical Review*, 112/4 (2007), pp. 1112-13.
[16] Irish, 'The "Moral Basis" of Reconstruction?', pp. 775-6.

different government departments. These questions help to underline the role that the British government played in the reconstruction of the oldest university in Japan.

This chapter argues that the Committee donated books because British diplomats and scholars believed that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public. Robert Nichols, the chair of English at the University, urged the British government to donate books, rather than food, on the grounds that any offer of food would offend the Japanese people.[17] Sir Charles Eliot, the British ambassador to Japan, agreed with Nichols on the grounds that the demand for books had become greater than the demand for food.[18] Ramsay MacDonald, the British prime minister and foreign secretary, decided that his government would provide books, rather than food, in the belief that books would represent a more permanent expression of friendship.[19] Gollancz showed more interest in assisting Japanese academics than he showed in the possibility of assisting the Japanese government or public.[20] These factors help to explain why most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake was solely for the benefit of British expatriates and the University.

This chapter contributes to the study of intellectual relief by highlighting that the state in inter-war Britain played an active role in the overseas provision of this particular kind of aid by providing books to a university. The disagreements that arose between the Foreign Office and the Treasury, though, reflect that these departments contested the role that the state should play in the international provision of intellectual and humanitarian relief. This chapter demonstrates that British academics and diplomats envisioned that intellectual relief should play an active role in foreign policy. In particular, diplomats and scholars maintained that the British government should offer books in the hope that this gesture would convince the Japanese government that the governments remained friends despite the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The way in which Kozai reacted to this assistance shows how the recipients of intellectual relief have responded

[17] Robert Nichols to Sir Charles Eliot, 'The Library of the Imperial University', 7 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[18] Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon, 'The Needs of Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, pp. 468-9.
[19] Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir John Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[20] Gollancz to MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 109.

to the support that they have received. The first and final chapters analyse these contributions to the literature in further detail.

The rest of this chapter is divided into four parts. The next part outlines why the Foreign Office established the Committee throughout the months that followed the earthquake. The following part examines how the Executive Board and the Foreign Office decided to finance and structure the Committee during the year that followed the disaster. The penultimate part analyses how the Committee and the University exchanged books with each other throughout the decade that followed the earthquake. The final part explains why the Committee donated books. This chronological approach demonstrates how the structure of the Committee developed throughout the 1920s and the early 1930s.

**The Formation of the Committee, October – December 1923**

Sir Charles Palairet was the first British diplomat to inform the Imperial University of Tokyo that the British government would support the reconstruction of the University. Yoshinao Kozai recalled in the letter that he sent to Palairet on 4 October 1923 that the chargé d'affaires had informed him that the British government would support the rebuilding of the University. This letter demonstrates that Palairet had spoken with the staff at the University by early October.[21] At the same time, this letter is the only extant source that is written in English that contains any information about the support that Palairet offered. This factor means that it is unclear when exactly he first offered assistance to the University. What he envisioned that this assistance would entail and why he offered this support are likewise uncertain.

Kozai nonetheless outlined that the University would accept any assistance that the British government could provide. He explained to Palairet that the earthquake had destroyed 'almost all the books' that the University had held. Kozai proposed that the government could donate books to replace those that had been destroyed. He highlighted that the University was 'particularly in need of books relating to literature, philosophy, history, jurisprudence, politics, economics, statistics, finance, commerce, and other branches of the social sciences'.[22] This letter suggests that Kozai was the first to propose that the British government should provide books.

His proposal attracted little attention from British academics or diplomats until Robert Nichols reiterated what Kozai had suggested a month later in November. Sayoni Basu and Edmund Blunden argue that Nichols acquired an international reputation during the First World War as a 'highly acclaimed' poet and he translated Japanese poetry into English after the war had ended. Nichols had taught at the University for two years and

[21] Kozai to Palairet, 'The Library', 4 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 570-1.
[22] Kozai to Palairet, 'The Library', 4 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 571.

he was living with his wife Norah in Tokyo when the earthquake struck.[23] The couple were among the hundreds of British expatriates who left the capital throughout the weeks that followed the disaster by boarding a commercial passenger ship that carried them to Kobe. Sir Montague Paske-Smith, the British vice-consul in Kobe, reported in late September that the couple took refuge at the British Consulate in Kobe for several nights at the end of the month.[24] The couple returned to Tokyo in early October and they stayed at a house near Shiba Park, a public park, throughout the autumn.[25]

Nichols outlined his views on the reconstruction of the University in a memorandum that he sent to Sir Charles Eliot on 7 November. Nichols estimated that the books that were written in English that were destroyed when the University caught fire 'cannot have been [worth] less than one million pounds', the equivalent of roughly £52,000,000 today. He contended that the British government should replace every book that had been written in English in the belief that this gesture would 'prove beneficial to our prestige and beneficial in no temporary sense'.[26] This passage shows that Nichols believed that the British government should provide books and play a proactive role in the overseas provision of intellectual relief on the grounds that the donation of books would enhance British prestige in Japan.

He informed Eliot that his colleagues at the University were starting to replace the books that the earthquake had destroyed by purchasing books from overseas. Nichols predicted that Japanese academics and students would be more likely to import books in future from countries that had supported the reconstruction of the University. He argued that the British government should donate books in the expectation that this gesture would encourage Japanese scholars and students to import books from Britain. He maintained that the gift of books 'cannot fail to stimulate British trade'.[27] Nichols saw intellectual relief as an economic tool that the government could utilise to promote British trade.

Nichols reasoned that the University wielded considerable influence over the Japanese government. He explained that at least some of the members of the House of Peers, the upper house of the Japanese Diet that is today known as the House of Councillors, were alumni of the University. He highlighted that more civil servants graduated from the

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[23] Sayoni Basu and Edmund Blunden, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Nichols, Robert Malise Bowyer', 2016, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35223?rskey=ojCvJF&result=1>, accessed date: 5 August 2024.
[24] Sir Montague Paske-Smith, 'British Subjects Reported Safe', 29 September 1923, Earthquake Papers, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1589, pp. 210-12.
[25] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[26] *Ibid*.
[27] *Ibid*.

Imperial University of Tokyo than from any other Japanese university. He suggested that the Japanese government could not undertake any 'drastic political measure … if this University as a whole opposed it'. He proposed that the British government should donate books in the belief that this gesture would help the government to curry favour with the University and by extension the House of Peers, the civil service, and the Japanese government.[28] His interest in the House of Peers demonstrates that Nichols saw intellectual relief in elitist terms as he believed that the donation of books would help the British government to gain favour with the political elite of Japan.

Nichols outlined that the staff at the University could be divided into three factions. He informed Eliot that each group was influenced by the culture of a different country. Nichols reported that the largest faction was influenced by Germany. He underlined that most of those who were affiliated with this group were members of the departments of law, science, or technology. He argued that the second faction was influenced by Britain and the United States. He described how those who were affiliated with this group included himself and what he called 'the best and most far-sighted' scholars. He explained in passing that the third faction was influenced by France, but he did not explain where this faction or his faction were based at the University.[29]

Nichols lamented that his faction had started to lose influence. He contended that the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance over two months earlier had 'discouraged' him and the rest of his faction. He argued that the British government should donate books to the University on the grounds that this gesture would convey that the end of the Alliance did not represent the end of friendly relations with Britain. He reasoned that the gift of books would offer encouragement to his faction and would help to restore the influence that his group and Britain had lost at the University.[30]

Nichols reported that publishers from across the world were preparing to offer books. In particular, he noted that Wilhelm Solf, the German ambassador to Japan, was 'in constant communication with the University'. Nichols recalled that Solf had asked every German publisher across the world to donate at least one copy of every book that they held in stock. Nichols warned Eliot that this proposal constituted 'a very serious' threat to British interests. Nichols feared that what Solf had proposed would further increase the influence that Germany held at the University at the expense of Britain and what Nichols described as his own 'pro-English' faction.[31]

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[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *Ibid*.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] *Ibid*.

Publishers and twelve universities across Germany supported the rebuilding of the University. The Universities of Berlin, Bonn, Breslau, Frankfurt, Gottingen, Greifswald, Halle, Kiel, Konigsberg, Marberg, Munster, and the Academy of Music in Berlin donated books. Tomas Irish estimates that the Imperial University of Tokyo received 22,800 books from Germany.[32] These books replaced roughly three percent of the books at the University that the earthquake had destroyed.[33] The role that German publishers and universities played in the reconstruction of the University shows that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee was not the only international donor that provided intellectual relief in response to the earthquake.

The British and German governments competed with each other for influence in Japan throughout the early twentieth century. The German government proposed in 1912 that Prince Heinrich, the German emperor's brother, should bolster German prestige in Japan by visiting Tokyo and awarding the Order of the Black Eagle, a military honour, to the Japanese emperor. Antony Best argues that the British government reacted to this proposal by dispatching Prince Arthur, a cousin of the British monarch, to Japan in September 1912 'in a move designed to outbid the Germans'.[34] The memorandum that Nichols wrote suggests that he saw the reconstruction of the University and the donation of books as an extension of this broader rivalry between Britain and Germany. This factor explains why he paid meticulous attention to Solf and to the German faction at the University.[35]

Nichols reported that the Italian government was also preparing to offer books. He recalled that he had asked a colleague at the University if any foreign governments had offered to support the reconstruction of the University. His colleague replied by showing Nichols a telegram that Giacomo de Martino, the Italian ambassador to Japan, had sent to the University in October. Nichols struggled to remember the contents of the telegram because he 'was only granted a moment or two in which to read it'. He likewise lamented that Martino wrote 'in French, which … is not so easy to memorise as English'. Nichols nevertheless informed Eliot that 'the Italian government would see to it that the University was provided with Italian books'.[36] Although historians are yet to consider

[32] Tomas Irish, *Feeding the Mind: Humanitarianism and the Reconstruction of European Intellectual Life, 1919-33* (Cambridge, 2024), p. 185.
[33] Kozai to Palairet, 'The Library', 4 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 570; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[34] Antony Best, 'Race, Monarchy, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *Social Science Japan Journal*, 9/2 (2006), pp. 181-2.
[35] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[36] *Ibid*.

whether the Italian government donated any books, Martino's offer nonetheless demonstrates how the rebuilding of the University attracted attention across Europe.

Nichols warned that the British government needed to donate books as soon as possible. He interpreted the offers that Martino and Solf had made as evidence that the British government needed to donate books before other governments or publishers took the chance to 'get in' first.[37] This argument implies that he believed that the British government should provide books as quickly as possible on the grounds that this gesture would protect British influence at the University from other Europeans. This memorandum shows that Nichols saw intellectual relief as a tool that the British government should utilise to compete with other Europeans to advance British diplomatic, economic, and political interests in Japan.

Nichols predicted that books would leave a lasting impression on the future of British diplomatic relations with Japan. He reasoned that 'the sight of books given by the British government cannot but exert its influence on generations of students' and would constitute a permanent expression of friendship between the British government and the University. At the same time, he contended that a gift of food to the Japanese public would not leave a lasting impression on the future of British diplomatic relations with Japan because food 'is soon consumed'.[38] This memorandum reflects that the Committee donated books because academics like Nichols advised that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese public.

Nichols argued that an offer of food would offend the Japanese people. He explained that the Japanese people, like 'most of us, don't like being fed like beggars'. In contrast, he suggested that the donation of books to the University would not offend the Japanese people because 'few [in Japan] are averse to the present of a book'. He underlined that he had 'never known a nation who did so much and so serious reading' as Japan. He proposed that a gift of books would have 'a sort of refinement about it that would … appeal to a nation full of reverence for learning and enthusiasm for education'. He concluded that the British government should offer books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese public, in the belief that books would imply 'an interest in civilisation and friendship as opposed to charity'.[39] This memorandum illustrates that Nichols saw intellectual relief in elitist terms as he urged the government to prioritise the scholars and students at the University over the wider Japanese public.

[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Ibid*.
[39] *Ibid*.

Japanese academics and diplomats were publicising the reconstruction of the University on the world stage when Nichols wrote this memorandum. Inazo Niitobe, the undersecretary-general of the League of Nations and a former student at the University, urged the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation to assist the University in November. Kozai called on Sir Eric Drummond, the secretary-general of the League, to endorse the rebuilding of the University. Kenzo Takayanagi, a professor of law at the University, asked Kenneth Chorley, a conservationist, and William Verbeck, an American-Dutch general who had lived in Japan, to support the University when the professor visited the United States.[40] These examples and the memorandum highlight that the staff at the University were proactive, rather than passive, recipients of intellectual relief as they actively appealed to the international community for assistance.

Eliot forwarded the memorandum that he had received from Nichols to Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary. The ambassador enclosed the memorandum in a letter that he sent to Curzon on 10 November. Eliot informed Curzon that he agreed with Nichols that the British government should donate books to the University.[41] Eliot sent this letter only three days after Nichols had written the memorandum. The speed with which Eliot forwarded the memorandum suggests that he wanted to bring the reconstruction of the University to the attention of Curzon as soon as possible.

Eliot outlined why the British government should provide books. Nichols had predicted that Japanese academics and students would be more likely in future to import books from countries that had supported the reconstruction of the University. He reasoned that the British government should offer books in the expectation that this gesture would encourage Japanese scholars and students in future to import books from Britain.[42] Eliot shared this view and he advised Curzon that the government should donate books in the belief that this gesture 'would produce [an] excellent and permanent effect' on British trade.[43] Eliot concurred with Nichols that intellectual relief was an economic tool that the government could utilise to support British trade.

Eliot recognised that more than two months had passed since the earthquake had struck. He informed Curzon that the Japanese public was no longer short of food. Eliot contended that 'on the other hand … books would arouse real enthusiasm' at the University.[44] Eliot and Nichols believed that the British government should offer books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese public, for different reasons. Nichols

[40] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 183-4.
[41] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 468-9.
[42] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[43] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 468.
[44] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 469.

proposed that the government should provide books, rather than food, on the grounds that a gift of food would offend the Japanese people.[45] In contrast, Eliot argued that the government should donate books, rather than food, in the belief that the demand for books had become greater than the demand for food.[46] The views that Eliot and Nichols expressed demonstrate that the Committee later provided books because British diplomats and scholars encouraged the British government to donate books to the University rather than food to the Japanese public.

Eliot had shown an interest in academia throughout his career. He wrote academic articles and books about British colonialism, Buddhism, Hinduism, marine biology, and the Ottoman Empire. He was the vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield between July 1905 and March 1912 and he was the vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong between March 1912 and April 1920.[47] His interest in academia helps to further explain why he paid attention to the reconstruction of the Imperial University of Tokyo.

The previous chapter demonstrates that Curzon had been contemplating how the British government should respond to the earthquake for over a month by the time that he received this letter from Eliot. Curzon proposed in late September that the Foreign Office should convene a memorial service at St. Paul's Cathedral in memory of those who had died during the disaster.[48] The Cabinet dismissed this proposal on the grounds that the service would clash with other events.[49] Curzon suggested in early October that the British government should offer £100,000, or roughly £5,200,000 today, to the Japanese government. He envisioned that the Japanese government would spend this grant on the procurement and distribution of clothes, medicine, and other humanitarian provisions.[50]

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[45] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[46] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 469.
[47] Joan Hussey and George Sansom, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Eliot, Sir Charles Norton Edgcumbe', 2009, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/abstract/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-32991>, accessed date: 10 May 2022.
[48] Lord Stamfordham to Lord Curzon, 'Japanese Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[49] Lord Curzon to Lord Stamfordham, 'Question of Proposed Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[50] Sir Victor Wellesley to Sir Norman Fisher, 'A Practical Expression of Sympathy', 9 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

The Treasury rejected his request for a grant in late October.[51] Curzon reacted by asking the Cabinet to submit his request to a vote in Parliament.[52]

Curzon and the rest of the Cabinet discussed the earthquake throughout three meetings that took place between 13 and 16 November.[53] The ministers concurred during the first meeting that they could not submit the request for a grant to Parliament because Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister, was preparing to dissolve Parliament. The Cabinet decided instead that the Foreign Office would offer food to the Japanese government as a gift. The Cabinet agreed that the Foreign Office could spend £100,000 on the purchase of foodstuffs that would be chosen by the Japanese government.[54] Sir Neville Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer, criticised this proposal during the second meeting on the grounds that the British government could not afford to spend this sum of money.[55] This argument led the Cabinet to conclude during the third meeting that the Foreign Office could only offer food to the Japanese government subject to a vote in Parliament.[56] This decision meant that the Foreign Office could not offer food to the Japanese government until Parliament had reconvened in the new year, over four months after the earthquake had struck.

Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet secretary, wrote minutes during these meetings. The minutes show that Curzon attended the first two meetings.[57] He did not, however, attend the third meeting.[58] His absence means that Curzon was not present when the rest of the Cabinet concluded that the Foreign Office could not provide food to the Japanese government until Parliament had reconvened.

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[51] Sir George Barstow to Ronald McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[52] Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, pp. 438-9.
[53] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[54] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[55] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[56] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[57] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 327; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 340.
[58] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 353.

These meetings took place several days after Curzon had received the letter that Eliot had written and the memorandum which Nichols had written. The minutes that Hankey wrote, though, do not contain any references to the University. This factor suggests that Curzon did not discuss the possibility of offering books with his fellow ministers. He instead advised his colleagues that the British government should offer a grant to the Japanese government.[59] These factors imply that Curzon was at first more interested in offering relief to the Japanese government than he was in the possibility of donating books to the University.

He started to question the decision that his fellow ministers had reached shortly after the third meeting had taken place. He outlined his doubts in a letter that he sent to Eliot on 20 November. Curzon informed Eliot that the rest of the Cabinet had agreed that the Foreign Office could not offer food to the Japanese government until Parliament had reconvened. Curzon asked Eliot if the Foreign Office should offer food 'in view of this unavoidable delay'.[60] This letter demonstrates that Curzon questioned if the Foreign Office should spend money on the procurement of food given that the department would not be able to offer such provisions to the Japanese government until January.

Eliot replied to Curzon two days later by sending a letter to the foreign secretary on 22 November. Eliot explained that he had discussed the letter that he had received from Curzon with Kiichiro Hiranuma, the Japanese minister of justice and a former student at the University, a few hours earlier.[61] Eliot reported that Hiranuma had advised that the Japanese government would not need any donations of food by the time that the British Foreign Office would be able to provide such provisions. The minister suggested instead that 'the greatest assistance which could be rendered to Japan now would … be the replacement of the [books in the] burnt out University Library'.[62] This argument illustrates that at least some members of the Japanese government agreed with Eliot and Nichols that the British government should provide books, rather than food, in response to the earthquake.

Curzon replied to Eliot by sending a telegram to the ambassador on 12 December. Curzon outlined that he had asked Lord Balfour and the rest of the general committee, the governing body, of the British Academy to establish a panel of British academics in

[59] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[60] Lord Curzon to Sir Charles Eliot, 'British Contribution to Earthquake Relief', 20 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[61] Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon, 'British Contribution to Earthquake Relief Work', 22 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[62] Eliot to Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 22 November 1923, T 161/516/1.

cooperation with the Foreign Office.[63] The members of the panel were responsible for the donation of books to the Imperial University of Tokyo on behalf of the British government. Balfour and the rest of the general committee of the British Academy helped to establish the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee by deciding who sat on the Executive Board that oversaw the running of the Committee.[64] Curzon explained that the members of the Board had held their first meeting two days earlier on 10 December, over three months after the earthquake had struck.[65] Curzon only showed an interest in the donation of books after the Cabinet had concluded that the Foreign Office could not offer food to the Japanese government without the approval of Parliament. This delay caused Curzon to question whether the Foreign Office should donate food to the Japanese government and he asked the British Academy to assist with the formation of the Committee only after Hiranuma had confirmed Curzon's doubts.

Balfour had negotiated with the Japanese government several times throughout his career. He persuaded the Japanese government to agree to protect India, a British colony, when the British and Japanese governments renewed the Alliance in August 1905. He oversaw the negotiations that took place between the Japanese navy and the Royal Navy between December 1916 and February 1917 that led to the deployment of Japanese warships in Malta, a British colony, during the First World War. He was the head of the British delegation at the Washington Conference that took place between November 1921 and February 1922. Ian Nish argues that this role meant that Balfour played a critical role in the negotiations between the British and Japanese governments that resulted in the end of the Alliance.[66] It is plausible that this familiarity with Japan explains why Curzon asked Balfour to chair the Committee.

Several academics and diplomats proposed throughout the autumn that followed the earthquake that the British government should donate books to the University. Palairet had informed the University by early October that the government would assist the reconstruction of the University. Kozai replied by advising the chargé d'affaires that the government could provide books.[67] This suggestion received little attention from British diplomats or scholars until Nichols brought this proposal to the attention of Eliot in early

[63] Lord Curzon to Sir Charles Eliot, 'An Executive Committee', 12 December 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 410.
[64] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.
[65] Curzon to Eliot, 'An Executive Committee', 12 December 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 410.
[66] Ian Nish, 'Arthur James Balfour', in Antony Best and Hugh Cortazzi (eds), *British Foreign Secretaries and Japan, 1850-1990: Aspects of the Evolution of British Foreign Policy* (Folkestone, 2018), pp. 126-30.
[67] Kozai to Palairet, 'The Library', 4 October 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 570-1.

November. Eliot agreed that the government should donate books and he forwarded the memorandum that he had received from Nichols to Curzon.[68]

Curzon at first showed little interest in the University. He did not raise the possibility of donating books with his fellow ministers when the Cabinet discussed the earthquake during the middle of November. He instead advised his colleagues that the British government should offer a grant to the Japanese government.[69] The rest of the Cabinet, however, concluded instead that the Foreign Office would offer food to the Japanese government subject to a vote in Parliament in the new year.[70] Curzon questioned this decision and he asked Eliot if the Foreign Office should provide food given that the department would be unable to offer these provisions to the Japanese government until January.[71] Eliot replied by informing the foreign secretary that Hiranuma had advised that the British government should donate books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government.[72] Curzon accepted this advice and by early December he had asked Balfour and the rest of the general committee of the British Academy to form the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in cooperation with the Foreign Office.

The Foreign Office and the British Academy established the Committee and the Committee later donated books because academics and diplomats had urged the British government to donate books to the University rather than food to the Japanese public. Nichols argued that the government should offer books, rather than food, on the grounds that books would leave a lasting impression on the future of British diplomatic relations with Japan. In contrast, he warned that the Japanese people would be offended if they received food.[73] Eliot likewise contended that the British government should provide books, instead of food, in the belief that the Japanese public was no longer short of food.[74] Curzon agreed with Eliot and Nichols after the Cabinet had discouraged the Foreign Office from offering food to the Japanese government and after Hiranuma had spoken with Eliot.

**Financing and Structuring the Committee, January – September 1924**

A new government entered office in Britain roughly a month after the British Academy and the Foreign Office had established the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. The Labour Party, the second largest party in Parliament, formed the first Labour government with the support of the Liberal Party, the third largest party in Parliament, in

[68] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 468-9.
[69] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[70] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[71] Curzon to Eliot, 'Earthquake Relief', 20 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[72] Eliot to Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 22 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[73] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[74] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 469.

late January 1924. Ramsay MacDonald, the new premier, held the offices of prime minister and foreign secretary simultaneously. How the British government should respond to the Great Kanto Earthquake remained unanswered by the time that the new government entered office over four months after the earthquake had struck.

This question remained unanswered because the previous government had not reached a final decision on how to respond to the earthquake. The previous Cabinet had concluded in November that the Foreign Office would spend £100,000 on the provision of food to the Japanese government subject to a vote in Parliament in the new year.[75] Lord Curzon, however, had asked Lord Balfour and the rest of the general committee of the British Academy by early December to form the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in cooperation with the Foreign Office. It was unclear when the new government entered office if the previous government had decided to donate books to the University as well as, or instead of, offering food to the Japanese government.

The staff at the Treasury outlined their stance on the possibility of providing books as well as food a week after MacDonald had entered office. Maurice Headlam, an assistant secretary at the Treasury, explained the view of his colleagues in a letter that he sent to Sir Victor Wellesley, the head of East Asian policy at the Foreign Office, on 31 January. Headlam reported that his colleagues had decided that the British government could not afford to donate books to the University as well as food to the Japanese government.[76] This letter demonstrates that the Treasury forced the Foreign Office to decide if the British government would provide books or food.

MacDonald outlined how he planned to respond to the Treasury in a telegram that he sent to Sir Charles Eliot a week later on 7 February. MacDonald informed Eliot that his government would donate books rather than food. MacDonald recalled that the previous Cabinet had planned to spend £100,000 on the provision of food. He proposed that his government would instead spend this money on the purchase of books that the Committee would donate to the University. He explained that he planned to submit this proposal to a vote in Parliament.[77] This telegram shows that the Committee donated books in part because MacDonald decided that his government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government. This telegram illustrates

[75] Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[76] Maurice Headlam to Sir Victor Wellesley, 'Professor Nichols', 31 January 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[77] Ramsay MacDonald to Sir Charles Eliot, 'Misunderstanding', 7 February 1924, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties in Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1612, p. 248.

that the British government prioritised elites when providing humanitarian aid in response to the earthquake as MacDonald envisioned that his government should prioritise scholars and students at the University over the wider Japanese public.

He outlined why he made this decision in a letter that he sent to Gonsuke Hayashi, the Japanese ambassador to Britain, almost six months later in August. The prime minister informed Hayashi that the gift of books would epitomise what MacDonald described as 'the sympathy and friendship of the British people'.[78] John Ferris explains that MacDonald aimed to foster friendly relations with the Japanese government out of fear that the Japanese government could threaten British interests in Asia after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended.[79] This letter suggests that MacDonald believed that his government should provide books to the University in the expectation that this gesture would help to foster cordial diplomatic relations between the two countries. He contended that the books would constitute 'a small but permanent expression' of this friendship.[80] This letter shows that MacDonald concurred with Robert Nichols that the British government should donate books, rather than food, on the grounds that books would represent a more permanent expression of friendship.[81] This letter also illustrates that MacDonald envisioned that intellectual relief could play a role in British foreign policy by fostering friendly diplomatic relations with other countries.

The amount of money that MacDonald planned to spend alarmed the Treasury. Sir George Barstow, a civil servant at the Treasury, outlined the views of his colleagues in a letter that he sent to Arthur Ponsonby, the parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, on 19 March. Barstow reported that his colleagues had decided that the Foreign Office could not spend £100,000 on the acquisition of books. He explained that his colleagues had reached this decision on the grounds that the government could not afford the expense.[82]

The previous chapter analyses how the Treasury discouraged the Foreign Office from spending money in response to the earthquake. Sir Vincent Caillard, a financier, had argued in September that the British government should offer £10,000,000, or over

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[78] Ramsay MacDonald to Gonsuke Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[79] John Ferris, 'Ramsay MacDonald', in Antony Best and Hugh Cortazzi (eds), *British Foreign Secretaries and Japan, 1850-1990: Aspects of the Evolution of British Foreign Policy* (Folkestone, 2018), pp. 144-7.
[80] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[81] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1; MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[82] Sir George Barstow to Arthur Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

£520,000,000 today, to the Japanese government.[83] This loan would have been worth nearly 900 times more than the amount that the Royal Navy spent in response to the disaster.[84] Sir Otto Niemeyer, the head of finance at the Treasury, prevented the Foreign Office from offering a loan to the Japanese government on the grounds that the British government could not afford the expense without raising taxes. He proposed that the British government should focus instead on repaying the debts that it had accumulated during the First World War.[85] The letter that Barstow sent to Ponsonby formed part of a broader debate between the Foreign Office and the Treasury over the amount of money that the government should spend in response to the earthquake.

The British government encountered numerous economic challenges throughout the 1920s. Stuart Ball explains that the number of strikes in the coal and steel industries increased, the value of exports fell, and farmers faced growing hardships after the end of the war.[86] Matthew Heaslip estimates that the government spent £300,000,000, the equivalent of over £16,000,000,000 today, on debt repayments in 1920-1, representing over a fifth of the national budget.[87] Andrew Thorpe reasons that over twenty percent of the workforce was unemployed in 1921 and unemployment remained high during the years that followed.[88] These factors help to explain why the Treasury argued that the government could not afford to spend money in response to the earthquake.

The Treasury, though, was willing to compromise on the acquisition of books. Barstow informed Ponsonby that the Treasury would allow the Foreign Office to spend '£25,000 … on books for presentation to Tokyo University'.[89] Barstow did not outline why the Treasury had chosen this particular figure when MacDonald had planned to spend four times this amount.[90] This disagreement between the Foreign Office and the Treasury over spending highlights that the state in inter-war Britain was not a single, unified humanitarian actor. This debate reflects instead that the state was a contested space

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[83] Sir Otto Niemeyer to Sir Neville Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[84] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1.
[85] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[86] Stuart Ball, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Baldwin, Stanley, First Earl Baldwin of Bewdley', 2019, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30550?rskey=mTmSs6&result=1>, accessed date: 27 June 2023.
[87] Matthew Heaslip, *Gunboats, Empire, and the China Station: The Royal Navy in 1920s East Asia* (London, 2021), p. 28.
[88] Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (fourth edition, London, 2015), p. 54.
[89] Barstow to Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, T 161/516/1.
[90] MacDonald to Eliot, 'Misunderstanding', 7 February 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 248; Barstow to Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, T 161/516/1.

where the Treasury debated and restricted the role that the state played in the provision of intellectual relief.

The sum of money that the Treasury allowed the Foreign Office to spend on books was considerably smaller than the proposals that Caillard and Curzon had suggested. The amount that the Foreign Office spent on books was 400 times smaller than the loan that Caillard had proposed.[91] The amount that the Foreign Office spent on books was four times smaller than the grant that Curzon had requested.[92] These comparisons suggest that the Treasury was more concerned with the amount of money that the government spent than the department was concerned with how the government spent the money.

MacDonald submitted the compromise that the Treasury had offered to a vote in Parliament on 31 July. He described the vote in a letter that he sent to Hayashi two days later on 2 August. MacDonald reported that he asked Parliament to allow the Foreign Office to spend £25,000 on the acquisition of books. He outlined in Parliament that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee would donate the books to the Imperial University of Tokyo on behalf of the British government. MacDonald explained to Hayashi that Parliament voted to approve this request.[93] This vote marked the end of the debate that had taken place between the Foreign Office and the Treasury for almost a year over the amount of money that the government should spend in response to the earthquake.

MacDonald held the vote in Parliament over four months after Barstow had informed Ponsonby that the Treasury would allow the Foreign Office to purchase books. MacDonald did not explain in the letter that he sent to Hayashi why he did not hold the vote earlier. This delay meant that the Committee did not receive financial support from the government until nearly a year after the earthquake had struck. This delay likewise meant that the Foreign Office could not provide books to the Committee until almost eight months after the department had established the Committee. Hansard, the transcript of the debates and votes that have taken place in Parliament, does not hold any record for this particular vote. The dearth of any minutes or transcripts means that how Parliament voted on the acquisition of books remains uncertain.

Sir Israel Gollancz, the chair of English at King's College in London, sent a letter to MacDonald on 13 August, two weeks after the vote in Parliament had taken place. William Baker and Albert Hyamson argue that Gollancz had 'won wide recognition' across Britain and overseas by the time that he became the secretary of the Committee for his

[91] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Barstow to Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, T 161/516/1.
[92] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Barstow to Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, T 161/516/1.
[93] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.

research on William Shakespeare.[94] He contended that the donation of books would constitute 'an adequate tribute to the intellectual life' of Japan.[95] This passage illustrates that Gollancz participated in the Committee and believed that the British government should provide books on the grounds that this gesture would support Japanese academia. At the same time, he did not refer to the Japanese government or public in this letter. This letter suggests that the Committee donated books because academics like Gollancz were more interested in donating books to the University than they were in the possibility of assisting the Japanese government or public. This letter helps to underline the elitist nature of intellectual relief as Gollancz showed more interest in the scholars and students of the University than he showed in the wider Japanese public.

Gollancz anticipated that the donation of books would play a role in the future of British diplomatic relations with Japan. He reasoned that the books would represent 'a worthy testimony of sympathy and friendship' between the two countries.[96] This passage shows that he believed that the Committee should donate books because he agreed with MacDonald that intellectual relief should play an active role in British foreign policy by promoting friendly diplomatic relations with other countries. Although Gollancz had studied a diverse range of subjects throughout his career that included French chronicles, Icelandic poetry, and romantic novels, he had never studied any Japanese literature and he was unfamiliar with Japan when the earthquake struck.[97] His participation in the Committee reflects how the earthquake, the reconstruction of the University, and the diplomatic possibilities of intellectual relief attracted attention from scholars who did not have any discernible connections with Japan.

Gollancz outlined the structure of the Committee in a letter that he sent to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, an advisor on Japanese affairs at the Foreign Office, on 30 September. Gollancz recalled that the Executive Board had spent the last nine months since their first meeting in December planning the structure of the Committee.[98] This letter suggests that the Board, rather than the British Academy or the Foreign Office, was responsible for structuring the Committee. Figure 4.1 outlines the structure of the Committee.

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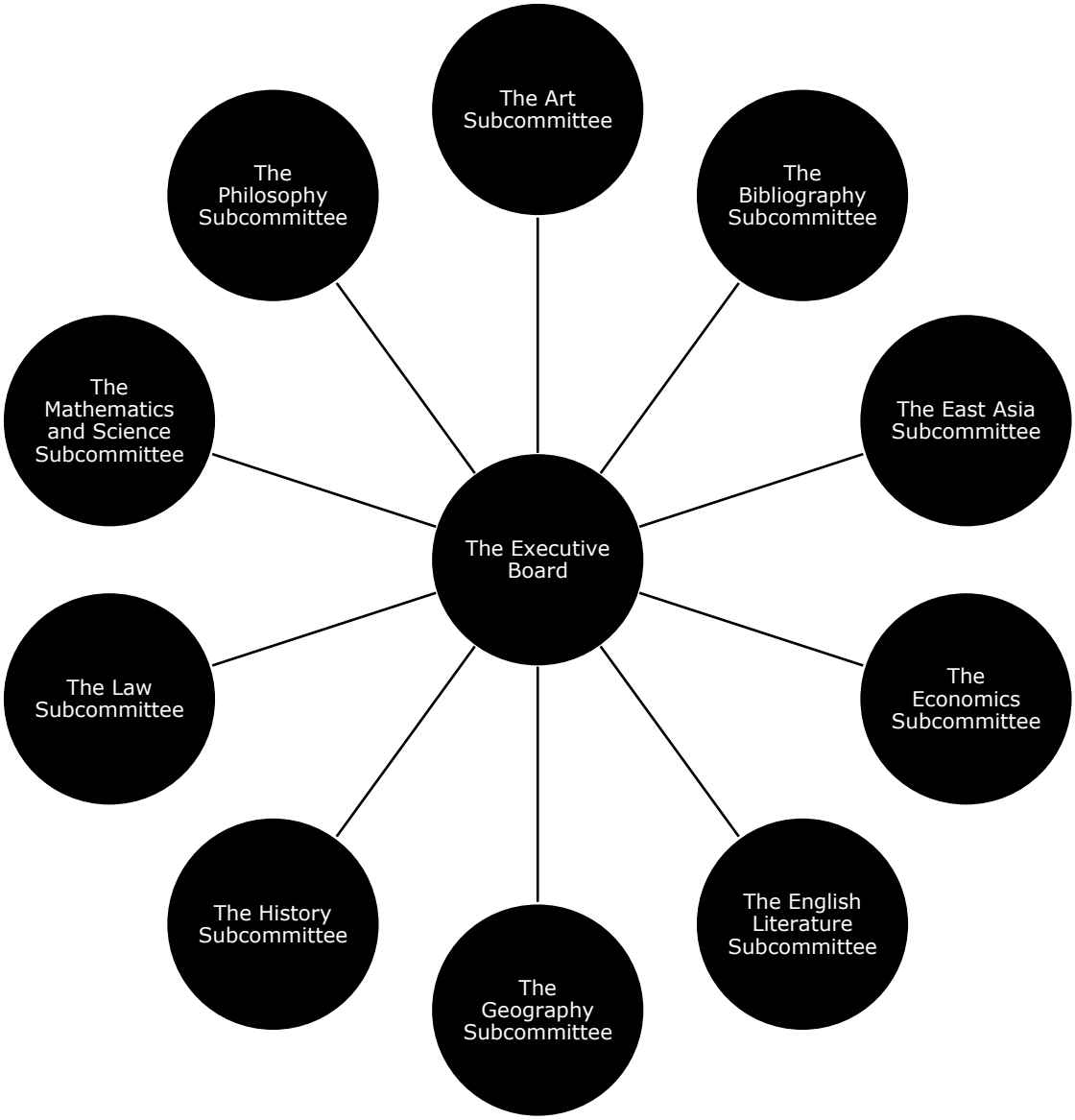
[94] William Baker and Albert Hyamson, 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Gollancz, Sir Israel', 2006, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33445?rskey=LZehde&result=1>, accessed date: 15 August 2024.
[95] Gollancz to MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 109.
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] Baker and Hyamson, 'Gollancz, Sir Israel', 2006, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-33445?rskey=LZehde&result=1>, accessed date: 15 August 2024.
[98] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.

**Figure 4.1 – The Structure of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee**




*Source: Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

The members of the Executive Board grouped the rest of the members of the Committee into ten subcommittees. The Board assigned an academic discipline to each subcommittee. The subcommittees were responsible for providing advice to the Board and to the Foreign Office. In particular, the members of each subcommittee advised which books and how many books the Committee should donate in the discipline that the Board had assigned to the subcommittee in question.[99]

[99] *Ibid*.

Most of the subcommittees covered disciplines in the arts, humanities, and political and social sciences. The subcommittees provided advice on books that covered art, economics, English literature, geography, history, law, mathematics and science, and philosophy. The East Asia Subcommittee provided advice on books that addressed the study of East Asia. The Bibliography Subcommittee compiled bibliographical information about every publication that the Committee donated.[100]

The Executive Board disbanded the Mathematics and Science Subcommittee in July 1926. Gollancz outlined the reason for this decision in a report that he sent to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, the parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, several days later. Gollancz explained that he and his colleagues had dissolved the Subcommittee as soon as the Board had 'learnt that the Japanese authorities did not wish these subjects to be included' in the gift of books.[101] Gollancz did not underline why the Japanese government did not want the Committee to donate books that covered mathematics or science. The dissolution of the Mathematics and Science Subcommittee nevertheless illustrates how the Board allowed the Japanese government to shape the intellectual relief that the Committee provided.

None of the members of any of the subcommittees wrote minutes during the meetings that they held. The lack of any minutes means that the identities of most of those who sat on the subcommittees remain uncertain. Gollancz, though, highlighted in a report that he sent to Locker-Lampson in July 1927 that nine members sat on the Art Subcommittee. Most of these members were either artists at the Royal Academy of Arts, an art gallery and art school in London, or were affiliated with the British Museum, a public museum in London. Walter Lamb, the secretary of the Royal Academy, chaired the Subcommittee. Laurence Binyon, the head of Asian art at the British Museum; Sir George Clausen, a painter at the Royal Academy, and Sir William John, a sculptor at the Royal Academy, sat on the Subcommittee as well. Although he did not outline their forenames, Gollancz nonetheless noted that 'Mr Palmer, Mr Hardie, Dr Hill … Mr Hake, and Mr Dircks' sat on the Subcommittee too.[102]

Gollancz informed Locker-Lampson how the Committee procured and provided books to the Imperial University of Tokyo. Gollancz reported that the Committee obtained books by liaising with the Foreign Office and the Stationery Office, a division of the Treasury.

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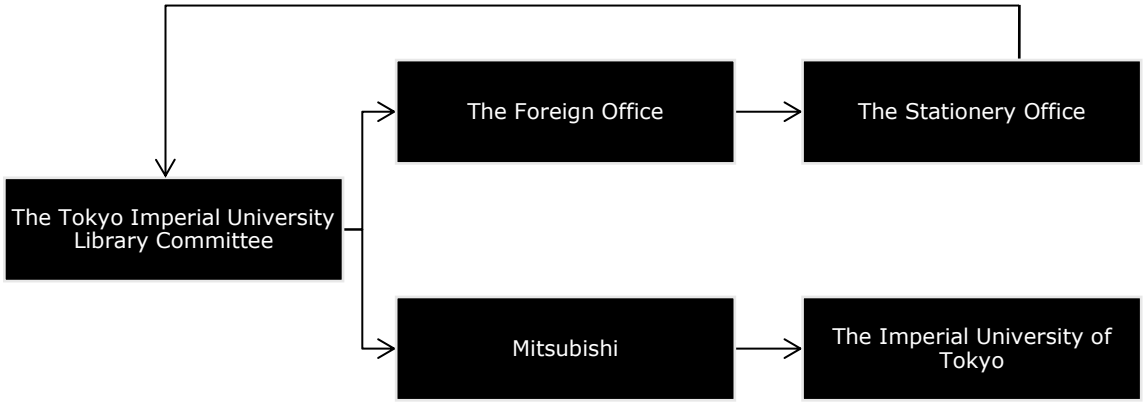
[100] *Ibid*.
[101] Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[102] Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee', 22 July 1927, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

The shipping division of Mitsubishi, a financial, industrial, and shipping conglomerate in Japan, shipped the books from their offices in London to the University.[103] Figure 4.2 illustrates how the Committee obtained and donated books.

**Figure 4.2 – The Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee and the Acquisition and Donation of Books to the Imperial University of Tokyo**




*Sources: Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee', 22 July 1927, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir John Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

Figure 4.2 outlines the role that the Foreign Office played in the acquisition of books. Gollancz submitted to the Foreign Office requests for the books that he and the rest of the Executive Board planned to donate. The subcommittees likewise submitted requests for books to the Foreign Office. The department forwarded these requests to the Stationery Office.[104]

The Stationery Office purchased the books that Gollancz and the subcommittees had requested from commercial retailers.[105] William Brawn, a clerk at the Stationery Office, was responsible for obtaining the books.[106] The Foreign Office paid Brawn for the books

[103] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1; Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee', 22 July 1927, T 161/516/1; Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[104] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1.
[105] *Ibid*.
[106] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

that he purchased by transferring to the Stationery Office the money that Parliament had allowed the Foreign Office to spend on the acquisition of books. Brawn delivered the books to the Executive Board at King's College.[107] The Board delivered the books to the offices that Mitsubishi maintained in London and the company shipped the books to Tokyo free of charge.[108]

In summary, the Foreign Office and the Executive Board had decided how the Committee would be financed and structured by late September 1924, over a year after the earthquake had struck. The Foreign Office financed the Committee by working with the Stationery Office to purchase books on behalf of the Committee. Headlam, however, informed Wellesley in January that the Treasury would not allow the Foreign Office to purchase books as well as food.[109] MacDonald explained to Eliot the following month that the Foreign Office would respond to this decision by spending £100,000 on the acquisition of books instead of donating food to the Japanese government.[110] Barstow nonetheless outlined in the letter that he sent to Ponsonby in March that the Treasury had decided that the British government could only afford to spend £25,000.[111] MacDonald accepted this decision and Parliament voted to allow the Foreign Office to spend £25,000 on the purchase of books in late July, nearly eight months after the members of the Committee had held their first meeting.[112] The dispute between the Foreign Office and the Treasury meant that the Stationery Office could not purchase books until August and highlights how government departments contested the role that the state should play in the provision of intellectual relief.

The Executive Board grouped the rest of the members of the Committee into ten subcommittees. The subcommittees provided advice to the Board and to the Foreign Office on the number of books as well as on which books the Committee should donate across numerous academic disciplines.[113] Gollancz and the subcommittees also submitted requests for books to the Foreign Office.[114] The Foreign Office forwarded these requests to the Stationery Office and Brawn purchased the books from commercial retailers.[115] The Foreign Office paid Brawn for the books that he purchased and he delivered the books to the Board.[116] The Board delivered the books to the offices that

[107] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1.
[108] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[109] Headlam to Wellesley, 'Nichols', 31 January 1924, T 161/516/1.
[110] MacDonald to Eliot, 'Misunderstanding', 7 February 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 248.
[111] Barstow to Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, T 161/516/1.
[112] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[113] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.
[114] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1.
[115] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[116] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1.

Mitsubishi maintained in London and the company shipped the books to Tokyo.[117] The structure of the Committee and the way in which the Committee acquired and donated books suggest that in inter-war Britain the overseas provision of intellectual relief entailed cooperation between academics, companies, and the state.

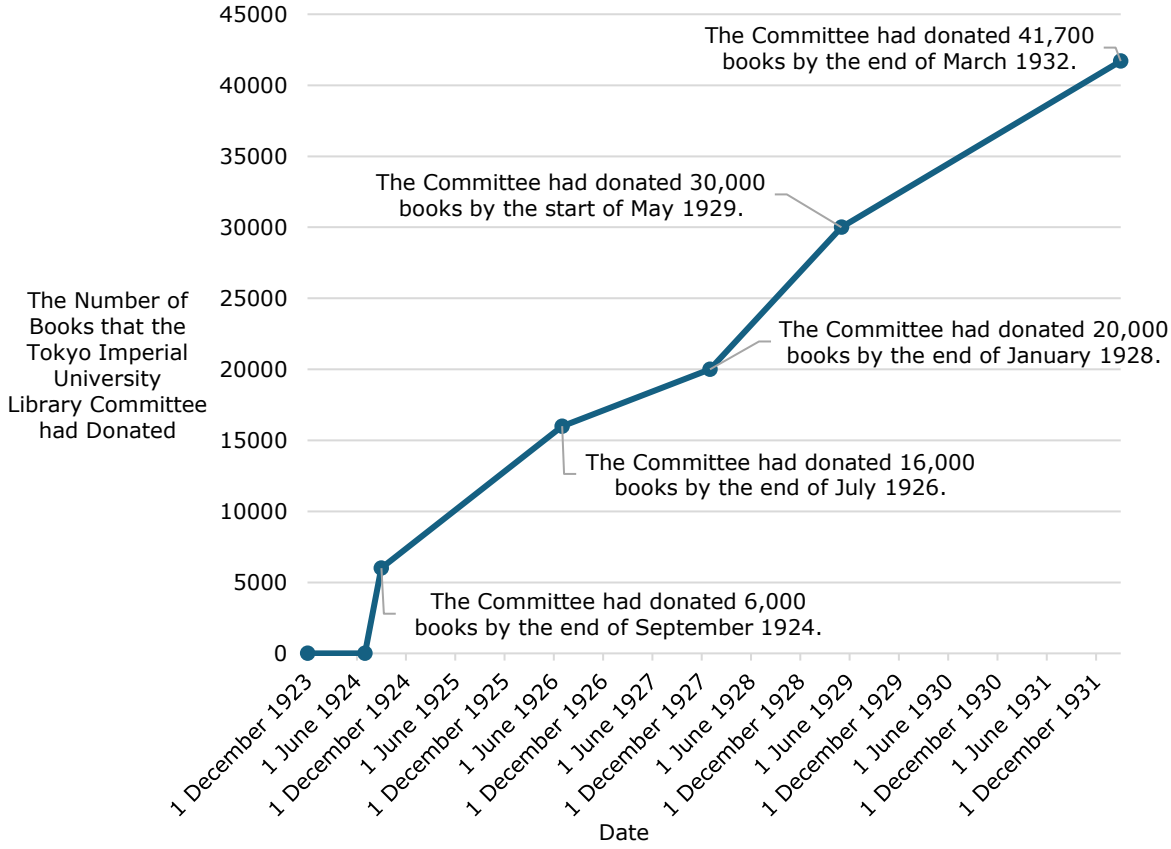
The Committee donated books to the University because British academics and diplomats believed that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public. MacDonald decided that his government would donate books, rather than food, on the grounds that books would constitute a more permanent expression of friendship.[118] Gollancz shared this view and he reasoned that the books would foster friendly diplomatic relations between the two countries. He showed more interest in assisting scholars and students at the University than he showed in the possibility of assisting the wider Japanese public, underlining the elitist character of intellectual relief.[119] These examples help to explain why most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake took the form of intellectual relief.

**The Donation of Books, October 1924 – March 1932**

Sir Israel Gollancz submitted annual reports about the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee to the Foreign Office between 1924 and 1929. Sir Charles Montgomery, the deputy parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, continued to write these reports after Gollancz died in June 1930. Gollancz and Montgomery outlined in each report the number of books that the Committee had donated to date.[120] Figure 4.3 shows the number of books that the Committee provided between December 1923 and March 1932.

[117] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[118] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[119] Gollancz to MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 109.
[120] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1; Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1; Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

**Figure 4.3 - The Number of Books that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee had Donated to the Imperial University of Tokyo by Selected Dates between December 1923 and March 1932**




*Sources: Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Yoshinao Kozai to Sir John Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir John Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

The Committee provided 41,700 books in total.[121] The Committee did not donate any books until August 1924 because Parliament did not allow the Foreign Office to obtain books until the end of July. Gollancz underlined that the Committee had donated 6,000 books in a report that he submitted to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin at the end of September,

[121] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

roughly two months after the vote in Parliament had taken place.[122] Gollancz reported that the Committee had provided 16,000 books in a report that he submitted to Godfrey Locker-Lampson in July 1926.[123] Gollancz informed Sir Austen Chamberlain, the foreign secretary, nearly three years later that the Committee had donated 30,000 books by May 1929.[124] Montgomery outlined in a report that he sent to Sir Norman Fisher, the permanent secretary to the Treasury, almost three years later that the Committee stopped donating books in March 1932. Montgomery explained that the Committee stopped donating books because the Foreign Office had spent the money that Parliament had allowed the department to spend.[125]

The number of books that the Committee donated per month fluctuated greatly. The Committee provided 3,000 books per month throughout the two months that followed the vote in Parliament.[126] This number fell between the end of September 1924 and the end of July 1926 to an average of roughly 450 books per month.[127] This figure continued to decrease between the end of July 1926 and the end of January 1928 to an average of roughly 220 books per month.[128] The number of books that the Committee donated per month more than tripled between the end of January 1928 and the end of May 1929 to an average of nearly 670 books per month.[129] This figure fell between the end of May 1929 and March 1932 to an average of roughly 330 books per month.[130] Gollancz and Montgomery did not provide any reasons for these fluctuations.

British academics donated books to universities in Belgium, Japan, and Serbia/Yugoslavia during the First World War and throughout the years that followed. Austro-Hungarian soldiers shelled the Belgrade University Library when they attacked the Serbian capital in July 1914. The Royal Society of Literature, an academic society in London, reacted by donating over 18,000 books between January 1919 and August 1923.[131] This figure represented less than half the number of books that the Tokyo Imperial University

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[122] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.
[123] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1.
[124] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[125] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[126] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.
[127] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1; Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1.
[128] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1; Yoshinao Kozai to Sir John Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[129] Kozai to Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, T 161/516/1; Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[130] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[131] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.

Library Committee offered to the Imperial University of Tokyo.[132] Steven Witt estimates that German troops destroyed over 300,000 books when they torched the Louvain University Library in August 1914 during what Belgian, British, and French propaganda called "the sack of Louvain".[133] British scholars responded by offering nearly 56,000 books to the University between August 1914 and July 1928, roughly 14,000 more books than the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee provided in response to the earthquake.[134] These examples reflect that British academics played a prominent role in the international provision of intellectual relief as these three universities received a combined total of over 115,000 books from Britain.[135]

At the same time, these universities received more books from American scholars than they received from British scholars. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace donated over 200,000 books to the Belgrade University Library between July 1914 and May 1926. Tomas Irish estimates that the Louvain University Library received roughly 27,000 books from the United States between August 1914 and July 1928.[136] John Rockefeller Junior, an American industrialist and philanthropist who financed libraries across the world during the early twentieth century, donated ¥4,000,000, the equivalent of almost £430,000 or over £22,000,000 today, to the Imperial University of Tokyo.[137] The University received 77,000 books from the United States, nearly double the number that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee provided.[138] American academics provided a combined total of over 300,000 books to universities in Belgrade, Louvain, and Tokyo.[139] These examples show that American scholars played a more prominent role than British scholars played in the international provision of intellectual relief as American scholars donated over double the number of books that British scholars donated to these universities.[140]

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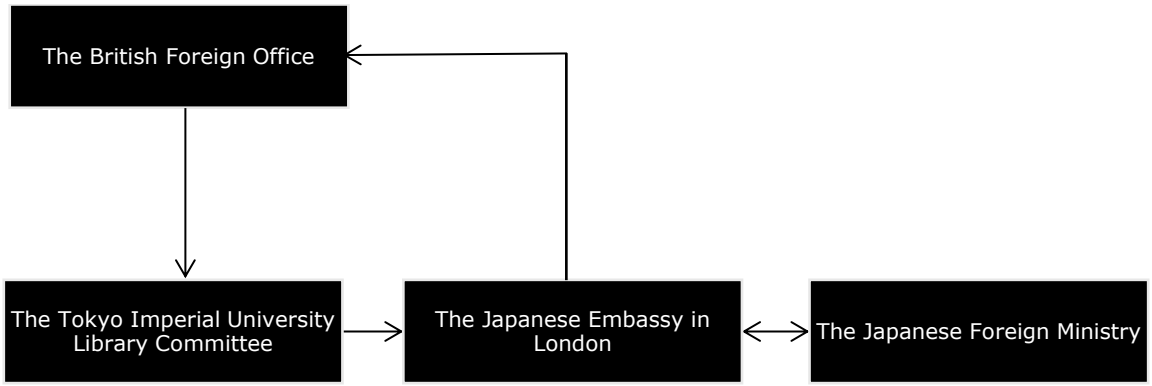
[132] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.
[133] Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 2.
[134] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 16.
[135] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 16; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.
[136] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 168-75.
[137] Mary Haskell, 'Brother, Can You Share a Dime? The Rockefeller Family and Libraries', *Libraries and Culture*, 31/1 (1996), p. 135.
[138] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[139] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 168-75, 185.
[140] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 16; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-75, 185.

Figure 4.3 demonstrates that the Committee donated books over eight years. Gollancz predicted in the letter that he sent to Ashton-Gwatkin on 30 September 1924 that it would take several years for the last of the books to reach Tokyo. Gollancz reported that the Japanese Foreign Ministry would not allow the Committee to donate any book until the Committee had forwarded to the ministry the title of the book that the Committee planned to donate. The ministry then decided if the Committee could donate the book in question. This process meant that the Committee could not donate any books without the permission of the Japanese government. Gollancz described the vetting of books as 'somewhat complicated and necessarily protracted'.[141] This passage suggests that the last of the books did not reach Tokyo until over eight years after the earthquake had struck in part because the process of vetting delayed the donation of the books.

Figure 4.4 illustrates how the Japanese Foreign Ministry vetted the books. Gollancz submitted to the Japanese Embassy in London the titles of the books that he, the rest of the Executive Board, and the subcommittees planned to donate. The Embassy forwarded the titles to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo.[142] Figure 4.4 reflects that the British Embassy in Tokyo did not play any role in the vetting of books.

**Figure 4.4 – The Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee and the Vetting of Books, December 1923 – March 1932**




*Source: Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

The Japanese Foreign Ministry decided which books the Committee could and could not donate. The ministry informed the Japanese Embassy in London about these decisions and the Embassy forwarded this information to the British Foreign Office. The Foreign

[141] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.
[142] *Ibid*.

Office explained to the Executive Board and to the subcommittees which books they could and could not donate.[143] Figure 4.2 outlines how the Committee subsequently acquired and donated the books that the Japanese Foreign Ministry had approved. The vetting of books and the dissolution of the Mathematics and Science Subcommittee illustrate how the Japanese government shaped the intellectual relief that the Committee provided.

The vetting of books can be interpreted as part of a broader suppression of academic freedom that took place across Japanese universities throughout the 1920s. Byron Marshall contends that the Japanese government aimed to suppress any activities and beliefs that it interpreted as left-wing. Police officers arrested members of the Student Federation of Social Science, a national network of left-leaning study groups, between December 1925 and January 1926. Police officers also searched the home of Hajime Kawakami, a professor of law at the Imperial University of Kyoto, as part of this operation. Rentaro Mizuno, the education minister, ordered universities to sack staff who showed left-wing sympathies from April 1928. Police officers arrested Yoshitaro Hirano and Moritaro Yamada, two economists at the Imperial University of Tokyo, two years later on the grounds that they were members of the Japanese Communist Party.[144] It is plausible that the Japanese government vetted the books that the Committee donated because the government did not want the University to receive any books that contained left-wing material.

The staff at the University conveyed their gratitude towards the British government as the Committee continued to donate books. Yoshinao Kozai showed his appreciation in a letter that he sent to Sir John Tilley, the British ambassador to Japan, on 27 January 1928, over four years after Kozai had first proposed that the British government could offer books. Kozai reported that the Committee had provided 20,000 books. He explained that he had written this letter because he and his colleagues felt that they could not 'remain without attempting to offer some sign, however small, of our heartfelt appreciation'.[145] This example shows how the recipients of intellectual relief have responded to the assistance that they have received.

Kozai highlighted that he wanted to convey his appreciation by presenting gifts to the British government. He sent this letter along with five copies of the *Lotus Sutra*, an ancient Buddhist text. He asked Tilley to accept these copies as a gift from the University to the British government and to take the books with him when the ambassador next

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[143] *Ibid*.
[144] Byron Marshall, *Academic Freedom and the Japanese Imperial University, 1868-1939* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 132-7.
[145] Kozai to Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, T 161/516/1.

returned to Britain. Kozai outlined that he had chosen to gift these copies because the *Lotus Sutra* was 'the sacred book of Buddhism, and represents in some measure for that religion what the … Gospel represents for Christianity'.[146]

Kozai gifted five copies of a manuscript as well. He informed Tilley that the manuscript was a commentary that Prince Shotoku had written about the *Lotus Sutra*. Kozai explained that the prince was a regent and a devout Buddhist who ruled Japan between the late sixth and early seventh centuries. The prince bequeathed the commentary to Horyu-ji, a Buddhist temple that the prince had founded near the city of Nara. Kozai reported that archivists had archived the manuscript at the Imperial Household Archives, the archive that the Japanese royal household maintains, in Tokyo. The copies that Kozai presented to Tilley were photographic reproductions. Kozai underlined that he had decided to gift these copies in the belief that the prince was 'the founder of Japanese civilisation'.[147]

The way in which Kozai reacted to intellectual relief contrasted sharply with the way in which the German Foreign Ministry reacted to the humanitarian aid that Germany received after the First World War. Elisabeth Piller argues that the ministry was divided over the acceptance of international relief. Some diplomats reasoned that their government should show appreciation in the belief that gratitude and the acceptance of aid would draw international attention to the starvation of German children and to the possibility of revising the Treaty of Versailles. Other diplomats maintained that their government should not show gratitude, especially for aid from countries that Germany had fought against during the war, on the grounds that relief was a humiliating reminder of defeat.[148] In contrast, Kozai responded to the books that his University received by offering gratitude and theological texts to the British government. This comparison highlights how the recipients of humanitarian assistance have reacted to the support that they have received and have shown gratitude in different ways depending upon diplomatic and political circumstances.

Japanese scholars donated theological literature to Europeans throughout the 1920s. Willy Walle describes how a committee of Japanese academics and businesspeople provided over 20,000 books to the Louvain University Library between March 1920 and August 1926.[149] This example reflects that Japanese scholars were donors as well as

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[146] *Ibid*.
[147] *Ibid*.
[148] Elisabeth Piller, 'Despondence, Dependence, and Dignity: On the Dilemmas of being an Object of International Charity in Western Europe – A Weimar German Case Study', *European Review of History*, 30/5 (2023), pp. 770-3.
[149] Willy Walle, 'The Japanese Book Donation to the University of Louvain', in Eline Mennens, Jan Schmidt, and Willy Walle (eds), *Japanese Cultural Identity and Modernity*

recipients of intellectual relief as they donated books to the Louvain University Library at the same time that they received books from the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee. Japanese academics offered copies of the *Blue Cliff Record*, a collection of stories that Chinese Buddhists wrote during the twelfth century, and the *Jakushitsuroku*, a book that Buddhist monks wrote during the fourteenth century, to the Louvain University Library.[150] Jan Schmidt outlines that Japanese scholars chose to donate these theological texts in the expectation that these donations would enhance Japanese prestige on the world stage and promote the study of Japanese culture across Europe.[151] It is possible that Kozai offered theological texts to the British government for similar reasons.

Tilley left Japan on leave for eight months a few days after he had received the gifts from Kozai.[152] He took the gifts with him when he returned to Britain. He informed Sir Austen Chamberlain about the manuscripts in a letter that the ambassador sent to the foreign secretary on 12 May 1928.[153] Harumi Goto-Shibata argues that Chamberlain and Tilley rarely exchanged messages with each other.[154] It is plausible that this factor explains why Tilley did not inform Chamberlain about the manuscripts until nearly four months after Tilley had accepted the gifts.

Tilley explained that he had distributed the manuscripts amongst five institutions. He recalled that he had donated the manuscripts to the British Museum in London, the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and to the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Oxford. He reported that he had provided one copy of the *Lotus Sutra* and one copy of the commentary that Prince Shotoku had written to each institution.[155] Tilley did not clarify when or why he offered the manuscripts to these particular museums and universities. The British Museum, the School of Oriental and African

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*in the 1920s – Japan's Book Donation to the University of Louvain* (Louvain, 2022), p. 53.

[150] Walle, 'The Japanese Book Donation to the University of Louvain', in Mennens, Schmidt, and Walle (eds), *Japan's Book Donation to the University of Louvain*, p. 49; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 176.

[151] Jan Schmidt, 'The First World War as the Precondition to the Japanese Donation to the University of Louvain', in Eline Mennens, Jan Schmidt, and Willy Walle (eds), *Japanese Cultural Identity and Modernity in the 1920s – Japan's Book Donation to the University of Louvain* (Louvain, 2022), pp. 23-6.

[152] Harumi Goto-Shibata, 'Sir John Tilley: British Ambassador to Japan, 1926-31', in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume IV* (Abingdon, 2002), pp. 79-82.

[153] Sir John Tilley to Sir Austen Chamberlain, 'The President of the Imperial University', 12 May 1928, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

[154] Goto-Shibata, 'Sir John Tilley', in Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits, Volume IV*, p. 86.

[155] Tilley to Chamberlain, 'The President', 12 May 1928, T 161/516/1.

Studies, and the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Oxford no longer hold any of these manuscripts. This factor means that it is unclear what happened to these gifts after Tilley distributed them across Britain. The gifts nevertheless underline how the earthquake and the provision of intellectual relief in Japan led to a reciprocal exchange of literature between Britain and Japan during the 1920s.

Chamberlain hosted an exhibition at the Foreign Office in Whitehall roughly a year after Tilley had distributed the gifts that he had received from Kozai. Chamberlain described the event in a report that he sent to Tilley on 23 May 1929, two weeks after the exhibition had taken place. Chamberlain reported that the 'Exhibition of Books Illustrative of the History of English Printing and Book Production Presented by His Majesty's Government to the Imperial University of Tokyo' was held on 9 May. He arranged for the exhibition to take place on this particular date to coincide with the donation of the 30,000th book to the University.[156] The date, location, and title of the event imply that he held this exhibition to highlight the role that the British government was playing in the reconstruction of the University.

The exhibition showcased a portion of the books that the Committee planned to donate. The event exhibited 163 books that addressed the history of the printing, production, and publishing of books in Britain from the late fourteenth century.[157] Chamberlain recalled that Sir Stephen Gaselee, the chief librarian at the Foreign Office; Gollancz, and Alfred Pollard, a bibliographer at the University of London, selected the books that featured in the exhibition.[158] Chamberlain did not outline if Gaselee and Pollard were members of the Committee or how Gaselee, Gollancz, and Pollard decided which books should be included in the exhibition.

The Stationery Office printed a catalogue that listed every book that featured in the exhibition. Frederic Ferguson, a bibliographer and bookseller, wrote the catalogue. He did not specify in the catalogue whether he was a member of the Committee or explain why he wrote the catalogue rather than Gaselee, Gollancz, or Pollard. The Foreign Office donated the catalogue and the books that featured in the exhibition to the Imperial University of Tokyo as soon as the exhibition had taken place.[159] The University adopted a new name in 1947 and is now called the University of Tokyo. The catalogue can be accessed at the General Library of the University of Tokyo.

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[156] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[157] Frederic Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books Illustrative of the History of English Printing and Book Production* (London, 1929), p. 42; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[158] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[159] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, pp. 1-5.

Ferguson listed every book that was included in the exhibition chronologically by date of publication. He also outlined the author and title of each book.[160] The books that featured in the exhibition accounted for less than one percent of the total number of books that the Committee donated.[161] The catalogue and the exhibition, however, provide at least some insight into the kind of books and intellectual relief that the Committee provided. Over eighty percent of the books that featured in the exhibition were written in English and roughly fourteen percent were written in Latin. None of the books were written in Japanese.[162]

The exhibition showcased various poems. The exhibition featured a copy of *The Temple of Glass*, a poem that describes several romantic encounters that take place inside a glass temple, that John Lydgate, a monk, wrote between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. William Caxton, a printer who established the first printing press in England, printed the poem between 1477 and 1478. The exhibition included a copy of *The Purple Island*, a poem that examines the relationship between the body and the soul, that Phineas Fletcher, a clergyman, wrote and the University of Cambridge published in 1633. The exhibition displayed a copy of *Poems*, an anthology of sixty-three poems that explore Arthurian and Greek mythology, isolation, and romance, that Lord Tennyson, a poet laureate, wrote between 1827 and 1853.[163]

The exhibition showcased various novels. The exhibition featured a copy of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, a novel that outlines the challenges that a family encounters when they face bankruptcy, that Oliver Goldsmith, an Irish poet, wrote during the eighteenth century. The exhibition included a copy of *Leila*, a novel that describes a wartime romance in Spain, that Edward Bulwer-Lytton, a member of Parliament, wrote in 1838. The exhibition displayed a copy of *Vanity Fair*, a novel that explores the lives of aristocratic women in London during the Napoleonic Wars, that William Thackeray, a journalist and novelist, wrote in 1849.[164]

Chamberlain explained in the report that he sent to Tilley that only those whom the foreign secretary had invited were allowed to attend the exhibition. Gollancz and every other member of the Committee attended. Tsuneo Matsudaira, the Japanese ambassador to Britain and a former student at the Imperial University of Tokyo, and Ramsay MacDonald, the former prime minister and former foreign secretary, attended too. Matsudaira had been in London for three months when he attended the event. It is

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[160] *Ibid*.
[161] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, p. 42; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[162] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, pp. 1-5.
[163] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, pp. 7, 22, 33.
[164] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, pp. 32-3.

possible that Chamberlain invited him in the hope that the exhibition would help the British government to establish a friendly rapport with the new ambassador by drawing his attention to the donation of books. Lord Balfour did not attend the event due to his ailing health.[165]

Chamberlain and MacDonald opened the exhibition together.[166] Chamberlain was a senior member of the Conservative Party, the party that was in office when he hosted the exhibition. In contrast, MacDonald was the leader of the Labour Party, the largest opposition party in Parliament. Chamberlain informed Tilley that he had invited MacDonald in recognition of the role that the former premier had played in securing financial support for the Committee from Parliament.[167] The attendance of Chamberlain and MacDonald suggests that the Committee, the exhibition, and the overseas provision of intellectual relief received support from across the political spectrum in inter-war Britain.

Ferguson reported in the catalogue that he wrote that the exhibition featured a copy of the *Kelmscott Chaucer*.[168] Chamberlain and MacDonald opened the exhibition by presenting this copy to Matsudaira as a gift on behalf of the British government. Chamberlain explained to Tilley that the book was an anthology of poems that Geoffrey Chaucer had written during the fourteenth century. The Kelmscott Press, a company in London that engraved and printed medieval manuscripts, published the *Kelmscott Chaucer* at the end of the nineteenth century. William Morris, an artist and poet, established the Kelmscott Press and designed the book. Chamberlain underlined that the book contained eighty-seven woodcuts that Sir Edward Jones, a decorator and painter, had designed. The copy that Matsudaira accepted on behalf of the Japanese government was one of forty-eight copies that Thomas Sanderson, a bookbinder and printer, had bound in pigskin.[169]

MacDonald delivered a speech after he and Chamberlain had presented this gift. Although Chamberlain did not provide a verbatim transcript, he nonetheless summarised the contents of the speech in the report that he sent to Tilley. MacDonald highlighted why he had decided five years earlier that the British government would provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government. Chamberlain reported

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[165] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[166] *Ibid*.
[167] *Ibid*.
[168] Ferguson, *Exhibition of Books*, p. 37.
[169] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.

that MacDonald contended that he had wanted 'to contribute … to the treasure of intellectual culture and beauty which was the heritage of the Japanese people'.[170]

This speech formed part of a wider discourse that drew connections between intellectual relief and ideas about the future of "civilisation". Irish argues that international donors saw libraries and universities as 'symbolic embodiments of civilisation'. He reasons that donors described the reconstruction of these sites during and after the First World War as part of a broader struggle for the preservation of "civilisation". This rhetoric built on and reinforced Allied propaganda that portrayed the war as well as the destruction of universities in Belgrade and Louvain as part of a battle between "civilisation" and German "barbarism". This rhetoric also built on and reinforced the notion that the rebuilding of libraries and universities would protect "civilisation" against the spread of Bolshevism after the Bolshevik takeover in Russia.[171] His speech at the exhibition implies that MacDonald believed that the provision of books and intellectual relief to the Imperial University of Tokyo would safeguard what he interpreted as Japanese "civilisation" from the effects of the earthquake. This rationale helps to explain why he decided roughly five years earlier that his government would offer books, rather than food, in reaction to the disaster.

MacDonald proposed that the gift of books would convey respect towards Japan. Chamberlain reported that MacDonald outlined that the donation of books would show the Japanese government and public that 'Britain respected the Japanese as a people of fine sensibilities and taste'. Chamberlain informed Tilley that MacDonald concluded that the books would demonstrate that the British government saw Japanese culture as 'equal to that of any [other] country'. These passages imply that the Committee donated books to the University in part because MacDonald envisioned that the provision of intellectual relief, rather than food, would illustrate that the British government saw Japan as an equal. His speech further underlines the elitist nature of intellectual relief as the 'people' whom MacDonald referred to were the scholars and students of the University, suggesting that he saw this academic elite as representatives of the wider Japanese nation.[172]

Chamberlain delivered a speech after MacDonald. Chamberlain enclosed a verbatim transcript of his speech in the report that he sent to Tilley. Chamberlain outlined that the books showed that 'the friendship between Japan and Great Britain … flourishes as freshly as ever'.[173] This passage demonstrates that he believed that the provision of

[170] *Ibid*.
[171] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 156-61.
[172] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[173] *Ibid*.

books would encourage friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan. This passage likewise suggests that he arranged and hosted the exhibition because he wanted to cultivate cordial diplomatic relations between the two countries. In particular, Chamberlain aimed to encourage friendly diplomatic relations by drawing the attention of the Japanese ambassador and government to the role that the British government was playing in the reconstruction of the University. His speech reflects that Chamberlain envisioned that intellectual relief could play a role in British foreign policy by helping the government to cultivate friendly diplomatic relations with other states.

He explained why he and MacDonald had presented a copy of the *Kelmscott Chaucer* to Matsudaira. Chamberlain described Chaucer as 'the first of the great line of English poets who have made their poetry out of the ordinary stuff of human life'. Chamberlain contended that this factor meant that the *Kelmscott Chaucer* was 'an essentially English book'. He concluded that 'the heart of England is held in Chaucer's work, the heart of England in her early youth … and it is the heart of England which is herewith offered to Japan'.[174] This speech underlines that Chamberlain and MacDonald presented a copy of the *Kelmscott Chaucer* to Matsudaira in the belief that the book epitomised what Chamberlain saw as English culture. The National Diet Library, the national library of Japan, in Tokyo holds the copy that Matsudaira received.[175]

This speech can also be interpreted as part of the broad discourse that drew connections between intellectual relief and ideas about the future of "civilisation". Most of the books that the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace donated to the Belgrade University Library covered American history. Irish explains that the think tank chose these particular books in the expectation that the books would promote American ideas about "civilisation" and culture in Serbia and Yugoslavia.[176] His speech suggests that Chamberlain presented a copy of the *Kelmscott Chaucer* in the belief that this particular book represented British ideas about "civilisation" and culture. It is plausible that Gaselee, Gollancz, and Pollard chose to theme the exhibition around the history of English literature for similar reasons.

Matsudaira delivered a speech after Chamberlain. Chamberlain enclosed a verbatim transcript in the report that he sent to Tilley. Matsudaira argued that the donation of books to the Imperial University of Tokyo and the gift of the *Kelmscott Chaucer* would 'draw tighter the bond of trustful friendship' between the British and Japanese

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[174] *Ibid*.
[175] National Diet Library Search, <https://ndlsearch.ndl.go.jp/>, accessed date: 24 October 2024, Searched for all books that were published between 1896 and 1932 which include 'Chaucer' in the title and 'Kelmscott' as the publisher.
[176] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 168-70.

governments.[177] This passage demonstrates that Matsudaira concurred with Chamberlain that the gift of books would encourage cordial diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.

Matsudaira concluded by reading a telegram that he had received from Giichi Tanaka, the Japanese prime minister and foreign minister, on the eve of the exhibition. Chamberlain enclosed a copy of the telegram in the report that he sent to Tilley. Tanaka interpreted the books as a sign of the 'friendship so happily subsisting between … Britain and Japan'.[178] This telegram reflects that Tanaka agreed with Chamberlain that their governments should remain friends after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended nearly six years earlier.

Ian Gow and other historians reason that relations between the British and Japanese governments were almost hostile throughout the years that followed the end of the Alliance. Gow argues that the possibility of a war with Japan became central to the planning of the Admiralty as the British government fortified Singapore, a British colony, from May 1923 in anticipation of a Japanese invasion.[179] Antony Best contends that several Conservatives in Parliament shared what Best describes as the 'anti-Japanese sentiment' of the Admiralty and warned that the Japanese navy threatened British naval supremacy.[180] Zoltan Buzas maintains that the British and Japanese governments became alienated from each other as the British government pursued closer diplomatic relations with the United States rather than with Japan.[181] These assessments have led Matthew Heaslip to conclude that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan 'were not as cooperative as they once had been'.[182]

The exhibition, though, suggests that several British and Japanese diplomats aimed to foster friendly relations between their governments despite the end of the Alliance. Chamberlain proposed during his speech that the provision of books represented 'a gift between friend and friend'. Matsudaira agreed that the books would encourage cordial relations between the two governments. Tanaka outlined that the books underlined the 'strength of the friendship' that he believed had developed between the British and

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[177] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[178] *Ibid*.
[179] Ian Gow, 'The Royal Navy and Japan, 1921-41', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 109-14; Daniel Spence, *A History of the Royal Navy: Empire and Imperialism* (London, 2015), pp. 136-7.
[180] Antony Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: An Examination into Historical Mythmaking', *The Historical Journal*, 49/3 (2006), pp. 818-19.
[181] Zoltan Buzas, 'The Colour of Threat: Race, Threat Perception, and the Demise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *Security Studies*, 22/4 (2013), pp. 600-1.
[182] Heaslip, *The China Station*, pp. 112-13.

Japanese governments.[183] The exhibition and the donation of books imply that the post-Alliance relationship was not as hostile as Best, Buzas, Gow, and Heaslip contend as British and Japanese diplomats continued to see their governments as friends.

Montgomery submitted the final report on the Committee to Fisher on 12 March 1932. Montgomery reported that the last of the books would reach Tokyo by the end of the month. He explained that William Brawn had taken several years to obtain every book that the Committee had requested because forty-five percent of the books could not be purchased from commercial retailers.[184] This factor explains to some extent why the last of the books did not reach Japan until over eight years after the members of the Committee held their first meeting.

In summary, several factors explain why the last of the books did not reach Japan until over eight years after the earthquake had struck. The possibility of donating books attracted little attention from British academics or diplomats until Robert Nichols proposed over two months after the disaster had unfolded that the British government should offer books.[185] The members of the Committee held their first meeting only after Kiichiro Hiranuma had convinced Lord Curzon that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government. The Committee could not obtain any books until Parliament allowed the Foreign Office to spend money on the acquisition of books almost a year after the earthquake had struck. The Committee could not donate any books without the permission of the Japanese government.

A reciprocal exchange of literature took place between the British government and the University throughout the decade that followed the earthquake. Kozai offered five copies of a commentary that Prince Shotoku had written and five copies of the *Lotus Sutra* to the British government.[186] The government became a recipient as well as a donor of literature as soon as Tilley accepted these gifts. The University likewise became a recipient as well as a donor as soon as Kozai offered these gifts. This example demonstrates how the recipients of intellectual relief have responded to the assistance that they have received.

MacDonald outlined in his speech at the exhibition why he had decided five years earlier that his government would provide books to the University. He explained that the donation of books would help his government to protect what he saw as the "civilisation" of Japan. He reasoned that the books would convey to the Japanese government and

[183] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[184] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[185] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[186] Kozai to Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, T 161/516/1.

public that the British government saw Japan as an equal.[187] His speech shows that the Committee donated books because British diplomats believed that their government should offer books to the University instead of food to the Japanese government.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee donated books because British academics and diplomats believed that the British government should provide books to the Imperial University of Tokyo rather than food to the Japanese government or public. Robert Nichols saw intellectual relief as a tool that the British government could utilise to promote diplomatic, economic, and political interests in Japan. He argued that the government should offer books in the expectation that this gesture would enhance British prestige and stimulate trade. He contended that the gift of books would support his faction at the University and would help the British government to exert influence over the Japanese government. He reasoned that the British government should provide books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese public, on the grounds that books would leave a lasting impression on the future of British diplomatic relations with Japan. He believed that the Japanese public would be offended if the British government offered food. Nichols played a critical role in the donation of the books because the memorandum that he wrote in November 1923 brought the reconstruction of the University to the attention of the British ambassador.[188]

Sir Charles Eliot agreed with Nichols. In particular, Eliot concurred that a gift of books would encourage British trade. He recognised that more than two months had passed since the earthquake had struck by the time that he received the memorandum that Nichols had written. Eliot concluded that the British government should offer books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese public, in the belief that the Japanese public was no longer short of food.[189]

Ramsay MacDonald agreed that the British government should provide books rather than food. He concurred with Nichols that books would constitute a permanent expression of friendship between Britain and Japan.[190] MacDonald envisioned that a donation of books would help the British government to protect what he saw as the "civilisation" of Japan from the effects of the earthquake. He proposed that books would convey equality and respect towards Japan.[191] The Committee donated books to a large extent because

[187] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[188] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[189] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, pp. 468-9.
[190] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[191] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.

MacDonald decided that his government would offer books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government.

Sir Israel Gollancz showed more interest in the donation of books to the University than he showed in the possibility of offering food to the Japanese government or public. He agreed with MacDonald that the donation of books would encourage cordial diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.[192] The Committee donated books because Eliot, Gollancz, MacDonald, and Nichols argued that the British government should donate books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public. These arguments help to explain why most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake was solely for the benefit of the University and British expatriates.

Most of the aid that the government provided in Japan took the form of intellectual relief. The Committee spent £25,000, accounting for over two thirds of the total amount that the government spent in reaction to the disaster.[193] This figure reflects that British diplomats and scholars urged the British government to prioritise academics and students at the University over the wider Japanese public. MacDonald saw these scholars and students as representatives of the wider Japanese nation.[194] Nichols maintained that the donation of books would enable the government to curry favour with the members of the House of Peers and with the political elite of Japan.[195] These examples underline the elitist nature of intellectual relief and highlight that the British state prioritised academic elites over the wider public when providing humanitarian aid overseas. The earthquake suggests that the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of humanitarian relief was politically and socially restricted as this relief was confined to academic elites and to British expatriates.

The Foreign Office financed the Committee by working with the Stationery Office to purchase the books that the Committee planned to donate. The financing of the Committee formed part of a wider debate between the Foreign Office and the Treasury that arose over the amount of money that the government should spend in response to

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[192] Gollancz to MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 109.
[193] Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[194] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[195] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.

the earthquake. Maurice Headlam informed Sir Victor Wellesley in January 1924 that the Treasury had decided that the government could not afford to provide books to the University as well as food to the Japanese government.[196] MacDonald explained to Eliot a week later that the Foreign Office would offer books, rather than food, in response to this decision.[197] Sir George Barstow, however, outlined in March that the Treasury had concluded that the Foreign Office could only spend £25,000, four times less than the amount that MacDonald had planned to spend.[198] MacDonald accepted this compromise and Parliament voted in July to allow the Foreign Office to spend £25,000 on the acquisition of books.[199] The disagreements that arose between the Foreign Office and the Treasury highlight how the latter contested and restricted the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of humanitarian and intellectual relief.

The Executive Board that oversaw the running of the Committee structured the Committee. The Board grouped the rest of the members of the Committee into ten subcommittees. The subcommittees provided advice on which books as well as the number of books that the Committee should donate across various academic disciplines. Gollancz and the subcommittees submitted requests for books to the Foreign Office. William Brawn purchased the books from commercial retailers and the Foreign Office transferred money to the Stationery Office to cover the costs. Mitsubishi subsequently shipped the books to Tokyo free of charge.[200] The structure of the Committee shows how the international provision of intellectual relief entailed cooperation between academics, companies, and the state.

Tomas Irish argues that the University received books from at least fifteen countries. He explains that the United States was the largest donor as the University received 77,000 books from the United States. Germany was the third largest donor as German publishers and universities provided 22,800 books. China was the fourth largest donor as the University received 20,000 books from China. France was the fifth largest donor as the National Museum of Asian Arts in Paris offered 15,300 books.[201] Britain was the second largest donor as the Committee donated 41,700 books between December 1923 and March 1932, nearly double the number that the University received from

[196] Headlam to Wellesley, 'Nichols', 31 January 1924, T 161/516/1.
[197] MacDonald to Eliot, 'Misunderstanding', 7 February 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 248.
[198] Barstow to Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, T 161/516/1.
[199] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[200] Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, T 161/516/1; Gollancz to Locker-Lampson, 'Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee', 22 July 1927, T 161/516/1; Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[201] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.

Germany.[202] Although the Committee provided fewer books than the United States, these comparisons nevertheless suggest that the British state played a prominent role in the provision of intellectual relief as the Committee donated more books than China and France combined.[203]

Yoshinao Kozai responded to the books that his University received from the Committee by conveying gratitude towards the British government. He showed gratitude by donating five copies of the *Lotus Sutra*. He also offered five copies of an accompanying commentary that Prince Shotoku had written.[204] These examples highlight how the recipients of intellectual relief have reacted to the assistance that they have received.

Various British and Japanese diplomats believed that the provision of books would encourage cordial relations between their governments. MacDonald argued that books would represent a permanent expression of friendship between the two countries.[205] Sir Austen Chamberlain reasoned that the donation of books would encourage friendly relations between the two governments. Tsuneo Matsudaira agreed with Chamberlain that the books would help to cultivate friendly diplomatic relations. Giichi Tanaka contended that the books epitomised the friendship that he believed had developed between the two countries.[206] These examples reflect that several diplomats believed that intellectual relief could play a role in British foreign policy by promoting friendly diplomatic relations with other states.

Neville Bennett and other historians suggest that relations between the British and Japanese governments were cordial throughout the years that followed the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Bennett maintains that the British government showed 'considerable empathy' towards the Japanese government when the American government banned Japanese migrants from entering the United States from May 1924.[207] Tadashi Kuramatsu outlines that relations between the British and Japanese governments were further strengthened during the Geneva Naval Conference, an international disarmament summit, that took place between June and August 1927. Although no agreements were reached during the conference, Kuramatsu nonetheless explains that what he describes as the 'pro-British' stance of the Japanese delegation

[202] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[203] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[204] Kozai to Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, T 161/516/1.
[205] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[206] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[207] Neville Bennett, 'White Discrimination against Japan: Britain, the Dominions, and the United States, 1908-28', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 3/2 (2001), pp. 101-4.

helped to strengthen diplomatic ties between the two countries.[208] The exhibition that Chamberlain hosted in May 1929 provides another example that shows that British and Japanese diplomats continued to see their governments as friends despite the end of the Alliance.

The Japanese government nevertheless restricted the range of books that the Committee donated. The Japanese Foreign Ministry did not allow the Committee to donate books that the ministry had not vetted. The Japanese government stopped the Committee from donating books that covered mathematics or science. These examples illustrate that the Japanese government shaped the intellectual relief that the University received. These examples can also be interpreted as part of a wider range of examples that demonstrate how the Japanese government shaped the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake. The following concluding chapter answers the research question set out in the introductory chapter by investigating the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake and the ways in which the Japanese government shaped this role.

[208] Tadashi Kuramatsu, 'Britain, Japan, and Inter-war Naval Limitation, 1921-36', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 131-2.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

### Overview of the Thesis

This thesis investigates the role that the British government played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. This thesis argues that most of the humanitarian aid that the government provided was solely for the benefit of British expatriates and the Imperial University of Tokyo, the oldest university in Japan. Three groups provided or planned to provide humanitarian assistance on behalf of the British government. The Royal Navy undertook relief work in Tokyo and Yokohama between September and October 1923. Diplomats at the Foreign Office considered how they could provide food and other provisions to the Japanese government throughout the autumn that followed the disaster. The Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, a panel of British scholars, donated 41,700 books to the University throughout the decade that followed the earthquake.[1]

The second chapter demonstrates that most of the relief that the Royal Navy provided was exclusively for the benefit of British and other European nationals. The navy offered clothes and toiletries to British nationals and rescued expatriates who were stranded.[2] The navy also recovered property that belonged to expatriates, identified and buried the bodies of British nationals, and provided shelter to merchants.[3] At the same time, the navy did not offer these services to any Japanese nationals.

The third chapter illustrates that the Foreign Office offered limited diplomatic and financial support and did not provide any humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government or public due to the actions and views of the Cabinet and the Treasury. The Cabinet restricted the ways in which the Foreign Office could convey sympathy by preventing Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, from convening a memorial service

[1] Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[2] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 7 September, 1923', 7 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Robert Boulter, 'The Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, Earthquake Reports, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 908/6, p. 11.
[3] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 6 September 1923', 6 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Robert Boulter, 'Report for 8 September 1923', 8 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 711; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 19-24.

in memory of those who had died during the earthquake.[4] The Foreign Office provided a restricted amount of financial relief to the Japanese government and public because the Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from offering a loan to the Japanese government.[5] The Foreign Office did not donate any food or other humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government because the Treasury argued that the British government could not afford the expense.[6] These factors reflect that the government prioritised expatriates and the University when providing relief in Japan to some extent because the Cabinet and the Treasury opposed the provision of aid to the Japanese government and public. The earthquake shows how the Cabinet and the Treasury shaped and restricted the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the provision of humanitarian aid.

The second and third chapters demonstrate that the British state was not a single, unified humanitarian actor. Robert Boulter, the British acting consul in Yokohama, and Sir Arthur Leveson, the commander-in-chief of the British warships that sailed to Japan, prioritised expatriates over Japanese nationals amidst pressure from the merchant community in Yokohama. It was not, however, a foregone conclusion that the government would prioritise expatriates. The Admiralty in Whitehall, Curzon, and Sir Charles Eliot, the British ambassador to Japan, argued that the British government should provide humanitarian aid to Japanese as well as British nationals. The Admiralty, Curzon, and Eliot maintained that the provision of relief to Japanese nationals would convince the Japanese government that the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations between the two countries.[7] In contrast, the Treasury opposed the provision of humanitarian aid to the Japanese government and public on the grounds that the British government should focus instead

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[4] Lord Curzon to Lord Stamfordham, 'Question of Proposed Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.
[5] Sir Otto Niemeyer to Sir Neville Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[6] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[7] Sir Charles Eliot to Sir William Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', 13 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Victor Wellesley to Sir Norman Fisher, 'A Practical Expression of Sympathy', 9 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.

on repaying the debts that it had accumulated during the First World War.[8] These examples underline that the state in inter-war Britain was a contested space where different groups debated who should receive humanitarian support from the government as well as the amount of support that recipients should receive.

The fourth chapter highlights that the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee donated books because British diplomats and scholars advised the British government to provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public. Robert Nichols, the chair of English at the University, reasoned that the British government should offer books, instead of food, on the grounds that offers of food would offend the Japanese people.[9] Eliot agreed with Nichols in the belief that the demand for books had become greater than the demand for food.[10] Ramsay MacDonald, the British prime minister and foreign secretary, decided that his government would provide books, rather than food, in the belief that books would represent a more permanent expression of friendship.[11] Sir Israel Gollancz, the secretary of the Committee, concurred with MacDonald that the donation of books would promote friendly diplomatic ties between Britain and Japan.[12] The British government spent £25,000, or roughly £1,300,000 today, on behalf of the Committee, representing over two thirds of the overall amount that the government spent in response to the earthquake.[13] This figure reflects that the state in inter-war Britain provided humanitarian aid overseas by prioritising academic elites over the wider public.

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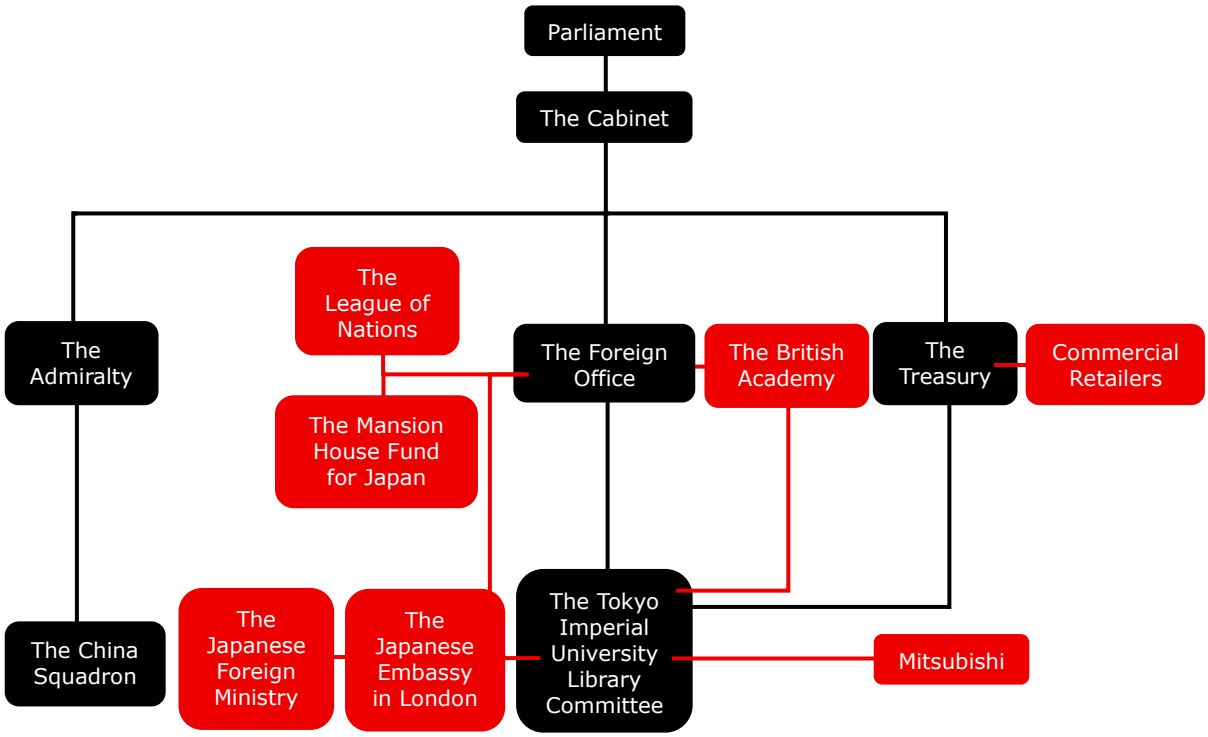
[8] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[9] Robert Nichols to Sir Charles Eliot, 'The Library of the Imperial University', 7 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[10] Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon, 'The Needs of Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 469.
[11] Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir John Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[12] Sir Israel Gollancz to Ramsay MacDonald, 'Most Grateful Acknowledgement', 13 August 1924, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties in Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1612, p. 109.
[13] Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

This concluding chapter analyses the role that the British government played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake. The rest of this chapter is divided into three parts. The next part explains why most of the humanitarian aid that the government provided was solely for the benefit of British expatriates and the Imperial University of Tokyo. The following part examines how this thesis contributes to the study of humanitarianism in inter-war Britain, the Alliance, and to the study of intellectual relief. The final part identifies avenues for further enquiry.

**The British Government and the Great Kanto Earthquake**

Figure 5.1 names the government departments and other groups that underpinned the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake. The figure also illustrates how these departments and groups worked with each other to provide aid. The black lines and rectangles represent government departments and organisations that acted on behalf of the government. The red lines and rectangles represent the academic societies, companies, and other groups that liaised with the British state.

**Figure 5.1 – The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Structure of the British Government**




*Sources: Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', The Daily Mail, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Lord Curzon to Sir Charles Eliot, 'An Executive Committee', 12 December 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 410; Ramsay MacDonald to Gonsuke Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir John Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

Parliament voted to allow the Foreign Office to purchase books on behalf of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in July 1924.[14] The Cabinet could submit requests for books, grants, and other matters to Parliament and held the power to veto any

[14] Ramsay MacDonald to Gonsuke Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.

decision that the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, the Treasury, or other departments made. The Admiralty issued orders to the China Squadron, the division of the Royal Navy that patrolled the East China Sea. The squadron was responsible for all of the relief work that the navy undertook in response to the earthquake. The Foreign Office and the British Academy, the national academy for the arts, humanities, and social sciences in Britain, established the Committee in December 1923.[15] Although the Committee was not a government department, the panel nevertheless donated books to the Imperial University of Tokyo on behalf of the British government. The Treasury controlled and oversaw spending.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates that the government worked with a diversity of companies, public appeals, and other organisations to provide aid in Japan. The Foreign Office donated money to the Mansion House Fund for Japan, a nationwide fundraising appeal, and to an appeal that the League of Nations established in Geneva.[16] The Committee submitted the titles of the books that it planned to donate to the Japanese Embassy in London and the Embassy forwarded the titles to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo. The Embassy forwarded the titles of the books that the ministry had approved to the British Foreign Office and the Foreign Office notified the Committee, reflecting how the Japanese government shaped the relief that the British government provided.[17] The Committee submitted requests for books to the Foreign Office and the department forwarded the requests to the Stationery Office, a division of the Treasury. William Brawn, a clerk at the Stationery Office, purchased the books from commercial retailers and he carried the books to the Executive Board that governed the Committee.[18] The Board delivered the books to the shipping branch of Mitsubishi, a Japanese conglomerate, in London and the company shipped the books to Tokyo.[19]

The way in which the British government responded to the earthquake can be interpreted as an example of what Tehila Sasson calls the 'mixed economy' of aid. She defines this concept as the cooperation between companies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, and states that became the foundation for the provision

[15] Lord Curzon to Sir Charles Eliot, 'An Executive Committee', 12 December 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 410.
[16] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4.
[17] Sir Israel Gollancz to Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, 'A General Outline of My Ideas', 30 September 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[18] Sir Israel Gollancz to Godfrey Locker-Lampson, 'The Present Position', 27 July 1926, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[19] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.

of humanitarian relief across the world from the early twentieth century.[20] The British state worked with several private aid partnerships in response to the disaster. The government engaged with a public appeal when the Foreign Office donated money to the Mansion House Fund. The government liaised with an intergovernmental organisation when the Foreign Office offered money to the appeal that the League of Nations had established. The government worked with companies when Brawn purchased books from commercial retailers. These examples reflect that the overseas provision of humanitarian aid in inter-war Britain relied on a 'mixed economy' that involved academics, companies, intergovernmental organisations, public appeals, and the state.[21]

The British government started to provide relief in response to the earthquake when the *HMS Despatch*, a cruiser, arrived in Yokohama on 5 September 1923. The crew recovered property that belonged to expatriates, offered shelter to merchants, rescued expatriates who were stranded, identified and buried the remains of British nationals, offered food to British diplomats, and distributed clothes and toiletries amongst British nationals.[22] In contrast, the crew did not offer any humanitarian assistance to the Japanese government or public. This contrast illustrates that the humanitarian aid that the Royal Navy provided was politically and socially restricted to British and other European nationals.

The crew of the *HMS Hawkins*, the flagship of the China Squadron, also offered relief to expatriates. The crew provided shelter to merchants and offered medical relief to expatriates.[23] Although the crew provided blankets, food, medicine, and vaccines to the Japanese public, these sundries represent the only humanitarian support that the Japanese government or public received from the Royal Navy.[24] The relief work that the crews of the *Despatch* and *Hawkins* undertook demonstrates that most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided was solely for the benefit of British expatriates or the University.

In contrast, the American navy prioritised Japanese nationals over expatriates. The American navy requisitioned forty-nine commercial passenger ships and dispatched

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[20] Tehila Sasson, 'From Empire to Humanity: The Russian Famine and the Imperial Origins of International Humanitarianism', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), p. 533.
[21] Sasson, 'The Russian Famine', p. 533.
[22] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Boulter, '8 September', 8 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 710; Sir Arthur Leveson to Sir Oswyn Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Admiralty, the National Archives in London, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 11, 19-24.
[23] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 17-24.
[24] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

these ships along with seven destroyers to Japan in response to the earthquake.[25] Julia Irwin argues that only 'a small portion' of the aid that these ships carried was for the benefit of American expatriates. Erle Dickover, the American consul in Kobe, lambasted his government for prioritising Japanese nationals over American citizens.[26] The earthquake suggests that the American navy and the Royal Navy provided humanitarian relief in contrasting ways.

The China Squadron prioritised British and other European nationals due to the actions and views of Robert Boulter and Sir Arthur Leveson. Boulter asked Robert Hamilton, the captain of the *Despatch*, if his crew could recover the contents of safes that belonged to British nationals as soon as the cruiser reached Yokohama.[27] Boulter did not, however, ask if the crew could recover property that belonged to Asians. Leveson spent most of his time in Shanghai and Yokohama arranging accommodation and transportation for British and other European nationals.[28]

Boulter and Leveson prioritised the interests of expatriates over those of the Japanese public due to the pressure that the pair received from the merchant community in Yokohama. Boulter asked Hamilton if marines could land as soon as possible because the acting consul was aware that prisoners who had escaped from nearby jails had ransacked British properties when the earthquake struck. These attacks and fears of further looting led the merchants who had taken refuge onboard the *Despatch* to establish a committee that lobbied marines to recover the contents of safes that belonged to expatriates as quickly as possible.[29] Boulter outlined in a report that he submitted to the Foreign Office in December that the merchants who took shelter onboard the *Hawkins* criticised Leveson for not offering additional accommodation.[30] Leveson reacted to this criticism by asking British investment firms in Hong Kong to provide accommodation for British merchants in Yokohama.[31] Although it is unclear if the firms replied to Leveson, this example nevertheless shows that he planned to provide

[25] Natsuko Chubachi, Atsushi Kawauchi, Soraya Ono, Yuichi Ono, and Ken Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake and U.S.-Japan Relations: Japanese Students' Thank-You Letters Sent to the United States and their Implications for International Disaster Risk Reduction Cooperation', *Journal of Disaster Research*, 20/1 (2025), pp. 65-7.
[26] Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century* (Chapel Hill, 2024), pp. 113-14, 124, 127.
[27] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 5 September 1923', 5 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 726.
[28] Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.
[29] Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 712-13.
[30] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, p. 24.
[31] Boulter, '13 September', 13 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 683.

relief to expatriates by establishing a mixed economy of aid that entailed cooperation between companies and the Royal Navy.

The relief work that the China Squadron undertook formed part of the wider strategy that the squadron pursued throughout the 1920s. Matthew Heaslip argues that the squadron aimed to protect British colonies as well as British and other European civilians across East Asia. He explains that this strategy of 'imperial policing' entailed the evacuation of British and other European expatriates during famines and other humanitarian crises, combat operations against Chinese pirates, and the suppression of anti-colonial dissent.[32] The emphasis on the safety of expatriates that underpinned this strategy further explains why most of the aid that the squadron provided in Japan was solely for the benefit of British and other European nationals. This thesis represents an original contribution to the study of imperial policing by showing how humanitarian relief work should be interpreted as part of, rather than separate to, this strategy. Although the relief work that the navy undertook in Japan represented less than 0.02 percent of the navy's annual budget, the protection of British citizens in Tokyo and Yokohama nonetheless illustrates how humanitarianism and naval strategy were deeply intertwined.[33]

The Japanese government and navy also influenced the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook. Makoto Saito, the governor-general of Korea, advised Leveson how the China Squadron should respond to the earthquake. British marines landed in Yokohama only after Asakichi Yasukouchi, a prefectural governor, had given them permission. The crew of the *HMS Ambrose*, a supply ship, and the crew of the *Hawkins* allowed the Japanese navy to exercise complete control over the distribution of the sundries that the crews had purchased in Hong Kong and Shanghai. The doctors and nurses who travelled onboard the *Hawkins* left Yokohama when Yasukouchi suggested that they should sail to Kobe instead.[34] The crew of the flagship did not undertake any relief work in Tokyo on the advice of Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, the Japanese prime minister and foreign minister.[35]

The Japanese government and navy likewise influenced the relief work that the American navy undertook in response to the earthquake. Cyrus Woods, the American ambassador

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[32] Matthew Heaslip, *Gunboats, Empire, and the China Station: The Royal Navy in 1920s East Asia* (London, 2021), pp. 25-7, 127-33.
[33] Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Heaslip, *The China Station*, p. 150.
[34] Robert Boulter, 'Report for 11 September, 1923', 11 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1.
[35] Gonnohyoe Yamamoto to Sir Charles Palairet, 'The Water Channel', 13 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 352.

to Japan, advised his government that the American navy should only provide provisions that the Japanese government had requested. The American navy allowed the Japanese navy to exercise total control over the distribution of the supplies that the Americans had shipped to Tokyo and Yokohama.[36] Irwin contends that the American government hoped that these gestures would convey equality, respect, and trust between Japan and the United States.[37] It is possible that the China Squadron allowed the Japanese navy to oversee the distribution of the provisions that the squadron had purchased in Hong Kong and Shanghai for similar reasons.

The Japanese government restricted the relief work that the Royal Navy undertook in two ways. Yasukouchi discouraged the doctors and nurses who travelled onboard the *Hawkins* from offering their services to the Japanese public on the grounds that the doctors and nurses were unfamiliar with the Japanese language.[38] Yamamoto warned that the squadron should not approach Tokyo due to the congestion of ships in Tokyo Bay.[39] These examples reflect that most of the relief that the navy provided was exclusively for the benefit of British and other European nationals at least in part due to the restrictions that the Japanese government imposed.

It was not, however, a foregone conclusion that the navy would prioritise expatriates as the Admiralty in Whitehall envisioned that the navy should provide humanitarian aid to Japanese as well as British nationals. Lord Curzon outlined the views of the Admiralty in the memorandum that he presented to the Cabinet in November, roughly a month after the navy had left Japan. He explained that the Admiralty had anticipated that the provision of blankets, food, medicine, and vaccines to the Japanese public would help the British government to convey sympathy in response to the earthquake. The Admiralty had expected that this display of sympathy would convince the Japanese government that the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations between the two countries. The department had feared that the post-Alliance relationship would be damaged if the Japanese government surmised that the British government had not shown as much sympathy as the American government and public had shown.[40] This memorandum demonstrates that the Royal Navy was not a single, unified humanitarian actor as the Admiralty in Whitehall and onsite figures, like Boulter and Leveson, disagreed over who should receive humanitarian support.

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[36] J. Charles Schencking, 'Giving Most and Giving Differently: Humanitarianism as Diplomacy following Japan's 1923 Earthquake', *Diplomatic History*, 43/4 (2019), pp. 739-43, 746-8.
[37] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, p. 122.
[38] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1.
[39] Yamamoto to Palairet, 'The Water Channel', 13 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 352.
[40] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.

Stanley Baldwin, the British prime minister, and Sir Charles Eliot agreed with the Admiralty that the British government should offer sympathy to the Japanese government. Eliot informed Sir William Tyrrell, the deputy permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be harmed if the British government did not show any sympathy in response to the earthquake.[41] This rationale explains why Eliot offered his 'personal sympathy' in the telegram that he sent to Yamamoto towards the middle of September.[42] Baldwin conveyed his 'profound sympathy' when he opened the tenth Imperial Conference, an international summit in Whitehall, a month after the disaster had unfolded. He expressed sympathy in the expectation that this gesture would demonstrate that the end of the Alliance did not constitute the end of friendly relations between the British and Japanese governments.[43]

Curzon concurred with the Admiralty, Baldwin, and Eliot that the British government needed to convey sympathy in response to the earthquake. Curzon asked the Cabinet in late September if the Foreign Office could convene a memorial service in memory of those who had died during the earthquake.[44] Lord Stamfordham, the private secretary to the king, recalled that Curzon had described a memorial service as 'the best means' of showing sympathy.[45] Sir Victor Wellesley, the head of East Asian policy at the Foreign Office, explained that Curzon expected that this gesture would convince the Japanese government that relations between their governments would remain friendly despite the end of the Alliance.[46] Curzon also agreed with the Admiralty that these relations would be damaged if the Japanese government concluded that the British government had conveyed less sympathy than the American government had conveyed.[47] The Cabinet, though, dismissed the memorial service on the grounds that the service would clash with other events.[48] Although the Cabinet was not opposed to what the Admiralty, Baldwin,

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[41] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[42] Sir Charles Eliot to Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, 'Personal Sympathy', 12 September 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1587, p. 353.
[43] 'British Chief Admires Spirit of Japanese', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.
[44] Lord Stamfordham to Lord Curzon, 'Japanese Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, Telegrams from Sir Frederick Ponsonby to Lord Curzon, Correspondence with the Palaces, the National Archives in London, FO 800/155/130, p. 460; Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan – Proposed Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Proposed Memorial Service for the Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/19, p. 255.
[45] Stamfordham to Curzon, 'Memorial Service', 22 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 460.
[46] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[47] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.
[48] Curzon to Stamfordham, 'Memorial Service', 26 September 1923, FO 800/155/130, p. 461.

Curzon, and Eliot saw as the need to show sympathy, the Cabinet was opposed to the date that Curzon had chosen for the memorial service.

The Foreign Office provided financial relief to the Japanese government and public. The department donated £535, the equivalent of almost £28,000 today, to the Mansion House Fund, the appeal that the League of Nations established in Geneva, and to the Japanese government.[49] The Foreign Office, however, only offered a limited amount of financial support due to the opposition of the Treasury. Sir Otto Niemeyer, the head of finance at the Treasury, argued that the Foreign Office could only provide a loan to the Japanese government if the Treasury raised the average rate of income tax. He contended that the British government could not afford to offer loans in the face of an impending deficit and should focus instead on repaying the debts that it had accumulated during the First World War.[50]

Curzon started to consider how the Foreign Office could provide humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government in early October. Wellesley explained to Sir Norman Fisher, the permanent secretary to the Treasury, that Curzon believed that the Foreign Office should offer £100,000, or roughly £5,200,000 today, in the form of a grant to the Japanese government. Curzon anticipated that the Japanese government would spend the grant on the acquisition of clothes, food, medicine, and other supplies. He envisioned that the Japanese government would have been free to spend the grant without any conditions or terms attached.[51] This plan suggests that Curzon believed that the Japanese government should have played an active role in shaping the aid that it would have received from the British government. This factor implies that he planned to treat the Japanese government as a proactive participant, rather than as a passive recipient, in the provision of humanitarian aid. Sir George Barstow, a civil servant at the Treasury, though, informed Ronald McNeill, the parliamentary undersecretary at the Foreign Office, in late October that the Treasury would not allow the Foreign Office to offer grants to the Japanese government.[52]

Curzon asked the Cabinet to resolve this impasse by submitting his request for a grant to Parliament.[53] His fellow ministers agreed instead that the Foreign Office would spend

[49] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[50] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[51] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[52] Sir George Barstow to Ronald McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[53] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.

£100,000 on the donation of food to the Japanese government.[54] Sir Neville Chamberlain, the chancellor of the exchequer, though, criticised this plan on the grounds that the British government could not afford the expense.[55] This criticism persuaded his fellow ministers that the Cabinet should submit the plan to donate food to Parliament as soon as Parliament had reconvened in the new year.[56] This decision meant that the Foreign Office could not provide any humanitarian provisions in response to the earthquake until January, over four months after the disaster had unfolded. The opposing views of Chamberlain and Curzon highlight that the state in inter-war Britain was not a unified humanitarian actor as ministers debated whether the government should offer humanitarian support to foreign governments.

Curzon questioned the decision that his fellow ministers had reached in a letter that he sent to Eliot in late November. Curzon asked Eliot whether the plan to donate food would constitute an effective way of conveying sympathy towards the Japanese government given that the donation could not take place until after Parliament had reconvened.[57] Eliot discussed this question with Kiichiro Hiranuma, the Japanese minister of justice. Hiranuma explained that his government would not require any donations of food by the time that Parliament had reconvened. He advised that the British government could instead support the reconstruction of the Imperial University of Tokyo.[58] This advice confirmed Curzon's doubts about the plan to donate food and led him to ask the British Academy to assist the Foreign Office in establishing the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in December.[59] These factors show that the British government provided more support to the University than the government provided to the Japanese government and public in part due to the advice that Hiranuma offered to Eliot and Curzon.

Hiranuma echoed the views that Robert Nichols and Eliot had expressed several weeks earlier. Nichols had informed Eliot in early November that the British government should offer books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese public, in the expectation

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[54] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'Earthquake in Japan', 13 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/26, p. 333.
[55] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[56] Sir Maurice Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 16 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – The Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 23/46/28, p. 359.
[57] Lord Curzon to Sir Charles Eliot, 'British Contribution to Earthquake Relief', 20 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[58] Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon, 'British Contribution to Earthquake Relief Work', 22 November 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[59] Curzon to Eliot, 'An Executive Committee', 12 December 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 410.

that any offer of food would offend the Japanese people. Nichols proposed that books would constitute a more permanent expression of friendship between Britain and Japan.[60] Eliot concurred that the government should donate books, instead of food, in the belief that the demand for books had become greater than the demand for food.[61] These arguments demonstrate that the Committee donated books because British diplomats and scholars maintained that the British government should provide books to the University rather than food to the Japanese government or public.

The Committee also donated books due to the views of Ramsay MacDonald. Maurice Headlam, an assistant secretary at the Treasury, underlined in January 1924 that the British government could not afford to donate books as well as food.[62] MacDonald responded to this decision in February by deciding that his government would provide books instead of food.[63] He made this decision because he agreed with Nichols that books would represent a more permanent expression of friendship between Britain and Japan.[64] MacDonald envisioned that the donation of books would help to protect what he saw as the "civilisation" of Japan from the effects of the earthquake. He believed that the provision of books would convey equality and respect between the two nations.[65]

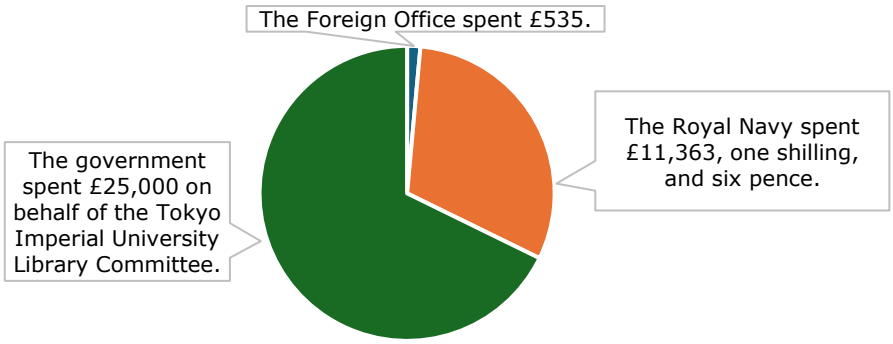
The Committee donated 41,700 books between December 1923 and March 1932, replacing almost six percent of the books at the University that the earthquake had destroyed.[66] These books can be interpreted as an example of intellectual relief. Tomas Irish defines this concept as the provision of humanitarian support to libraries, scholars, students, universities, or writers. Intellectual relief can entail the provision of clothes, food, medicine, or other supplies to academics, students, or writers. Intellectual relief can likewise involve the donation of equipment, literature, or money to libraries or

[60] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[61] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 469.
[62] Maurice Headlam to Sir Victor Wellesley, 'Professor Nichols', 31 January 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[63] Ramsay MacDonald to Sir Charles Eliot, 'Misunderstanding', 7 February 1924, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties in Yokohama, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1612, p. 248.
[64] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1; MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[65] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[66] Yoshinao Kozai to Sir Charles Palairet, 'The Library of the Imperial University', 4 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 570; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

universities.[67] The assistance that the Committee provided to the University can be described as an example of this latter kind of intellectual relief.

The British government spent £36,898, one shilling, and six pence, or roughly £1,900,000 today, in total in response to the earthquake.[68] Figure 5.2 outlines how the government spent this sum over more than eight years between September 1923 and March 1932, when the last of the books that the Committee donated reached Tokyo. The Foreign Office spent a combined total of £535, accounting for roughly one percent of the overall amount that the government spent. The Royal Navy spent £11,363, one shilling, and six pence, or almost £600,000 today, representing thirty-one percent of the total amount that the government spent. The government spent £25,000 on the books that the Committee donated, accounting for over two thirds of the overall amount that the government spent.[69]

**Figure 5.2 - The Amount of Money that the British Government Spent in Response to the Great Kanto Earthquake**




*Sources: Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', The Daily Mail, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.*

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[67] Tomas Irish, 'The "Moral Basis" of Reconstruction? Humanitarianism, Intellectual Relief, and the League of Nations, 1918-25', *Modern Intellectual History*, 17/3 (2020), p. 769.
[68] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[69] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

Figure 5.2 shows that most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided in response to the earthquake took the form of intellectual relief. British diplomats and scholars conceptualised this intellectual relief in elitist terms. Nichols proposed that the donation of books to the University would help the government to curry favour with Japanese political elites.[70] MacDonald saw the academics and students of the University as representatives of the wider Japanese nation.[71] These examples underline the elitist nature of intellectual relief as the British government provided more support to academic elites than it provided to the wider Japanese public. The earthquake suggests that the state in inter-war Britain played a politically and socially restricted role in the provision of humanitarian relief as aid was restricted to academic elites and to British expatriates.

In summary, this thesis argues that most of the humanitarian aid that the British government provided was solely for the benefit of British expatriates and the University. Figure 5.2 reflects that the government offered more support to the University than it offered to any other recipient. British and other European nationals received accommodation, clothes, food, medical assistance, and toiletries from the Royal Navy.[72] In contrast, the money that the Foreign Office provided to the Mansion House Fund and the money that Eliot donated represent the only assistance that the Japanese government received from the British government.[73] The sundries that the *Ambrose* and the *Hawkins* carried and the money that the Foreign Office donated to the appeal that the League of Nations established represent the only relief that the Japanese public received from the British government.[74]

The government prioritised expatriates and the University due to the actions and views of various individuals and government departments. Boulter and Leveson saw British and other European nationals as their priority in line with the emphasis on the welfare of expatriates that underpinned imperial policing and due to the pressure that the pair received from merchants in Yokohama. The restrictions that Yamamoto and Yasukouchi imposed limited the amount of relief that the Royal Navy offered to the Japanese

[70] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[71] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[72] Boulter, '6 September', 6 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 717; Boulter, '7 September', 7 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 714; Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176; Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 17-24.
[73] Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[74] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Leveson to Murray, 'Earthquake in Japan', 29 September 1923, ADM 1/8668/176.

public.[75] The Cabinet and the Treasury prevented the Foreign Office from providing food or other humanitarian provisions to the Japanese government because Chamberlain and Niemeyer believed that the British government could not afford the expense.[76] The Committee donated books because Eliot and Nichols proposed that the government should offer books to the University instead of food to the Japanese government or public. The Committee also donated books because the actions of the Cabinet and the Treasury, the passage of time, and advice from academics, diplomats, and Japanese ministers convinced Curzon that his government should not offer food to the Japanese government. MacDonald later concluded that the British government would provide books to the University, rather than food to the Japanese government, on the grounds that books would convey equality, friendship, and respect between Britain and Japan.[77]

**The Originality of the Thesis**

This part of this chapter highlights the originality of this thesis. This part is subdivided into three sections. The first section outlines how this thesis contributes to the study of humanitarian aid and humanitarianism in inter-war Britain. The following section explains how this thesis represents an original contribution to the study of diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan after the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The third section underlines how this thesis contributes to the study of intellectual relief.

**The State and the Overseas Provision of Humanitarian Aid in Inter-war Britain**

This thesis questions the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the overseas provision of humanitarian aid. Juliano Fiori *et al.* argue that scholars should look 'beyond the state' when examining aid and humanitarianism. They maintain that this approach will allow historians to 'better understand the … act of giving'. Fiori *et al.*, however, overlook that states have likewise engaged in the 'act of giving'.[78] This factor explains why Emily Baughan proposes instead that historians need to 'think more about the role of states … rather than the comparatively small efforts of non-state actors'.[79]

This thesis represents an original contribution to the study of aid and humanitarianism in inter-war Britain by analysing the role that the British government played in response to

[75] Boulter, '11 September', 11 September 1923, FO 262/1587, pp. 690-1; Yamamoto to Palairet, 'The Water Channel', 13 September 1923, FO 262/1587, p. 352.
[76] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[77] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1; Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[78] Juliano Fiori, Matthew Hilton, and Kevin O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarianisms in Context', *European Review of History*, 23 (2016), p. 1.
[79] Emily Baughan, Eleanor Davey, Bronwen Everill, Matthew Hilton, Kevin O'Sullivan, and Tehila Sasson, 'History and Humanitarianism: A Conversation', *Past and Present*, 241 (2018), p. 20.

the Great Kanto Earthquake. The Royal Navy dispatched three warships to Yokohama that undertook relief work in the city for nearly six weeks.[80] The Foreign Office donated money to the Mansion House Fund for Japan, the appeal that the League of Nations established, and to the Japanese government.[81] The department and the British Academy formed the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee that donated books to the Imperial University of Tokyo on behalf of the British government. These examples illustrate how the state engaged in what Fiori *et al.* describe as the 'act of giving'.[82]

Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie lament that scholars have overlooked the role that states have played in the history of aid and humanitarianism. They explain that historians tend to examine humanitarianism by accessing the archives of nongovernmental organisations. They outline that this approach has overstated the role that nongovernmental organisations have played in the provision of aid and has downplayed the role that aristocrats, armies, churches, governments, and other groups have played. Piller and Wylie contend that this approach explains why historians have overlooked how the First World War was a significant moment in the evolution of humanitarianism, when governments and state bureaucracies became heavily involved in the provision of relief. They conclude that 'governments and state bureaucracies were the most important' humanitarian actors during the years that followed the war as states outfitted medical fieldworkers, resettled displaced civilians, and distributed food.[83]

This thesis, though, challenges this conclusion. The British government spent almost £37,000 in response to the earthquake.[84] In comparison, the Mansion House Fund for Japan raised £262,000, the equivalent of over £13,600,000 today.[85] This comparison reflects that the government spent less than a seventh of the amount that the British public spent.[86] These factors imply that the state was not the most important humanitarian actor in inter-war Britain.

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[80] Boulter, 'Earthquake and Fire', 19 December 1923, FO 908/6, pp. 18-20.
[81] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453.
[82] Fiori, Hilton, and O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarianisms in Context', p. 1.
[83] Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie, 'Humanitarianism and the Greater War', in Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (eds), *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914-24* (Manchester, 2023), pp. 2, 6, 20.
[84] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.
[85] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.
[86] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21

An analysis of how the British government responded to the famine that unfolded along the Volga River in Russia during and after the First World War leads to the same conclusion. Historians estimate that between 2,500,000 and 9,000,000 people died during the famine.[87] Baughan estimates that the public appeal that the Save the Children Fund ran across Britain between August 1921 and April 1923 raised £1,300,000, or nearly £68,000,000 today. In contrast, the government spent £100,000 in response to the famine by donating lime juice and tinned beef in March 1922. This comparison shows that the government spent a thirteenth of the amount that the public spent.[88] This thesis contributes to the study of aid and humanitarianism in inter-war Britain by highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of the role of the state that neither ignores, nor exaggerates, the scale of this role.

The amount that the British government spent in response to the earthquake can be compared with the amounts that other governments spent. Figure 5.3 outlines the amount of money that the governments of Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States spent on the provision of humanitarian relief in response to the disaster. J. Charles Schencking explains that the American government spent $9,000,000, the equivalent of £1,980,000 or roughly £103,000,000 today.[89] Lord Curzon reported in the memorandum that he presented to the Cabinet over two months after the earthquake had struck that the Australian government spent £60,000, or over £3,100,000 today. He argued that the Canadian government spent £30,000, or over £1,500,000 today, and he underlined that the government of New Zealand spent £25,000.[90]

December 1923, p. 4; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

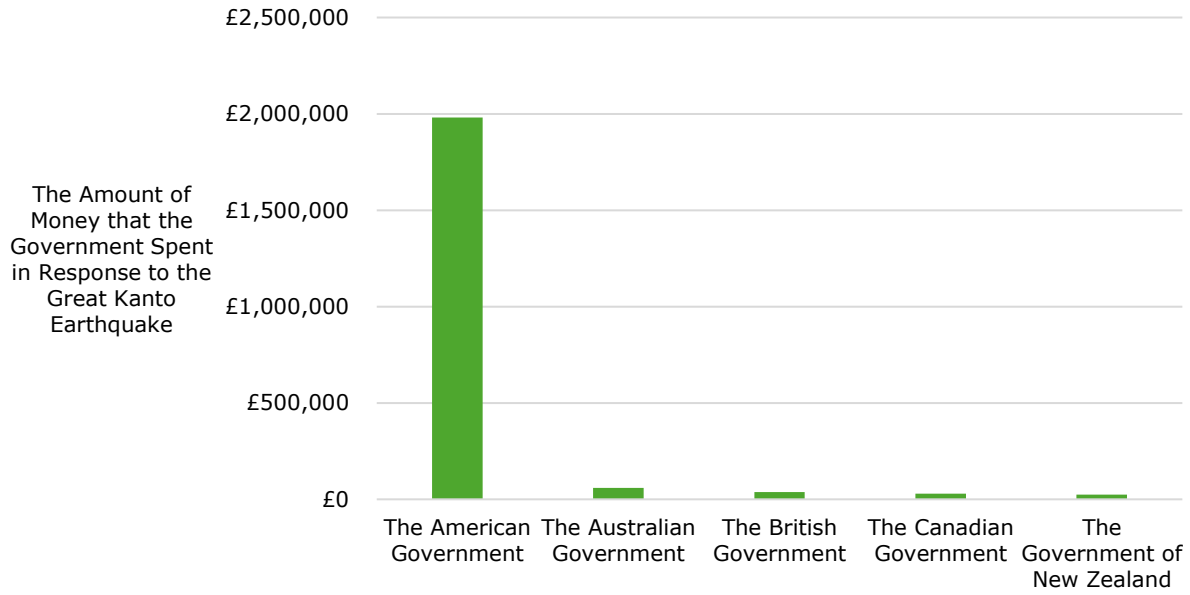
[87] Fuyuki Kurasawa, 'The Making of Humanitarian Visual Icons: On the 1921-3 Russian Famine as Foundational Event', in Jeffrey Alexander, Dominik Bartmanski, and Bernhard Giesen (eds), *Iconic Power: Materiality and Meaning in Social Life* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 68; Luke Kelly, *British Humanitarian Activity in Russia, 1890-1923* (Cham, 2018), p. 167.

[88] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire* (Oakland, 2022), pp. 39, 47.

[89] J. Charles Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923', 2013, <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>, accessed date: 30 January 2020.

[90] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.

**Figure 5.3 - The Amount of Money that the Governments of Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States Spent in Response to the Great Kanto Earthquake**




*Sources: Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', The Daily Mail, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Lord Curzon, 'Contribution by His Majesty's Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan', 9 November 1923, Cabinet Minutes – Contribution by the Government for Earthquake Relief in Japan, the Records of the Cabinet Office, the National Archives in London, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; J. Charles Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923', 2013, <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>, accessed date: 30 January 2020.*

Figure 5.3 suggests that the state in inter-war Britain played a limited role in the overseas provision of aid when compared with Australia and the United States. The British government spent less than a fiftieth of the amount that the American government spent and less than two thirds of the amount that the Australian government spent in response to the earthquake.[91] At the same time, the British state

[91] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1;

played an active role in the international provision of relief when compared with Canada and New Zealand. The British government spent almost £7,000 more than the Canadian government spent and nearly £12,000 more than the government of New Zealand spent.[92] Schencking laments that scholars 'know comparatively little about how members of the international community [apart from the American government and public] viewed, interpreted, or responded to the quake'.[93] This thesis helps to address this lacuna by highlighting how four of the governments of the British Empire reacted to the disaster. Figure 5.3 illustrates that the governments of Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand spent a combined total of almost £152,000, or over £7,900,000 today, less than a thirteenth of the amount that the American government spent.[94]

The amount that the British government spent in response to the earthquake can be compared with the amounts that the government spent in response to other humanitarian crises. Figure 5.4 outlines the amount of money that the government spent on the provision of humanitarian aid in response to the Volga Famine, the earthquake, and the Spanish Civil War. Baughan explains that the government spent £100,000 in reaction to the famine by donating food to Save the Children.[95] The government spent £36,898, one shilling, and six pence in response to the earthquake between September 1923 and March 1932.[96] Tom Buchanan estimates that the government spent £148,000, or over £7,700,000 today, in reaction to the Spanish Civil War that took place between July 1936 and April 1939. The government spent this sum on the evacuation of Spanish,

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Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.

[92] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

[93] J. Charles Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns: Corporate Giving from America's Industrial Heartland following the Great Kanto Earthquake', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 21/8 (2023), p. 54.

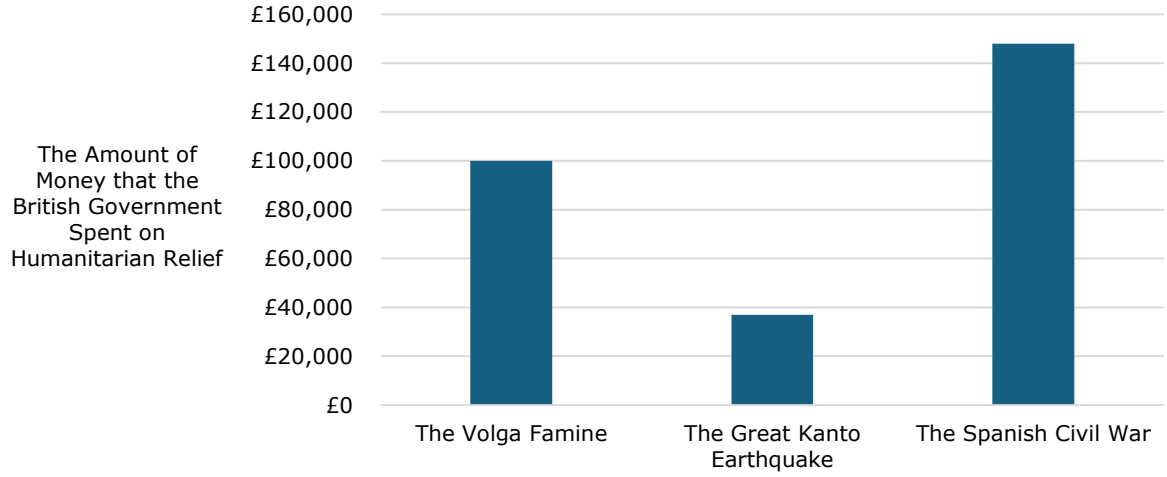
[94] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Schencking, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', <http://www.greatkantoearthquake.com/index.html>.

[95] Baughan, *Saving the Children*, pp. 46-8.

[96] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

British, and other European nationals and on the distribution of medicine and other provisions amongst Spanish refugees.[97]

**Figure 5.4 - The Amount of Money that the British Government Spent in Response to the Volga Famine, the Great Kanto Earthquake, and the Spanish Civil War**




*Sources: Robert Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Edward Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster in Japan', The Daily Mail, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Hikokichi Ijuin to Sir Charles Palairet, 'Sir Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, Correspondence on Subjects – Earthquake Casualties to Earthquake Relief, the Records of the Foreign Office, the National Archives in London, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Sir Frederick Butler to Sir Norman Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Sir Charles Montgomery to Sir Norman Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1; Tom Buchanan, Britain and the Spanish Civil War (Cambridge, 1997), p. 94; Emily Baughan, Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire (Oakland, 2022), pp. 46-8.*

Figure 5.4 demonstrates that the government in inter-war Britain provided humanitarian relief across the world. The amount of money that the government spent in response to the earthquake was less than half the amount that the government had spent in reaction to the Volga Famine.[98] The amount of money that the government spent in reaction to the earthquake was less than a quarter of the amount that the government spent in

[97] Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 94.
[98] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Baughan, *Saving the Children*, pp. 46-8.

response to the Spanish Civil War.[99] These comparisons illustrate that the scale of the role that the British state played in the overseas provision of aid varied throughout the 1920s and the 1930s.

Historians of inter-war humanitarianism tend to focus on the provision of aid in Europe. Janet Borland *et al.* argue that historians have paid more attention to Europe than they have paid to the Pacific.[100] This eurocentrism explains to a certain extent why Michael Barnett assumes that Europeans did not provide relief outside of Europe until after the end of the Second World War.[101] This thesis challenges this eurocentrism by highlighting how and why the British government provided aid in Japan, a country outside of the British Empire and outside of Europe. The earthquake shows that the British state played a geographically expansive, yet socially restricted role in the provision of humanitarian aid as the relief that the government offered in Japan was restricted to academic elites and to British citizens.

This thesis also contributes to the study of aid and humanitarianism by investigating the role that humanitarian aid played in British foreign policy. Alan Lester and Rob Skinner contend that historians have started to pay more attention to the relationship between humanitarian relief and foreign policy.[102] This thesis builds on this growing literature by examining why British diplomats believed that their government should provide aid in response to the earthquake. Sir Charles Eliot advised Sir William Tyrrell nearly two weeks after the earthquake had struck that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be damaged if the British government did not offer any humanitarian relief.[103] This advice reflects that the ambassador believed that aid should play a role in British foreign policy on the grounds that the provision of aid would help the government to maintain friendly relations with other governments.

Curzon shared this view. He explained why the British government should offer humanitarian support to the Japanese government in the memorandum that he

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[99] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1; Moore, 'Earthquake Disaster', *The Daily Mail*, 17 September 1923, p. 4; Ijuin to Palairet, 'Charles Eliot', 24 October 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 453; Butler to Fisher, 'Relief Work', 17 June 1924, T 161/516/1; Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, p. 94.
[100] Janet Borland and J. Charles Schencking, 'Objects of Concern, Ambassadors of Gratitude: Children, Humanitarianism, and Transpacific Diplomacy following Japan's 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 13/2 (2020), pp. 196-7.
[101] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York, 2011), p. 2.
[102] Alan Lester and Rob Skinner, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), p. 731.
[103] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

presented to the Cabinet over two months after the earthquake had struck. He contended that the Foreign Office should convey sympathy by offering humanitarian provisions. He reasoned that this display of sympathy would convince the Japanese government that the end of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did not constitute the end of cordial relations between the two governments. He predicted that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan would be harmed if the Japanese government surmised that the British government had not shown as much sympathy as the American government had shown. Curzon underlined that the British government needed to provide more relief than any of the governments of the Dominions had provided.[104] These views suggest that he saw diplomatic strategy and humanitarianism as closely intertwined.

These views can be understood within a broader diplomatic context. Patricia Clavin argues that the formation of the League of Nations after the end of the First World War 'multilateralised' British foreign policy. The League represented a transition away from the bilateral military alliances that had underpinned European diplomacy throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in favour of agreements between multiple states that covered arbitration, disarmament, and other international issues.[105] The end of the Alliance in August 1923 was a part of this move towards multilateral diplomacy. The British and Japanese governments agreed to replace the military alliance that had defined diplomatic relations between their countries for over twenty years with the Four-Power, Five-Power, and Nine-Power Treaties that entailed cooperation with seven other governments. Curzon and Eliot hoped that the provision of humanitarian aid in response to the earthquake would convince the Japanese government that this shift from bilateral to multilateral diplomacy did not represent the end of friendly diplomatic relations.

This thesis is an example of what Julia Irwin calls 'catastrophic diplomacy'. She defines this concept as the study of how the provision of humanitarian relief in response to wars, earthquakes, and other natural disasters have shaped diplomatic history.[106] Natsuko Chubachi *et al.* contend that this field likewise includes the study of how recipients and the ways in which they have reacted to the aid that they have received have influenced relations between states.[107] Irwin and Frank Kaser propose that governments started to formulate what the pair describe as 'humanitarian policies' from the first decade of the

[104] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[105] Patricia Clavin, 'The Ben Pimlott Memorial Lecture, 2019: Britain and the Making of Global Order after 1919', *Twentieth Century British History*, 31/3 (2020), p. 343.
[106] Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[107] Chubachi, Kawauchi, Ono, Ono, and Yoshino, 'The Great Kanto Earthquake', p. 63.

twentieth century. They define this concept as the belief that a state can advance its diplomatic and political objectives by providing relief overseas.[108]

The China Squadron and the Foreign Office expected that the provision of aid in response to the earthquake would support the diplomatic and imperial objectives of the British state. Curzon and Eliot envisioned that the provision of relief to the Japanese government and public would advance the diplomatic aspirations of the British government by promoting friendly diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Royal Navy offered humanitarian assistance to British and other European nationals in Yokohama in line with the emphasis on the welfare of expatriates that underpinned imperial policing. This thesis contributes to the study of catastrophic diplomacy by highlighting how the Foreign Office and the navy formulated humanitarian policies.

The Foreign Office monitored how the rest of the world reacted to the earthquake. Eliot read newspaper articles that described the relief work that the American navy undertook in Tokyo and Yokohama.[109] Robert Cecil, the head of the British delegation at the League of Nations, donated money to the appeal that the League established in the expectation that other diplomats would donate as well.[110] Curzon paid meticulous attention to the amount of aid that the American government provided out of fear that the Japanese government would conclude that the British government had shown less sympathy than the American government had shown.[111] Robert Nichols paid close attention to the assistance that German and Italian diplomats offered to the Imperial University of Tokyo in the belief that this assistance could threaten British interests in Japan.[112] These examples demonstrate that British academics and diplomats saw humanitarianism in competitive terms as they feared that the aid that the rest of the international community provided could threaten British diplomatic interests.

In contrast to the Foreign Office, the Treasury opposed the provision of humanitarian relief to Japanese nationals for economic reasons. Sir Otto Niemeyer warned in September 1923 that the British government could only afford to offer a loan to the Japanese government by raising the average rate of income tax.[113] Sir George Barstow underlined in late October that the Treasury would not permit Curzon to provide a grant to the Japanese government.[114] Sir Neville Chamberlain explained to the Cabinet towards

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[108] Frank Kaser, 'A Civilised Nation: Japan and the Red Cross, 1877-1900', *European Review of History*, 23/2 (2016), p. 27; Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, pp. 129-30.
[109] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[110] Cecil, 'A Subscription', 14 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[111] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1.
[112] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[113] Niemeyer to Chamberlain, 'Japan', 20 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[114] Wellesley to Fisher, 'A Practical Expression', 9 October 1923, T 161/516/1; Barstow to McNeill, 'A Gift', 24 October 1923, T 161/516/1.

the middle of November that the British government could not afford to donate food in response to the earthquake.[115] Maurice Headlam informed the Foreign Office in January 1924 that the government could not afford to donate books as well as food.[116] Although the Treasury allowed the Foreign Office to spend £25,000 on behalf of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee, this sum was nonetheless four times smaller than the amount that Ramsay MacDonald had originally planned to spend.[117] These examples reflect that the state in inter-war Britain was a contested space as the Foreign Office and the Treasury debated whether the government should offer humanitarian aid to foreign governments.

In summary, this thesis represents an original contribution to the study of humanitarian aid and humanitarianism in inter-war Britain by highlighting the role that the state played in the overseas provision of aid. The earthquake demonstrates that the British government engaged in what Fiori *et al.* call the 'act of giving' by providing more relief to universities and British expatriates than the government provided to the public and governments of foreign countries.[118] The earthquake and the Volga Famine suggest that the British state played a smaller role than the British public played in the international provision of relief. Figure 5.3 illustrates that the British government played a smaller role than the American and Australian governments played in the provision of aid. Figure 5.3 likewise implies that the British state played a larger role than the governments of Canada and New Zealand played. Figure 5.4 shows that the British government provided humanitarian support across the world throughout the 1920s and the 1930s. At the same time, the earthquake suggests that this humanitarian assistance was politically and socially restricted in Japan to academic elites and British citizens.

This thesis also underlines the role that humanitarian aid played in British foreign policy. Curzon and Eliot envisioned that the British government should offer relief to the Japanese government in the belief that relief would promote friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan. This thesis contributes to the study of catastrophic diplomacy by outlining how the Foreign Office and the navy anticipated that humanitarian aid could support the diplomatic and imperial objectives of the British state. The Treasury, however, contested the role that humanitarianism should play in British foreign policy and restricted the role that the state played in the provision of humanitarian aid.

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[115] Hankey, 'The Earthquake in Japan', 14 November 1923, CAB 23/46/27, p. 350.
[116] Headlam to Wellesley, 'Nichols', 31 January 1924, T 161/516/1.
[117] MacDonald to Eliot, 'Misunderstanding', 7 February 1924, FO 262/1612, p. 248; Sir George Barstow to Arthur Ponsonby, 'The Proposed Gift', 19 March 1924, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[118] Fiori, Hilton, and O'Sullivan, 'Humanitarianisms in Context', p. 1.

**The Post-Alliance Relationship**

This thesis questions what the role that the British government played in response to the Great Kanto Earthquake reveals about the diplomatic relationship that developed between Britain and Japan after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance ended in August 1923. David Steeds argues that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan remained friendly throughout the decade that followed the end of the Alliance.[119] Ian Nish concurs that the British and Japanese governments 'enjoyed a … normal friendship' throughout the 1920s.[120] Neville Bennett contends that that British government showed 'considerable empathy' towards the Japanese government when the American government banned Japanese migrants from entering the United States from May 1924.[121] Tadashi Kuramatsu maintains that the Geneva Conference, an international disarmament summit that took place between June and August 1927, demonstrates that diplomatic relations remained friendly as the Japanese delegation adopted a 'pro-British' stance.[122]

This thesis reaches a similar conclusion. Sir Charles Eliot advised Sir William Tyrrell in September 1923 that the British government should provide humanitarian aid in response to the earthquake in the belief that aid would help to maintain friendly diplomatic relations between the former allies.[123] Stanley Baldwin argued at the tenth Imperial Conference in October that the end of the Alliance had resulted in 'more cordial relations' between the British and Japanese governments.[124] Lord Curzon planned to offer humanitarian assistance to the Japanese government in the hope that aid would promote friendly diplomatic relations.[125] Ramsay MacDonald informed Gonsuke Hayashi, the Japanese ambassador to Britain, in August 1924 that the donation of books to the Imperial University of Tokyo would represent 'sympathy and friendship' between their countries.[126] This thesis contributes to the study of the post-Alliance relationship by outlining how British diplomats continued to see the Japanese government as a friend of

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[119] David Steeds, 'Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1902-23: A Marriage of Convenience', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 221.
[120] Ian Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance, 1920-30', in Yoichi Kibata and Ian Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I – The Political-Diplomatic Dimension, 1600-1930* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 275.
[121] Neville Bennett, 'White Discrimination against Japan: Britain, the Dominions, and the United States, 1908-28', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 3/2 (2001), p. 101.
[122] Tadashi Kuramatsu, 'Britain, Japan, and Inter-war Naval Limitation, 1921-36', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 131-2.
[123] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.
[124] 'British Chief', *The Japan Times and Mail*, 4 October 1923, p. 1.
[125] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 439.
[126] MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.

the British government and continued to pursue friendly diplomatic relations after the Alliance ended. In particular, Curzon, Eliot, and MacDonald envisioned that humanitarian relief should play a role in defining the new, post-Alliance relationship by conveying to the Japanese government that diplomatic relations would remain cordial despite the end of the Alliance.

Antony Best and other historians, though, argue that diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan deteriorated after the Alliance ended. Best contends that Conservatives in Parliament expressed 'anti-Japanese sentiment[s]' throughout the 1920s as they were alarmed by the territorial expansion of the Japanese Empire and by the growth of the Japanese navy.[127] Ian Gow reasons that the possibility of a war with Japan was at the centre of the plans that the Admiralty formulated throughout the years that followed the end of the Alliance.[128] Zoltan Buzas maintains that these factors meant that the British and Japanese governments became alienated from each other.[129]

The exhibition that Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British foreign secretary, hosted in Whitehall on behalf of the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in May 1929, however, suggests that diplomatic relations remained mostly cordial. Chamberlain explained to the attendees that the donation of books to the University showed that 'the friendship between Japan and Great Britain … now flourishes as freshly as ever'. Tsuneo Matsudaira, the Japanese ambassador to Britain, concurred that 'trustful friendship' continued to define relations between the British and Japanese governments more than five years after the Alliance had ended. Giichi Tanaka, the Japanese prime minister and foreign minister, agreed that the gift of books was a sign of the 'friendship so happily subsisting between … Britain and Japan'.[130] These examples reflect that British as well as Japanese diplomats saw the post-Alliance relationship in terms that were friendlier than Best, Buzas, and Gow imply.

Erik Goldstein and other scholars propose that relations between the Japanese navy and the Royal Navy were antagonistic at the time of the earthquake. Goldstein argues that an arms race between the American, British, and Japanese fleets caused tensions between the three navies throughout and after the First World War.[131] Phillips O'Brien

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[127] Antony Best, 'The "Ghost" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: An Examination into Historical Mythmaking', *The Historical Journal*, 49/3 (2006), pp. 818-19.
[128] Ian Gow, 'The Royal Navy and Japan, 1921-41', in John Chapman, Ian Gow, and Yoichi Hirama (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1600-2000, Volume III – The Military Dimension* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 114.
[129] Zoltan Buzas, 'The Colour of Threat: Race, Threat Perception, and the Demise of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *Security Studies*, 22/4 (2013), pp. 600-1.
[130] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.
[131] Erik Goldstein, 'The Evolution of British Diplomatic Strategy for the Washington Conference', in Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference, 1921-*

contends that the Admiralty in Whitehall interpreted the expansion of the Japanese navy as a threat to the naval supremacy of the British Empire.[132] Nish explains that these factors led the Royal Navy to fortify Singapore from May 1923 to protect the British colony from a hypothetical Japanese invasion.[133]

This thesis, though, shows that relations between the Japanese navy and the Royal Navy were at least somewhat cooperative when the earthquake struck. The China Squadron allowed the Japanese navy to oversee the distribution of the sundries that the squadron had purchased in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Curzon informed the Cabinet that the Admiralty hoped that these provisions would encourage friendly diplomatic relations between Britain and Japan.[134] These factors demonstrate that relations between the navies were not as antagonistic as Goldstein, Nish, and O'Brien suggest.

In summary, this thesis represents an original contribution to the study of the post-Alliance relationship by highlighting how British diplomats aimed to maintain friendly diplomatic relations after the Alliance had ended. Curzon, Eliot, and MacDonald envisioned that humanitarian aid would help to define the post-Alliance relationship by convincing the Japanese government that the end of the Alliance did not constitute the end of cordial diplomatic relations. The exhibition that Chamberlain convened in Whitehall illustrates that British and Japanese diplomats saw their governments as friends throughout the 1920s. The earthquake shows that the Japanese navy and the Royal Navy continued to work with each other despite the end of the Alliance.

**The Overseas Provision of Intellectual Relief in Inter-war Britain**

This thesis contributes to the study of intellectual relief by examining the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the overseas provision of this particular kind of aid. The Foreign Office and the British Academy established the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee in December 1923. The Foreign Office and the Stationery Office spent £25,000 on the acquisition of books on behalf of the Committee.[135] The Foreign Office informed the Committee which books the Japanese Foreign Ministry would allow and which books the ministry would not allow the Committee to donate.[136] The Committee donated 41,700 books to the Imperial University of Tokyo over more than eight years.[137]

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*2: Naval Rivalry, East Asian Stability, and the Road to Pearl Harbor* (Ilford, 1994), pp. 14-16.

[132] Phillips O'Brien, 'Britain and the End of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', in Phillips O'Brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-22* (London, 2004), pp. 281-2.

[133] Nish, 'Echoes of Alliance', in Kibata and Nish (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations, Volume I*, pp. 255-6.

[134] Curzon, 'Earthquake Relief', 9 November 1923, CAB 24/162/50, p. 438.

[135] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

[136] Gollancz to Ashton-Gwatkin, 'My Ideas', 30 September 1924, T 161/516/1.

[137] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1.

These examples suggest that the British state played a prominent role in the overseas provision of intellectual relief as the University received more books from the Committee than from China and France combined.[138]

British scholars donated books to universities across the world during the First World War and throughout the years that followed. Austro-Hungarian troops shelled the Belgrade University Library when they attacked the Serbian capital in July 1914. Tomas Irish explains that the Royal Society of Literature, an academic society in London, reacted by donating over 18,000 books between January 1919 and August 1923.[139] This figure represented less than half the number of books that the Imperial University of Tokyo received from the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee.[140] German soldiers destroyed over 300,000 books when they razed the Louvain University Library in August 1914 during what Belgian, British, and French propaganda nicknamed "the sack of Louvain".[141] Steven Witt outlines that British academics responded by donating almost 56,000 books to the Belgian university between August 1914 and July 1928, approximately 14,000 more books than the Committee provided in response to the earthquake.[142] These examples demonstrate that British scholars played an active role in the provision of intellectual relief as these universities in Belgrade, Louvain, and Tokyo received a combined total of over 115,000 books from Britain.[143]

At the same time, these universities received more assistance from American academics than they received from British academics. American scholars provided over 200,000 books to the Belgrade University Library between July 1914 and May 1926 and roughly 27,000 books to the Louvain University Library between August 1914 and July 1928.[144] Tammy Proctor highlights that the American government and public donated $1,125,000, the equivalent of nearly £250,000 or over £12,900,000 today, to support the reconstruction of the Louvain University Library.[145] John Rockefeller Junior, an American

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[138] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Tomas Irish, *Feeding the Mind: Humanitarianism and the Reconstruction of European Intellectual Life, 1919-33* (Cambridge, 2024), p. 185.
[139] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.
[140] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.
[141] Steven Witt, 'Inter-war Internationalism and the Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', *Libraries: Culture, History, and Society*, 4/1 (2020), p. 2.
[142] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 16.
[143] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 16; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-8.
[144] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 168-75.
[145] Tammy Proctor, 'The Louvain Library and US Ambition in Inter-war Belgium', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 50/2 (2015), p. 158.

industrialist and philanthropist who financed several libraries across the world during the early twentieth century, donated ¥4,000,000, the equivalent of almost £430,000 or over £22,000,000 today, to the Imperial University of Tokyo.[146] The University received nearly 77,000 books from the United States, almost double the number that the University received from the Tokyo Imperial University Library Committee.[147] American academics provided a combined total of over 300,000 books to universities in Belgrade, Louvain, and Tokyo.[148] These examples illustrate that American scholars played a larger role than British scholars played in the provision of intellectual relief as American scholars donated more than double the number of books that British scholars donated to these three universities.[149]

This thesis also contributes to the study of intellectual relief by highlighting the role that this particular type of aid played in British foreign policy. Sir Charles Eliot advised Lord Curzon that the British government should donate books to the Imperial University of Tokyo in the expectation that this gesture would encourage trade between Britain and Japan.[150] Ramsay MacDonald agreed with Robert Nichols that the gift of books would foster cordial diplomatic relations between the two countries.[151] MacDonald argued that the provision of books would convey to the Japanese government that the British government saw Japan as an equal of Britain. He expected that the donation of books would help to protect what he described as the "civilisation" of Japan from the effects of the earthquake. Sir Austen Chamberlain interpreted the books as evidence that relations between the British and Japanese governments remained friendly after the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended.[152] These examples show that the Committee donated books because British diplomats envisioned that intellectual relief should play an active role in British foreign policy for diplomatic, economic, and political reasons.

Finally, this thesis examines how the recipients of intellectual relief have reacted to the assistance that they have received. Yoshinao Kozai, the president of the University, donated five copies of the *Lotus Sutra*, an ancient Buddhist text, to the British government in January 1928. He likewise offered five copies of an accompanying

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[146] Mary Haskell, 'Brother, Can You Share a Dime? The Rockefeller Family and Libraries', *Libraries and Culture*, 31/1 (1996), p. 135.
[147] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[148] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 168-75, 185.
[149] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Witt, 'The Rebuilding of the Catholic University of Louvain Library', p. 16; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, pp. 165-75, 185.
[150] Eliot to Curzon, 'Tokyo University', 10 November 1923, FO 262/1586, p. 469.
[151] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1; MacDonald to Hayashi, 'The Tokyo Imperial University', 2 August 1924, T 161/516/1.
[152] Chamberlain to Tilley, 'British Books', 23 May 1929, T 161/516/1.

commentary that Prince Shotoku, a regent who ruled Japan between the late sixth and early seventh centuries, had written. Kozai hoped that these gifts would convey to the British government that his university appreciated the support that the Committee had provided and was continuing to provide.[153] These gifts demonstrate how the recipients of intellectual relief have responded to the assistance that they have received by offering gifts to donors. These gifts reflect how the provision of intellectual relief in response to the earthquake led to a reciprocal exchange of literature that took place between Britain and Japan throughout the 1920s and the early 1930s.

In summary, this thesis represents an original contribution to the study of intellectual relief by highlighting that the state in inter-war Britain played a prominent role in the provision of this particular kind of aid. The University received almost three times as many books from the Committee than it received from France.[154] The reconstruction of the University is one of several examples that show that British scholars provided intellectual relief across the world during the early twentieth century. At the same time, the rebuilding of the University is one of many examples that demonstrate that British academics played a smaller role than American academics played in the provision of intellectual relief. The support that the British government provided to the Committee reflects that various diplomats envisioned that intellectual relief should play a role in British foreign policy for diplomatic, economic, and political reasons. The manuscripts that Kozai presented to the British government illustrate how the recipients of intellectual relief have reacted to the assistance that they have received.

**Avenues for Further Enquiry**

This thesis suggests that the Great Kanto Earthquake presents historians with numerous avenues for further enquiry. In particular, scholars are yet to explain how many British nationals were living in Japan when the earthquake struck. Olive Checkland argues that the British community in Yokohama was larger than the British enclave in Tokyo.[155] She does not, though, specify how many British expatriates lived in either of these cities. In particular, the number of expatriates who lived on "the Settlement", an artificial island in the harbour of Yokohama, and the number who lived on "the Bluff", a range of hills to the south of the city, remain unclear. It is possible that historians can address these questions by examining the sources that are available at the Kobe City Archives and at

[153] Yoshinao Kozai to Sir John Tilley, 'Tokyo Imperial University', 27 January 1928, Acts of God – Earthquake in Japan, the Records of the Treasury, the National Archives in London, T 161/516/1.
[154] Montgomery to Fisher, 'The Supply of Books', 12 March 1932, T 161/516/1; Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.
[155] Olive Checkland, *Britain's Encounter with Meiji Japan, 1868-1912* (Basingstoke, 1989), pp. 96-7.

the Yokohama Archives of History, the archives that the municipal governments of Kobe and Yokohama maintain. It is plausible that these sources could help scholars to investigate how the earthquake affected the British community in Japan as well as the ways in which this community reacted to the disaster.

Prisoners who had escaped from nearby jails attacked British properties on "the Bluff" when the earthquake struck. George Moule, an Anglican missionary who lived in Tokyo with his wife Edith, informed his mother Agnes that 'escaped bands of prisoners … robbed the house' of Ernest Holmes, the British consul in Yokohama who died during the earthquake. George highlighted that Christine Dennis, a governess who lived at the home of the consul, 'lost all her possessions' during the robbery.[156] Prisoners likewise looted the home of James Mollison, a retired dynamite merchant. His wife recalled during an interview with *The Daily Mail* that the looters 'seized everything of value'.[157]

There are various questions about these attacks that scholars are yet to answer. Historians are yet to consider if the prisoners ransacked any properties outside of "the Bluff" or any homes that did not belong to British nationals. Scholars are yet to explain why prisoners attacked the homes of expatriates or whether these attacks led to any diplomatic repercussions. The number of properties that the prisoners looted as well as the number of prisoners who participated in these attacks remain uncertain. Historians are yet to analyse what the prisoners stole or how much they stole. It is possible that scholars can answer these questions by consulting the materials that are available at the Yokohama Archives of History. These enquiries could offer further insights into the ways in which British nationals experienced the earthquake.

Historians could examine the Mansion House Fund for Japan. Sir Edward Moore, the lord mayor of London, established this nationwide appeal on 4 September 1923, three days after the earthquake had struck.[158] The fund raised £262,000 over almost four months.[159] Scholars could investigate what this public appeal reveals about the role that the British public has played in the international provision of humanitarian aid. *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Times* supported the appeal by publishing lists in which the newspapers named the companies that had donated money to the fund. Historians could analyse these lists to obtain a clearer understanding of the role that British companies have played in the history of humanitarianism.

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[156] George Moule to Agnes Moule, 'I have been to Tokyo', 15 September 1923, the Letters of Edith and George Moule, Unofficial Papers of the Church Missionary Society, the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, CMS ACC 285 C.
[157] 'Attacked with a Sword: Englishwoman's Ordeal in Earthquake', *The Daily Mail*, 11 October 1923, p. 13.
[158] 'Direct News from Tokyo', *The Daily Mail*, 5 September 1923, p. 10.
[159] 'Japanese Earthquake', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1923, p. 4.

Figure 5.3 illustrates that the governments of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand provided aid in response to the earthquake. J. Charles Schencking laments that historians 'know comparatively little about how members of the international community [apart from the American government and public] viewed, interpreted, or responded to the quake'.[160] Scholars could address this lacuna by investigating how and why the governments of these three Dominions provided relief in Japan. Historians could highlight how and why the Australian government offered aid by examining sources that are available at the National Archives of Australia, the archives that the government maintains, in Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, and Sydney. Scholars could outline the role that the Canadian government played in reaction to the disaster by analysing materials that are available at Library and Archives Canada, the archive that the government maintains, in Ottawa. Historians could question how and why the government of New Zealand provided relief by consulting sources that are available at Archives New Zealand, the archive that the government maintains, in Wellington. These avenues for further research could enable scholars to compare the role that humanitarian aid played in British foreign policy with the role that aid played in the foreign policies of the Dominions.

Historians could also investigate the role that other European governments played in response to the earthquake. Robert Nichols informed Sir Charles Eliot over two months after the earthquake had struck that Giacomo de Martino, the Italian ambassador to Japan, had pledged that his government would donate books to the Imperial University of Tokyo.[161] Although Tomas Irish explains that the University received books from at least fifteen countries, he does not specify whether the University received any books from the Italian government.[162] Scholars could examine whether the government played a role in the reconstruction of the University by accessing materials that are available at the Central Archives of the State, the archive that the Italian government maintains, in Rome. These sources could allow historians to compare the role that the state in inter-war Britain played in the international provision of intellectual relief with the role that the state in Fascist Italy played. These sources could likewise help historians to compare the role that intellectual relief played in British foreign policy with the role that intellectual relief played in Italian foreign policy.

In summary, this thesis identifies various avenues for further enquiry. Historians are yet to examine the size of the British expatriate community that had developed in Japan when the earthquake struck. Scholars are yet to analyse how and why prisoners who

[160] Schencking, 'Acts of Humanity, Expectations of Returns', p. 54.
[161] Nichols to Eliot, 'The Library', 7 November 1923, T 161/516/1.
[162] Irish, *Feeding the Mind*, p. 185.

had escaped from nearby jails looted British homes on "the Bluff". An analysis of the Mansion House Fund could underline the roles that companies and the public in inter-war Britain played in the overseas provision of humanitarian aid. Historians could question how and why the governments of the Dominions provided relief in Japan. Scholars could compare the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake with the roles that other European governments played.

Historians are yet to consider how American, Japanese, and other diplomats interpreted the role that the British government played in response to the earthquake. Scholars have not yet investigated how Canadian, Italian, and other diplomats compared the aid that the British government provided in Japan with the aid that their governments provided. An analysis of these views could help to situate the study of humanitarian aid and humanitarianism in inter-war Britain within a wider international context. In particular, this comparative approach could illustrate whether the rest of the international community agreed or disagreed with Eliot when he warned the British government that 'we really are doing nothing'.[163]

[163] Eliot to Tyrrell, 'Earthquake Disaster', 13 September 1923, T 161/516/1.

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