

TRANSITIONS IN BRITISH EDITORIAL GERMANOPHOBIA

1899-1914

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1899-1914: A CASE STUDY OF J. L. GARVIN,
LEO MAXSE AND ST. LEO STRACHEY

By

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ABSTRACT

In recent years a new interest has developed in the social and political influence of the Edwardian press. This interest has been expressed in two ways. The direct approach examines a single newspaper and concentrates on that paper's editor. The newspapers which are chosen for this type of examination are most often Radical papers. The second, but more indirect interest in the press, considers the influence of newspapers on the domestic origins of foreign policy. The newspapers employed here are Conservative papers and such studies reflect the fact that the Conservative press was the primary disseminator of Germanophobia. Historians examining such domestic Conservative forces can make only simplistic judgements concerning the Conservative press as there are no precise studies of leading Germanophobe journals. The diplomatic historians cannot draw on the modern studies being done of Radical newspapers for this press was traditionally Germanophile.

This thesis bridges the interests in the Edwardian press by providing a detailed examination of three prominent Germanophobe editors. It illustrates that the Germanophobia of J. L. Garvin, Leo Maxse and St. Loe Strachey in the

period between 1899 and 1914 was not directed primarily against Germany but was used as an editorial method of enhancing their own political interests. This Germanophobia was entirely domestic in its orientation and reflected the editors' Conservative philosophies.

Through a detailed examination of the journals and private papers of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey this thesis traces the development of their Germanophobia in the fifteen years prior to the outbreak of the Great War. The historical development of Germanophobia prior to 1906 is explored to identify the elements which typically constituted Germanophobia. The editors took these elements and forged them into a unique political weapon. By 1908, the editors had established a fully developed form of editorial Germanophobia with which they constantly assailed all aspects of the Liberal administration.

The editors had all but abandoned their editorial Germanophobia by 1912. This was not a decision which reflected any major change in the international situation, but coincided with crucial domestic developments. The passage of the Parliament Act in 1911 allowed the Liberals to introduce their Home Rule Bill which nearly precipitated a civil war. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey responded to this crisis as Unionist partisans. They directly attacked the

Liberals over this one issue while ignoring the many other areas where they previously had employed their Germanophobia.

The approach and first months of the Great War places the editors' prewar Germanophobia into sharp relief. The wartime Germanophobia which permeated all of the British press was typified by a virulent anti-German sentiment. This element had never been present in the earlier editorials of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. Indeed, prior to the war the editors' papers had reflected a grudging admiration for the Germans. The failure to distinguish between these two forms of Germanophobia has led to a major misconception of the role of the Conservative press in Edwardian politics.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The social and political influence of British newspapers, both elitist and popular, reached its zenith during the Edwardian period. The abolition of the tax on newspapers in 1861 and the institution of Forster's Education Act in 1870 produced, by the early twentieth century, a reading public of unprecedented size. The extensions of the franchise in 1867 and 1884 had given that reading public novel political influence even though that influence was sporadic and indirect. The men who most benefitted from this evolution in Britain were the editors and publishers of the host of daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly journals which were to be found in Edwardian Britain. The editors, who were the most visible component of this thriving journalism, were men of extraordinary influence.¹ They were the social lions of their day. Their company was sought, their peculiarities were indulged, their opinions were treated with deference, but most important their journals were read.

The Edwardian press was not a monolithic entity which could move with tidal force but rather was divided

¹Linton Andrews and H. A. Taylor, *Lords and Laborers of the Press* (Carbondale, Ill., 1970).

in its social and political affiliations. The editors were keenly aware that different social classes responded to different types of journalism. A newspaper which was designed for working class consumption would tend to reflect the social biases and expectations of its readership. This unwritten rule of journalism applied with equal validity to middle and upper class papers. Such divisions of readership were clearly illustrated in the titles "popular" and "elitist" press. The popular press was composed primarily of mass circulation dailies which sold for a half-penny. An alternative title for this type of newspaper, the sensational press, speaks volumes about its format and its treatment of the daily news. This journalism stood in contrast to the elitist or quality press which assumed a well educated readership who enjoyed social and political power. The many journals of the elitist press were typically much older than their popular press counterparts. The revolution in newspaper readership which had helped to create the popular press did not have the same significance for the elitist press though it was not unaffected. Certainly some elitist papers, notably the National Review and the Observer, adopted some of the sensationalism of their more popular counterparts. At the same time the growth of the popular press, with its large constituency, heightened the importance of the elitist press. It was deemed to be part of the function of the elitist press to counteract what was often

seen as the mischievous or politically detrimental influence of the mass circulation dailies.² In practice the various papers became synonymous with their readership to the extent that they were seen as symbols of class differences.

The press was further divided along traditional and also shifting political lines. The Liberal, Unionist and Labour parties enjoyed the support of the various newspapers which reflected the complexity of Edwardian politics. The titles attached to the major parties were more collective terms than complete descriptions. The title "Liberal party" falls short of an accurate description of all the elements within the "party". The parliamentary coalition led consecutively by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and H. H. Asquith was composed of Radicals, Whigs, Nonconformists, Irish Nationalists and Labourites.³ The parliamentary alliance led in turn by Lord Salisbury, Arthur Balfour and Andrew Bonar Law was called the "Unionist party" but within its ranks were to be found old fashioned Tories, Conservatives and Liberal Unionists.⁴

²R. C. K. Ensor, England 1870-1914 (Oxford, 1936), 532-36.

³Peter Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments, 2 vols. (London, 1968, 1971).

⁴Robert Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill (London, 1970), and Peter Fraser, "The Liberal

The "Labour party", which during the Edwardian period was in close cooperation with the Liberals, was composed primarily of a tense alliance of the Independent Labour Party, Fabians, other socialists, Lib-Labs and trade unionists.⁵ These many political factions, which were created by the development of new political forces or the deterioration of old political alliances, found support in the press. Such factionalism resulted in a press of diverse and often antagonistic points of view.

Regardless of their various political affiliations Edwardian papers could not be termed party organs. Edwardian editors enjoyed a wide degree of freedom and, if a particular paper consistently reflected the views of a political party, it was done by choice, not by compulsion. The press was too powerful to be constrained by the rigours of party discipline or party doctrine. Indeed it was often the papers which set the tone for the party they chose to support. By serving as vehicles for the dissemination of political information they

Unionist Alliance: Chamberlain, Hartington and the Conservatives 1886-1904", English Historical Review 77, January, 1962, 53-78.

⁵Henry Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (Oxford, 1965) and A. M. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1884-1918 (Cambridge, 1966).

could and did modify that information to fit their own particular preferences.

Historians have long been aware of the social and political significance of the Edwardian press but in the last decade there has been an intensification of historical study. This new interest has been expressed in two ways. The first and most direct approach has been to examine a specific newspaper. This type of historical inquiry typically centres not on the newspaper as a whole but rather on its editor. Such emphasis on editorship highlights the primacy of the editors in Edwardian journalism. The other notable characteristic of this new approach is that the newspapers which have been chosen for attention are most often Radical papers.⁶ This has tended to create an historiographical imbalance. The Conservative press, which was much larger and in many ways more influential, has only to a limited extent been the subject of such detailed research.⁷ Historians have unwittingly created a false

⁶Some notable results of this historical inquiry have been Trevor Wilson, ed., The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott (London, 1970); David Ayerst, Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper (London, 1971); Stephen Koss, Fleet Street Radical: A. G. Gardiner (London, 1973); Alfred Havighurst, Radical Journalist: H. W. Massingham (Cambridge, 1974); and Alan Lee's interpretative section on, "The Radical Press", in A. J. A. Morris, ed., Edwardian Radicalism (London, 1974).

⁷A pioneering example of a broad treatment of the Conservative press is A. M. Gollin's The Observer and

impression of the relative significance of the two major political divisions of the press.

The second approach of recent historical inquiry considers Conservative journalists in an attempt to understand domestic influences on foreign policy. However, in their study of domestic counterrevolutionary forces, historians have been content with broad generalizations concerning the Conservative press and its employment of Germanophobia. The combination of Conservatism and Germanophobia, it is assumed, produced an anti-German press which had a great deal of influence in shaping both popular and official opinion in regards to Germany. Such diplomatic historians have erroneously equated the Anglophobia of the German press with the Germanophobia of the British press. This equation has served only to obscure the complexities of British Conservative Germanophobia.⁸

The major historiographical weakness in these two approaches is that, though they both consider aspects of the Edwardian press, they do not complement each other. Recent

J. L. Garvin 1908-1914: A Study in a Great Editorship (London, 1960). There have also been a few unsatisfactory works on Lord Northcliffe among which the most notable have been George Harmsworth and Reginald Pound, Northcliffe (London, 1959), and Paul Ferris, The House of Northcliffe (London, 1971).

⁸For the general question of counterrevolutionary forces and nationalism see Arno J. Mayer's "Domestic Causes of the First World War" in Leonard Kreiger and Fritz Stern, eds., The Responsibility of Power (Garden City, New York, 1967), 286-300, and "Internal Cause and Purposes of War in Europe 1870-1956: A Research Assignment", Journal of Modern History 41 (September, 1969):291-303. D. Lammers, "Arno Mayer and the British Decision for War: 1914", Journal of British Studies

studies of the Radical press, no matter how detailed or important cannot significantly aid the diplomatic historians in their examination of the domestic origins of Germanophobia. The Radical press was traditionally Germanophile. It attempted to alleviate diplomatic tensions and to defuse domestic fears about German intentions. Those studies of the Germanophobe press which do exist have consistently failed to differentiate between the elitist and popular components of that press. The excesses committed by the Northcliffe style of Conservative editor are assumed to be typical of all Conservative editors.⁹ The diplomatic historians have consequently been forced to construct their interpretations from the most inappropriate sources.

There has been no precise examination of leading Germanophobe journals and the exact nature of their Germanophobia. The purpose of this thesis is partially to redress this historiographical imbalance by presenting case

12 (1973):137-65 and Michael R. Gordon, "Domestic Conflict and the Origins of the First World War: The British and German Cases", Journal of Modern History 46 (June, 1974): 191-226.

⁹ Studies which typify this traditional and misleading impression of the Germanophobe press are E. Malcolm Carroll, Germany and the Great Powers 1866-1914, A Study in Public Opinion and Foreign Policy (New York, 1938); Oron J. Hale, Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution: Study in Diplomacy and the Press 1904-1906 (Philadelphia, 1931) and Publicity and Diplomacy -- with Special Reference to England and Germany 1890-1914 (Gloucester, Mass., 1964); and Bernadotte E. Schmitt, "The Relation of Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs Before and During the First World War" in

studies of three prominent Conservative editors -- J. L. Garvin, Leo Maxse and St. Loe Strachey. These men were editors of particular social and political influence. Their journals were read by the governing classes of Britain and their advice and support was sought by the political elite. All three men were Germanophobes though the intensity of their Germanophobia varied. By examining the nature and development of their editorial Germanophobia new aspects of historical problems emerge which have for the most part been either neglected or misinterpreted.

This thesis will illustrate that the Germanophobia of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey in the period between 1899 and 1914 was not directed against Germany but was used as an editorial device with which they furthered their own political concerns. These Germanophobes were not belligerent, sabre-rattling disturbers of the diplomatic peace. Rather, they were men who were deeply concerned for the welfare of their nation and who feared the damage, both domestic and diplomatic, that the inexperienced Liberals might cause. Their primary concerns were with the domestic development of Britain.

A. D. Sarkission, ed., Studies in Diplomatic History and Historiography in Honour of G. P. Gooch (London, 1961), 322-30.

They used the image of a militarily and industrially aggressive Germany to spur their nation to greater effort. Specific examination of these three editors reveals men who were haunted by the prospect of an Anglo-German war. They believed that Britain was in grave danger and that the Liberals were profoundly unsuited to lead the nation into the twentieth century. These two beliefs were combined to form a Conservative editorial Germanophobia which has to this point consistently been misunderstood.¹⁰

James Louis Garvin was the editor of the Observer, the oldest Sunday newspaper in Britain. He had been born at Birkenhead on April 12, 1868, into a poor Irish Catholic family. He was, in the best traditions of the Victorian ideal of "self-help", an autodidact. Appropriately enough, Garvin's first job was as a newsboy for the Liverpool Daily Post. His fascination with journalism never deserted him. In 1889 he was able to obtain a position at the Newcastle Chronicle which was at that time being edited by the Radical,

¹⁰There are to date no published works on the Germanophobia of any of these men. Gollin's The Observer and J. L. Garvin does mention that Garvin was a Germanophobe but beyond that it says nothing on this matter.

Joseph Cowen. Garvin learned quickly under Cowen's tutelage and in 1895 he began dispatching articles to the London based Daily Telegraph and Fortnightly Review. The editor of the Fortnightly Review, Leonard Courtney, invited Garvin to Fleet Street, the Mecca of British journalism, but Garvin was determined that he would not go to London until he was thirty years of age and had fully developed his skills as a journalist.

In 1899 Garvin finally went to London to become a leader writer for the Daily Telegraph. Once again his skill earned him much recognition and in 1905-6 he became editor of the Tariff Reform paper the Outlook. In January 1908 Lord Northcliffe made Garvin the editor of the Observer which at that time was a respected but little read Sunday paper. By 1911 Garvin had transformed his charge into one of the most influential papers in Britain. When, in 1911, Garvin and his famous employer had a falling out it was Northcliffe who left. Garvin found another proprietor for his paper in W. W. Astor, the expatriate American millionaire. Garvin maintained his editorship of the Observer until 1942 and continued to write for that journal until his death in 1947.¹¹

¹¹The chief sources of biographical information about Garvin are Katharine Garvin, J. L. Garvin: A Memoir (London, 1948); Dictionary of National Biography suppl. 6, 1941-1950, 290-93; The Times "Obituary", January 24, 1947, 7; Observer January 26, 1947, 4.

Prior to his arrival in London Garvin had been an Irish Home Ruler, a Free Trader and an advocate of Radical reform. After four years in the capital his political philosophy had undergone a volte face. He became a Unionist, a Tariff Reformer and a Conservative though he continued to insist upon the need for social reforms. In essence Garvin had changed from being a supporter of the Liberal party to one of the Unionist party. This transformation was based primarily on his growing affection for and commitment to Joseph Chamberlain. When Garvin first came to London, Chamberlain was the brightest star in the political firmament. Garvin was attracted to this figure who was the source of so much controversy. Chamberlain's Tariff Reform campaign which began in May 1903 was not the beginning of Garvin's conversion to Unionism as A. G. Gardiner suggested but rather represented its consolidation.¹² The political philosophy that Garvin developed during these few years remained with him until after the Great War.¹³

¹²A. G. Gardiner, The Pillars of Society (London, 1916), 231. Gardiner, editor of the Radical paper the Daily News, was one of Garvin's constant antagonists and was not disposed to see Garvin or any of his Conservative colleagues in a favourable light.

¹³Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 10-16.

Leopold James Maxse, editor of the National Review, was born in London on November 11, 1864. He was the second son of Admiral Frederick Maxse, a man of social prominence and radical political views.¹⁴ Leo Maxse entered Harrow in 1879 and in 1882 he enrolled in King's College, Cambridge where he took second class honours in the Historical Tripos in 1886. On the completion of his formal education Maxse toured all the self-governing colonies, forming his own impressions of the importance of imperialism. After his return to Britain Maxse began to study law but this pursuit was soon curtailed by a serious illness which left him physically frail for the rest of his life. In order to provide a livelihood for his son, Admiral Maxse bought a Conservative monthly -- the National Review.

Maxse had no previous journalistic experience but he did have several attributes which were crucial to good journalism. He was articulate, imaginative and extremely energetic and, perhaps most important, he knew how to wage an effective campaign. Maxse edited his first issue of the National Review in August 1893. He drew on the experience of various members of his family, particularly his father

¹⁴J. Morrison Davidson, Eminent Radicals in and out of Parliament (London, 1880), 231-32.

and brother Ivor (later General Sir Ivor Maxse). The primary function of the National Review, from the moment that Maxse began his editorship, was to support the close friend of the Maxse family, Joseph Chamberlain. The National Review grew in prestige and, when in 1903 Chamberlain announced his new programme, Maxse enrolled his considerable talents under the Tariff Reform banner. During the Edwardian period the National Review became one of the most prominent Tariff Reform journals. Indeed, it became powerful enough to contribute significantly to the fall of Arthur Balfour from the leadership of the Unionists. Balfour had proven himself to be an untrustworthy disciple of the Chamberlain creed and thus earned Maxse's displeasure. Maxse remained a friend of Chamberlain and his sons, Austen and Neville, and editor of his paper until his death on January 23, 1932.¹⁵

Maxse's political development was not unlike that of his friend J. L. Garvin. In his earlier days Maxse had been a Home Ruler, a Free Trader and an advocate of radical reforms. He was also, like his father, a Francophil. Upon his return to Britain after his tour of the Empire Maxse

¹⁵The chief sources of biographical information about Maxse are D.N.B. suppl. 5, 1931-1940, 606-07; The Times "Obituary", January 15, 1932, 15; National Review, February, 1932, 182.

abandoned his Home Rule position and adopted an imperialist point of view. His political philosophy continued to lose its radical element until he was quite unmistakably a Conservative. His advocacy of Tariff Reform signalled the end of his Free Trade views and firmly established him in the camp of Chamberlainite Unionists, though he was less of a social reformer in outlook than Garvin. He maintained this position for the whole of the Edwardian period but in the post-war years he began to drift further to the political right.¹⁶ He ended his editorial career as a member of the Radical Right and earned for himself, perhaps unjustly, the reputation of being a proto-Fascist.¹⁷

The third subject of this study, John St. Loe Strachey, editor of the Spectator, was born on February 9, 1860, at Clifton, near Bristol. He was the second son of Sir Edward Strachey, the 3rd baronet of Sutton Court, Somerset. Strachey's family had long been leading members of the Somerset gentry and Strachey grew up at the family's

¹⁶R. M. Christian, "Leo Maxse and the National Review" unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Virginia, 1940.

¹⁷J. H. Jones, "England" in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., The European Right (Berkeley, 1965), 29-70.

country seat, Sutton Court.¹⁸ Strachey received his early education at home under the private tutorship of T. H. Green. In 1878 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, where he took first class honours in History. Six years later he went to London to study law and in 1885 was admitted to the bar. But Strachey found he had no great appreciation for law as a profession and turned his gaze towards journalism. Strachey was no stranger to journalism at the time he decided to make it his life's work. He had published a sonnet in the Spectator as early as 1875 and he had continued to publish poems and political articles in various journals until 1886 when he and C. L. Graves became co-editors of the Liberal Unionist. In 1896 Strachey became editor of the Cornhill Magazine but remained at this post for only two years. In 1898 Richard Hall Hutton and Meredith Townsend, the co-editors of the Spectator and friends of Sir Edward Strachey, sold the newspaper to the young Strachey who became its sole editor and proprietor.¹⁹

Through his own prodigious capacity for work and driven by his sense of justice, Strachey quickly turned the Spectator into one of the most prominent Unionist weeklies

¹⁸For a complete history of the entire Strachey family see C. R. Sanders, The Strachey Family 1588-1932 (New York, 1968).

¹⁹William B. Thomas, The Story of the Spectator 1828-1928 (London, 1928).

in Britain. His prosperous middle class readership grew, not because he actively sought their patronage, but because he represented to them solid values and the morality which were the currency of middle class respectability. Strachey maintained the editorship of the Spectator until two years before his death on August 26, 1927.²⁰

Unlike Garvin and Maxse, the development of Strachey's political philosophy saw no radical readjustment as he grew older. He had, from his earliest years, identified himself with his family's liberal ideals and values. In his own idiosyncratic fashion he believed in the need for social and political reform. Strachey was also dedicated to the Union of Ireland to the rest of Britain. When in 1892 Chamberlain and Hartington moved the Liberal Unionists completely out of Gladstone's Radical Liberal camp Strachey's sympathies went with them. But in 1903, when Chamberlain sought to throw off what he perceived to be the yoke of Free Trade, Strachey immediately became one of Tariff Reform's most dedicated and consistent opponents. The Spectator became the centre of Liberal Unionist opposition to the abolition of Free

²⁰Biographical information about Strachey can be found in Amy Strachey, St. Loe Strachey: His Life and His Paper (London, 1930); D.N.B. suppl. 4, 1922-1930, 8-6-18; The Times "Obituary", January 27, 1927, 12.

Trade.²¹ Indeed, this unwillingness to alter his political philosophy admirably illustrates one of the most important of Strachey's characteristics. He was absolutely inflexible. It was this inflexibility which led to his political isolation. As the two major parties reacted to political circumstances they tended to change their platforms to suit the situation. Strachey would have no part in political compromise. He was fanatically dedicated to political principles.²²

The differences among Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were many but the similarities were crucial and supply the justification for a study based upon these three particular men. There were four major connecting links among Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. First and foremost was the fact that all three men were journalists and editors of the first order. They shared similar views as to the function and responsibility of the press in a modern society. They believed that the press had a duty not only to report the news but to provide a perspective from which their readers could intelligently

²¹St. Loe Strachey, The Adventure of Living: A Subjective Autobiography (New York, 1922).

²²Gardiner, The Pillars of Society, 144-150. Gardiner states that Strachey's ". . . unsympathetic and unimaginative mind makes him merely a geological curiosity of politics, . . ."

interpret social and political developments. More significantly, they believed that the press should be independent of extraneous obligations so that it could operate as the watchdog of society. They maintained that the men who were the most valuable journalists were, as Strachey once stated, "the men who gave warnings".²³

These editors were in a situation in which they could run their respective journals as they saw fit. Maxse and Strachey owned their journals outright; thus they were able to do whatever they thought right without deferring to the opinions of a proprietor. Garvin did not own the Observer though he did have a third share of the paper. He made it a condition of his employment, however, that he must be absolutely independent in his editorial duties.²⁴ When Garvin and Northcliffe finally came to an impasse over the continuing validity of Tariff Reform in 1911, Northcliffe realized that the Observer without Garvin would be a shadow of its former self and agreed to sell the paper to a proprietor whose views were closer to Garvin's.²⁵

²³Strachey, Adventure of Living, 297.

²⁴Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 20-25.

²⁵Ibid., 279-307.

All three editors were firm believers in "personalized journalism". They personally oversaw all the operations of their papers in the belief that an editor should not limit himself to merely writing editorials. Their own opinions permeated every aspect of their papers and they were loath to delegate authority to any member of their staffs. As a result the papers of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey can be seen as personal statements about their society. Regardless of who actually wrote an article one can be certain that the article agreed with the view of the editor or it would not have appeared at all. There were occasions when certain writers were allowed to express dissenting views but when this happened, and it happened rarely, the point was duly noted.

The second link among the three editors was that Joseph Chamberlain had influenced the development of their early political thought. Though they did not always agree with him, Chamberlain represented to them the most dynamic force for constructive change in either the Liberal or Unionist parties. Indeed, it is not at all surprising that three enthusiastic young editors should attach themselves to the Chamberlainites. Chamberlain was a constant source of innovation and inspiration. By the time he had entered national politics he was famous for his ability to supply novel solutions to the difficult problems of a large

industrial city. He seemed to symbolize the kind of statesmanship which would be necessary if Britain were to meet successfully all the challenges of the twentieth century.

The individual relationships between the three editors and Chamberlain were all different. Maxse's father had been a close friend of Chamberlain even before he had become the mayor of Birmingham. The Chamberlain and Maxse families remained close throughout two generations. When Leo Maxse first took control of the National Review his theories and opinions were very much influenced by the Chamberlain connection. Strachey had found in Chamberlain a man of principle and determination who could achieve important reforms without shattering the existing political system. When Chamberlain left Gladstone to form the Liberal Unionists he took Strachey with him. The irreparable break between the two men took place when Chamberlain announced his Tariff Reform programme. Strachey saw Tariff Reform as not only an ill-conceived economic proposal but an attack upon the moral standards which were represented by Free Trade.²⁶ Though the division between the two men over economics was never resolved, Strachey always maintained that Chamberlain had been a major influence on his early

²⁶Patricia Morrell, "John St. Loe Strachey and the Spectator in Edwardian Politics 1905-1911", unpublished M.A. thesis, Manchester University, 1971. See particularly 87-143 for Morrell's discussion of Strachey's violent reaction to the threat of Tariff Reform.

political development.²⁷ Garvin, the latecomer to London, was very much caught up in the mystique of the famous politician.²⁸ At the same time Garvin determined that if he attached his journalistic career to the coat-tails of Chamberlain's political career he could not possibly come out the loser. The reverence with which Garvin and Maxse held Chamberlain was revealed in their favourite reference to him as "our Joe". Indeed, after Chamberlain's incapacitating stroke in 1906, Garvin and Maxse elevated the name of Chamberlain to the level of a cause.

In common with many of their contemporaries, Garvin, Maxe and Strachey held notions of domestic and international evolution and conflict which are conveniently labeled Social Darwinist.²⁹ More exactly, the attitudes of the editors stemmed from Spencerian individualism.³⁰ Strachey was indisputably the most orthodox in his Spencerianism, supporting as he did the extreme laissez-faire position of the Liberty and Property Defence League.³¹ Yet all three editors believed

²⁷Strachey, Adventure of Living, 363.

²⁸Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin 1908-1914, 405.

²⁹R. J. Halliday, "Social Darwinism: A Definition", Victorian Studies 14 (1971):391-405.

³⁰Herbert Spencer, The Man Versus the State, ed. Donald Macrae (Harmondsworth, 1969). First published 1884.

³¹Edward Bristow, "The Liberyary and Property Defence League and Individualism", Historical Journal 18 (1975):761-89.

in the celebrated theory of the "survival of the fittest" and the applicability of this theory to international struggle. They feared that Britain was in the process of deteriorating morally and physically as well as economically and politically. In order to reverse this trend and re-establish her "fitness" for the modern world, Britain would have to undergo fundamental changes. This belief in the need for national reform was the one element in the political philosophies of all three men which did not change during the period of their political maturation. Though they were prepared to countenance certain reforms they were alarmed by many of the proposals for change which were being advanced by what they called "socialistic forces". These forces could be represented by Liberals and Radicals as well as by actual socialists. The editors were deeply hostile to Liberal-Radical reform intentions since they were to be financed largely by direct taxes -- taxes which would destroy or at least erode business confidence and decrease markedly levels of investment. "Socialism", under whatever label, was viewed with unrelieved horror. The editors believed that unfettered socialism would inevitably lead to Britain's further deterioration, and they were particularly afraid that such socialist forces might come to power through an appeal to the working class.³² They feared that a socialist government, in-

³²Neal Blewett, "The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918", Past and Present 32 (1965):27-56.

different to the realities of national survival, would weaken Britain's world position while attempting to satisfy the demands of its constituents. This fear obliged them to seek alternatives to the socialists' programmes which would combat the social and political problems upon which such socialists could establish their platform.

The fourth similarity among the three editors of most import to this thesis was that all were active Germanophobes. Their Germanophobia was rooted in a concern for their nation. Their patriotic instincts were aroused by the fear that Britain was losing her place among the nations of the world. They feared that if Britain did not remain domestically strong, she would fall prey to the nation which was growing increasingly powerful. Germany became their bête noire, not because they were anti-German, but because Germany symbolized for them the strength which they felt to be essential for survival in the modern world. Their Germanophobia was very different from that found in much of the popular Conservative press. They did not attempt to retaliate against German press Anglophobia as was common among the British popular press. Rather, they redirected the fear of Germany towards that group which they felt posed the greatest threat to Britain's welfare -- the Radical wing of the Liberal party.

Such exaggerated concern over Radical influence reveals more about the perceptions and fears of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey than it does about the reality of Radical power.

The editors were to a considerable extent influenced in their political reactions not by Radical politicians but by Radical newspapers. The province of all editors was not actual political power but rather the polemics of power. Radical editors maintained a high, vigorous profile which tended to obscure a realistic appraisal of "official" Radicalism. The three editors made no effort whatsoever to distinguish between Radical editorial positions and policy initiatives by Radical members of the Liberal party. Perhaps even more confusing was the editors' insistence upon using the label "Radical" interchangeably with that of "Liberal". Such apparent inaccuracy is made intelligible when it is realized that the editors used the label Radical in a pejorative sense.³³ The only member of the Liberal cabinet to avoid this stigma was Sir Edward Grey. On the other hand, no Liberal paper escaped being portrayed as a well-spring of corrosive Radicalism. In a grand effort to impale all of their enemies on the same stake, the editors frequently referred to the Socialists as Radicals, pretending that Socialism was merely Radicalism without its winged collar.

In order to combat the destructive influence of Radicalism, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey employed the Germano-

³³For the sake of consistency this thesis will use the label "Liberal" to describe the opponents of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey except in the case of those men who were particularly known for their Radicalism. Although this is a

phobe tradition in a novel fashion. They appreciated the fact that the pervasive fear of the "German menace" could be used as a wedge to separate the Radicals from their Liberal colleagues, thereby weakening the ability of the former to exert undue pressure upon the official leadership of their parliamentary party. But before the effectiveness of this editorial Germanophobia can be appreciated one should understand the various elements which comprised Germanophobia in general and from which Garvin, Maxse and Strachey forged their journalistic weapons.

generalization, it is serviceable for the editors' energies were chiefly spent against that collection of interests known as the Liberal party.

CHAPTER TWO
THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF GERMANOPHOBIA
1871-1914

The Germanophobia of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey was a synthesis of many diverse elements most of which reached back to the origins of Imperial Germany. The creation of the German Empire on January 18, 1871, heralded the disruption of the traditional balance of power. In one moment Britain had lost her place as the arbiter of Europe. German unification, created by Prussian military might, threatened Britain's position in Europe and ultimately in the world. The realization of this fact was not as immediate as its execution.¹ The historical development of Germanophobia from 1871 to 1914 is in essence a study of the growing awareness in Britain of Germany's claim to its place among the great Powers.²

This growing perception both of Germany's potential and of the nature of her claims upon the world took several forms. The growth of commercial, imperial, diplomatic and

¹Raymond J. Sontag, Germany and England, Background of Conflict 1848-1894 (London, 1938).

²A. J. P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918 (Oxford, 1954), and The Course of German History

naval rivalries all illustrated to Britain the reality of Germany's weight in the world order.³ This consciousness bred not only rivalries but also fear. Fear was not a direct product of competition but rather an unexpected by-product. The apparent failure of Britain to compete successfully with Germany was the primary cause of Germanophobia. A brief examination of the individual areas of competition reveals that the same apprehensions were constantly repeating themselves.

German industrialization, which had begun significantly later than that of Britain, reached fruition after Germany's political unification.⁴ Increased German industrial capacity made itself felt in Britain primarily through a growing trade rivalry.⁵ There has been much historical discussion of the many facets of this economic competition.

(London, 1945). For a completely different interpretation see Golo Mann, The History of Germany Since 1789 (Harmondsworth, 1974), 331-480.

³Ross Hoffman, Great Britain and the German Trade Rivalry 1875-1914 (Philadelphia, 1933), 293-304.

⁴J. H. Clapham, The Economic Development of France and Germany 1815-1914 (Cambridge, 1968), 278-338. See also Jurgen Reulecke, "Population Growth and Urbanization in Germany in the 19th Century", Urbanism Past and Present 4 (1977):21-32.

⁵J. H. Clapham's Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1938). W. H. B. Court's British Economic History 1870-1914 (Cambridge, 1965) and D. C. M. Platt's Finance, Trade and Politics in British Foreign Policy 1815-1914 (Oxford, 1968).

The consensus of the most recent work is that though British industry in its entirety was still able to outproduce that of the Germans, the latter had gained by the early twentieth century a dominance in chemicals, optics, electronics and steel manufacturing.⁶ Indeed, it had been argued that Germany was leading in what has been called the Second Industrial Revolution.⁷ The Britons of the day did not, of course, view the situation in such abstract terms.

Economic antagonism towards Germany was determined by Britain's own fluctuating prosperity. The 1860's witnessed a period of impressive economic expansion; yet, a decade later, Britain began to suffer what contemporaries feared to be a prolonged recession. Such anxieties challenged the precarious assumptions upon which British trade had rested. Foreign markets which had but a short time before been the almost exclusive preserve of British manufactured goods now attracted the attention of American, Belgium and German industry.⁸

⁶One of the most persuasive arguments for Britain's maintenance of her industrial and trade supremacy is to be found in S. B. Saul, Studies in British Overseas Trade 1870-1914 (Liverpool, 1960). Also see his article, "The American Impact on British Industry 1895-1914", Business History 3 (1960):19-38, and The Myth of the Great Depression, 1873-1896 (London, 1969).

⁷For a discussion of the changing emphasis in industrialization see Carlton Hayes, A Generation of Materialism (New York, 1941), 88-98.

⁸Saul, British Overseas Trade, 90-133.

These nations, which had themselves been lucrative customers, proved to be formidable competitors. Their national tariff policies alone placed Britain at a disadvantage. Clinging to the cherished policy of Free Trade, Britain conceded an important economic advantage to her protectionist challengers. Britain's domestic market was freely available to foreign goods while her own exports were impeded by strategically placed tariffs. The economies of Britain's competitors flourished apparently, if not always in fact, because of protection.

That British concern expressed itself primarily in terms of an economic Germanophobia is readily comprehensible. German unification coincided with the realization that British overseas trade was faced with stiff competition, but more significantly, the speed of German industrialization and the vigour of German marketing made British industry appear stagnant.⁹ In reality, such impressions were false but they served as tenable though superficial explanations for the occasion and duration of Britain's economic difficulties.¹⁰ More tangible evidence for the primacy of Germany as a trading competitor could be found in the great volume of German manu-

⁹Hoffman, The German Trade Rivalry, 78.

¹⁰A. L. Levine, Industrial Retardation in Britain 1880-1914 (London, 1967), 145-50.

factured goods which flooded Britain and the empire. Further aggravating the situation, German manufacturers seemed to have no scruples about stamping pirated British trade marks on German made goods. Germany's reluctance to sign the Convention of the Industrial Property Union in 1883 reinforced the opinion that Germany meant to cripple British industry by fair means or foul. Reacting to pressure from its own industrial sector, the British government passed the Merchandise Marks Act in 1887 which sought to provide greater protection for British interests than a similar law of 1862.¹¹

A more significant governmental response to Britain's economic problems began in November 1885 with the establishment of an official inquiry into the causes of British trade depression. The Royal Commission report of the following year was an exhaustive examination of Britain's industrial, agricultural and commercial condition. The report noted that the events of 1870-71 had resulted in a serious disturbance in the commercial world¹² Addressing itself specifically to trade competition, the report named Germany as Britain's chief competitor.

¹¹See Report from the Select Committee on Merchandise Marks Act, 1887; and also the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, 1890.

¹²Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry, 1886, 23:511.

The increasing severity of this competition, both in our home and neutral markets, is especially noticeable in the case of Germany. A reference to the reports from abroad will show that in every quarter of the world the perseverance and enterprise of the Germans is making itself felt. In the actual production of commodities we have now few, if any, advantages over them; and in knowledge of the markets of the world, and readiness to accommodate themselves to local tastes or idiosyncracies, they have evidently gained ground upon us.¹³

Such economic Germanophobia found expression in both newspaper and book presentations. Among the newspapers the National Review, under the editorship of Alfred Austin and the Spectator, co-edited by Hutton and Townsend, were prominent vehicles of this type of Germanophobia. As is illustrated by the Spectator's response to the Royal Commission Report, these papers were not prepared to accept graciously the German challenge to British commercial supremacy.

Apart from general causes, which may or may not have their day and cease to be, there can be little doubt that the one salient fact of the industrial world made to stand out in the boldest relief in this Report is the commercial uprising of the German nation; and to this is due, perhaps as much as to any more general or recondite cause, the continued depression of British industry. For it would seem that had it not been that the new or neutral markets of the world had been violently attacked and almost taken by storm by German competition in the last half-dozen years, the depression would ere now have passed away.¹⁴

¹³Ibid., 565.

¹⁴Spectator, 59, August 14, 1885, 1077.

There were also published at this time a vast number of books which bemoaned the retardation of British industry.¹⁵ Many of these works were alarmist in nature and contributed significantly to a pervasive rhetoric of decline. This type of writing culminated in the publication of Ernest E. Williams' classic statement of economic Germanophobia, Made in Germany. Williams' work had first appeared in January 1896 in the New Review. This work was so popular that it was quickly republished in book form and just as quickly became a best seller. Williams' accusatory tone speaks for itself.

Up to a couple of decades ago, Germany was an agricultural State. Her manufactures were few and unimportant; her industrial capital was small; her export trade was too insignificant to merit the attention of the official statistician; she imported largely for her own consumption. Now she has changed all that. Her youth was crowded into English houses, has wormed its way into English manufacturing secrets, and has enriched her establishments with the knowledge thus purloined . . . they have obtained State aid in several ways -- as special rates to shipping ports; they have insinuated themselves into every part of the world. . . . Not content with reaping the advantages of British colonization . . . Germany has "protected" the simple savage on her own account, and the Imperial Eagle now floats on the breezes of the South Seas Islands, and droops in the thick air of the African littoral.¹⁶

¹⁵This vast contemporary literature would make a study in itself but the following works will at least indicate the nature of what was being published. Artifex and Opifex, Causes of Decay in British Industry (London, 1907); Edwin Burgis, Perils to British Trade (London, 1895); Henri Hauser, Germany's Commercial Grip on the World (New York, 1918); G. A. Pagson, Germany and Its Trade (London, 1903), and A. Williamson, British Industries and Foreign Competition (London, 1894).

¹⁶Ernest E. Williams, Made in Germany, ed. Austen Albu (Brighton, 1973), 9.

The hallmark of economic Germanophobia was angry resentment towards the industrial usurper. Although often belligerent in tone, it sought only legislative and commercial action against Germany. This form of Germanophobia originally permeated all varieties of British political opinion and did not develop its predominantly Unionist associations until after the advent of the tariff reform campaign in 1903. At this point, the tariff reformers attempted to exploit for partisan gain three decades of resentment.

Though commerce nourished the body of Britain it was imperialism which nourished the British soul. Britain was the supreme imperial power. The foreign policy of Britain during the latter part of the nineteenth century was essentially an imperial policy. No foreign power could hope to challenge Britain's imperial supremacy with impunity. Even as late as 1898, six years prior to the signing of the Entente Cordiale, France found herself on the verge of war with Britain over conflicting imperial claims.¹⁷ Germany, too, excited a vigorous response when she tried to assert her imperial claims.

¹⁷J. A. S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy (London, 1964), 218-234.

The German entry into the race for colonial possessions did not occur until 1884. Germany could not hope to gain much territory in a world divided among Britain, France and Russia.¹⁸ As with Italy, the United States and Japan, Germany had to glean what territory it could after others had enjoyed the bounty of the harvest. Yet Britain's superior colonial position did not prevent her from being wary of German ambitions as is witnessed by the famous 1907 "Crowe Memorandum".¹⁹ Germany, it seemed, was determined to have an empire. Unfortunately, there was no place where the Germans could build their empire without disrupting British imperial schemes. Such a situation produced tensions over Africa, Asia, Latin America and finally Persia.²⁰ The latter conflict gained particular notoriety during the Edwardian period. British imperialist sentiment

¹⁸D. K. Fieldhouse, The Colonial Empires (New York, 1965), 364-71.

¹⁹Eyre Crowe, "Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany", in G. P. Gooch and H. W. Temperley, eds., British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914 (London, 1967), 3:397-420.

²⁰William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York, 1968), 629-50.

would not tolerate Germany dominating a strategically important area between Britain and India.²¹ The German attempts to build the Berlin-to-Bagdad Railway antagonized many Britons.²² Indeed, any attempt by the Germans to gain influence in any part of Asia was interpreted as an assault upon the British Empire.

The problem of German imperial expansion was further complicated by the fact that the British Imperialists were frequently beginning to feel the strain of trying to survive in the modern world.²³ The British policy of "Splendid Isolation" was quickly becoming bankrupt. The outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 made Britain's isolation look less than splendid.²⁴ Many in Britain began seriously to fear for the

²¹Max Beloff, Britain's Liberal Empire, 1897-1921 (London, 1969), 70-75.

²²J. B. Wolf, The Diplomatic History of the Bagdad Railway (New York, 1973).

²³Richard Shannon, The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915 (St. Albans, Herts., 1976), 249-68.

²⁴George Monger, The End of Isolation, British Foreign Policy 1900-1907 (London, 1963).

survival of the Empire. Even the great poet of Empire, Rudyard Kipling, expressed concern. One has but to read his Recessional (1897), The Islanders (1902), or The Dykes (1902) to appreciate the anxieties of Imperial Britain.²⁵

Germany could not have chosen a more awkward time to assert its imperialist claims. The fear that Germany might fall heir to Britain's imperial mantle became a very powerful and influential element of Germanophobia.²⁶

The development of Germany as a commercial and imperial rival was compounded by the fact that it also became a diplomatic rival.²⁷ Britain's flight from the insecurities of "Splendid Isolation" into the dubious security of the Entente Cordiale began a long series of diplomatic clashes that did not end until the outbreak of the Great War. Regardless of the intent of the Entente Cordiale of 1904 or the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907,

²⁵Rudyard Kipling, Collected Verse (New York, 1920), 202, 206, 219. See also John Gross, ed., The Age of Kipling (New York, 1972).

²⁶K. Mackenzie, "Some British Reactions to German Colonial Methods 1885-1907", Historical Journal 17 (1974): 165-75.

²⁷G. P. Gooch, Before the War, Studies in Diplomacy (London, 1936), 1:1-86. A good overview of the whole problem can be found in René Albrecht-Carrié, A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna (New York, 1973), 244-59.

the mere existence of any understanding between Britain and Germany's anatonagonists was bound to strain Anglo-German relations.²⁸ The Germans appeared to have committed themselves to a policy of breaking Britain's diplomatic ties. The often clumsy efforts to accomplish this goal served only further to alienate Britain. The Moroccan crisis of 1905 can be seen as an attempt by the Germans to break the apparently fragile Anglo-French Entente.²⁹ If this was their intent it failed badly. Sir Edward Grey, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Liberal cabinet, was constantly under pressure to turn the Entente into a defensive alliance.³⁰ That pressure was, in part, inadvertently applied by Germany's threatening diplomatic posture.

²⁸ Samuel R. Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy (Cambridge, Mass. 1969), 131-66.

²⁹ Eugene Anderson, The Moroccan Crisis 1904-1906 (Chicago, 1930; reprinted, Hamden, Conn., 1966), 135-58, 397-405.

³⁰ Monger, The End of Isolation, 313-17; Zara Steiner, "Grey, Hardinge and the Foreign Office 1906-1910", Historical Journal 10 (1967):415-39; Christopher Andrew, Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale (London, 1968) and Byron Dexter, "Lord Grey and the Problem of an Alliance", Foreign Affairs 30 (1952):298-309.

The situation was further aggravated by the fact that many prominent members of the British Foreign Office were active Germanophobes with the most notable exception of the Foreign Secretary himself who was neither a Germanophile nor a Germanophile.³¹ Grey's primary concern was to maintain Britain's diplomatic freedom from continental entanglements, a policy which met with mixed success.³² The policy-makers of both the Wilhelmstrasse and the Quai d'Orsay constantly pushed for a clarification of the British position. Unfortunately for the Germans, even their most benign diplomatic manoeuvres were greeted with a suspicion which the French were never obliged to face. German intentions were always suspect because it was Germany which had the most to gain from a new diplomatic settlement. The Germans demanded as a condition of any diplomatic agreement that the British recognize the existing boundaries of Germany. In essence this meant that Britain would be obliged to acquiesce to the German occupation of Alsace-

³¹ The most prominent Foreign Office Germanophobes were Charles Hardinge, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1906-1910; Arthur Nicolson, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1910-1914; Louis Mallet, Assistant Under-Secretary 1907-1913; Eyre Crowe, Senior Clerk in the Western Department 1906-1912; and William Tyrell, Grey's private secretary 1907-1915. For an authoritative study of the British Foreign Office see Zara Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy 1898-1914 (Cambridge, 1969).

³² See Keith Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, A Biography

Lorraine. Such a stipulation had provided the final stumbling block to the Chamberlain negotiations of 1902.³³ British statesmen were never prepared to strengthen diplomatically Germany's position on the continent.

There existed still another form of Anglo-German competition which had its roots in the rivalries already mentioned. This was the famous naval rivalry, by far the most important and dangerous of Anglo-German conflicts. Britain's commercial and imperial supremacy was absolutely dependent upon the maintenance of naval supremacy. It was an article of faith among most Britons that their nation must command the seas. The Germans excited the most bitter hostility with the creation of their "risk fleet". The sole purpose of this fleet was to challenge the British navy. The German fleet could never be large enough to totally overwhelm that of Britain but it could cause so much damage that the British fleet would automatically lose its world supremacy. The Germans believed that the British would find this to be an unconscionable sacrifice.³⁴

of Lord Grey of Fallodon (London, 1971).

³³ H. W. Koch, "The Anglo-German Alliance Negotiations: Missed Opportunity or Myth", History 54 (1969): 378-92.

³⁴ Peter Padfield, The Great Naval Race (London, 1974), 67-82.

Originally, the German Navy Laws of 1898 and 1900 gained only passing British attention but this situation soon altered.³⁵ On February 10, 1906, Britain launched the H.M.S. Dreadnought. The Dreadnought was so advanced in its design and construction that it made all other battle-ships obsolete.³⁶ The main problem was that this immediate obsolescence affected not only foreign fleets but the existing British fleet. The Dreadnought was the product of advanced technology, a technology of which the Germans were fast becoming the masters. In 1908 the Germans launched the Nassau which was the equivalent of the Dreadnought. It was at this point that the British began to become profoundly alarmed.³⁷ The year 1909 has become famous for in that year many Britons actually believed that the Germans would soon possess a modern fleet equal to their own. The government was forced by popular outcry to double their previous naval estimates for the year.³⁸ The cry of "We want eight and

³⁵A. J. Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power (New York, 1940), 456-67. See also P. M. Kennedy, "The Development of German Naval Operations Plan Against England 1896-1914", English Historical Review 21 (1971):48-76.

³⁶A. J. Marder, From Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, 1: The Road to War 1904-1914 (London, 1961), 43-45, 56-70.

³⁷J. Steinberg, "The Novelle of 1908: Necessities and Choices in the Anglo-German Naval Arms Race", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 5th ser., 21 (1971): 25-43.

³⁸Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, 1:151-185.

we won't "wait" was far more than simple jingoism.³⁹ It was the popular expression of the fear that Britain was about to fail the most important challenge the Germans had ever offered. This was the single most potent element of Germanophobia.

These rivalries were in themselves sufficient cause for tension but their effect was further exaggerated when viewed against the background of various types of Social Darwinism. During the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, Social Darwinism enjoyed a wide if complicated currency. Writers as diverse as Herbert Spencer and J. A. Hobson found their works sharing the same label yet their only similarity was a tenuous relationship to the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin.⁴⁰ The types of Social Darwinism with the greatest immediacy for this thesis are those to be found on

³⁹Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 73-76.

⁴⁰There were theorists, exemplified by Hobson and Hobhouse, who claimed that Darwinist evolution demonstrated the supremacy of co-operation rather than competition. They claimed that civilization was a function of co-operation and that societies which survived and prospered did so because they displayed a greater degree of co-operativeness than did those societies which failed. For discussions of this type of Social Darwinism see, P. F. Clarke, "The Progressive Movement in England", Transaction of the Royal Historical Society, 5th Series, 24 (1974), 159-81; Michael Freeden, "J. A. Hobson as a New Liberal Theorist: Some Aspects of His Social Thought Until 1914", Journal of the History of Ideas 34 (1973):421-43 and by the same author, The New Liberalism, An Ideology of Social Reform (Oxford, 1978), 76-93.

the Spencerian end of the spectrum. These are the theories which claim that social evolution was the result of perpetual struggle, both personal and national. Conflict, not cooperation, was the motive force behind evolution. This conflict was seen as natural, inevitable and even moral. Social Darwinism was employed to provide a "scientific" basis for laissez-faire capitalism, imperialism and militarism.⁴¹

Although such Social Darwinist theories could provide a justification for Britain's past, they could just as readily provide a warning about Britain's future. If Britain failed to maintain her supremacy she might go the way of all declining societies and be destroyed by the young and vital nations. This vague fear gained greater urgency with the conclusion of the Boer War. Britain had revealed herself as extraordinarily sluggish and incompetent. The "handful of Boer farmers" who were to be beaten in a few decisive campaigns proved to be a near match for the British army. The sense of shock spurred by the war created a quest for "National Efficiency" which found much support among the ranks of both Liberals and

⁴¹Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds (Gloucester, Mass., 1975), 318. Himmelfarb details the separate development of theories of inter-species and intra-species competition. It is the latter type of competition which is examined here.

Unionists.⁴² Efficiency was considered an attribute of "fitness" and there could be but one "fittest" race. The apprehension that that race might be German coloured Anglo-German relations during the entire Edwardian period.

Anglo-German tensions were further aggravated in the period after 1871 by the phenomenon which has been called "invasion literature". This literature was one of the most tangible results as well as a prime contributor to the growing Germanophobia. Invasion literature was composed of fictional accounts of future wars in which the British Isles were invaded and usually conquered by some continental enemy. The moral underlying all of the invasion literature was that Britain must prepare herself against the large conscript armies of the continent or else face the probability of a successful invasion. Faith in the ability of the British fleet to guard against invasion and the reliance on a small volunteer army were declared to be the height of folly. The fleet might be drawn off or simply evaded and the small regular army supported by a

⁴²G. R. Searle, The Quest for National Efficiency (Berkeley, 1971), 34-42, 96. Searle describes the National Efficiency ideology ". . . as an attempt to discredit the habits, beliefs and institutions that put the British at a

poorly trained militia would be no match for the large sophisticated continental armies.⁴³ The essence of this literature was that the British Empire was most vulnerable at its heart.

The development of the genre of invasion literature had great significance for Anglo-German relations. An early significant work was entitled "The Battle of Dorking" which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine in 1871. The author, George Tomkyns Chesney, an officer of the Royal Engineers, sent John Blackwood an outline for a proposed short story on February 8, 1871, twenty-one days after the creation of the new German Empire.⁴⁴ The successful invader of Chesney's story was not the traditional French enemy but rather the sophisticated, victorious German army. Britain had been stunned by the speed with which the Germans had gained European military hegemony. Chesney's story hypothesized a quick end for Britain once the German army had managed to reach British shores. The story was frightening and extremely popular. The original magazine article was repub-

handicap in their competition with foreigners and to commend instead a social organization that more closely followed the German model". Searle's italics.

⁴³Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, 1: 344-358.

⁴⁴G. T. Chesney, "The Battle of Dorking", Blackwood's Magazine 59, May, 1871, 539-72.

lished in pamphlet form and by July it had sold more than 80,000 copies.⁴⁵

From Chesney's work sprang a whole host of imitators, some agreeing with his vision of defeat, some strenuously arguing for an ultimate British victory. Not all the imitators believed that Germany was the most likely future foe. France and Russia were also depicted as future invaders, either on their own or in alliance with one another. But it was a German attack which continually returned to the fore. France and Russia may have been the greatest imperial rivals but if Britain itself were to be invaded the most likely candidate to play that role was Germany. The Germans had the best army, they had the most skilled generals and they had the greatest degree of military sophistication.⁴⁶ In the four decades following the publication of Chesney's story these strengths were magnified. The development of the various rivalries mentioned above gave urgency to the problems detailed in the invasion literature. It would not be a simplification to say that Germanophobia reached the state of a literary art. A vast

⁴⁵I. F. Clarke, Voices Prophesying War 1763-1984 (London, 1966), 40.

⁴⁶For an extensive examination of "The Battle of Dorking" and the many imitators which began to appear after 1871 see *ibid.*, 30-63.

amount of invasion literature was published but for the purpose of this thesis we need only consider a few of the choicer examples which appeared in the decade before the Great War.⁴⁷ These examples are significant because of their similar nature and for what they illustrate about Germanophobia in Britain.

In 1903 Erskine Childers published a book entitled The Riddle of the Sands.⁴⁸ The story was superficially a spy adventure about two young Englishmen exploring the estuaries of the German North Sea coast. The story gained great popularity; it was skilfully written and its underlying theme dealt with the threat of a German invasion. The two constant motifs of Childer's novel, represented on the one hand by the rough and ready Davies and on the other by the soft and trusting Carruthers, were worked in such a manner that they were made to symbolize the two major elements in the British national character. Childers was making a plea for Britain to return to the tough, self-sufficiency of Davies and at the same time he was suggesting

⁴⁷For a bibliography of many of the works which fall into the category of "Invasion literature" see *ibid.*, 227-38.

⁴⁸Erskine Childers, The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service Recently Achieved (London, 1903).

that the failure to do so could cost Britain its in-
⁴⁹dependence. The commercial success of The Riddle of the
 Sands signalled the revival of the German invasion scare
 which had been flagging for the past ten years.

These same concerns found a less skilful but more
 forceful expression in William Le Queux's book, The Invasion
 of 1910. Le Queux's work was first serialized in the Daily
 Mail in 1906.⁵⁰ The work had been commissioned and sup-
 ported by Lord Roberts and Lord Northcliffe. After a five-
 month run in the Daily Mail the story was republished in
 book form and gained significant popularity. The Invasion
 of 1910 depicted a successful German invasion of a Britain
 which lost all its former military greatness through the
 decline of moral standards and the growth of socialism. The
 bias of Le Queux's thesis is as unmistakable as is the active
 patronage of Lord Roberts.

⁴⁹ Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind
 (Princeton, 1968), 34-38.

⁵⁰ William Le Queux, "The Invasion of 1910",
Daily Mail, March 14 to July 4, 1906.

Looking back upon this sad page of history -- sad for Englishmen -- some future Thucydides will pronounce that the decree of Providence was not undeserved. The British nation had been warned against the danger: it disregarded the warning. In the two great struggles of the early twentieth century, in South Africa and the Far East, it had before its eyes examples of the peril which comes from unpreparedness and from haphazard government. It shut its eyes to the lessons. Its soldiers had called upon it in vain to submit to the discipline of military service. . . .

In the teeth of all entreaties it reduced the outlay upon its Army and its Fleet, to expend the money thus saved upon its own comfort. . . .⁵¹

The fear of unpreparedness and moral decline found expression not only in literature but also on the stage. In 1909, Major du Maurier, an officer in the Royal Fusiliers, presented his play An Englishman's Home. The play employed a scenario similar to those found in the majority of invasion literature. To the surprise of almost everyone, including the novice playwright, An Englishman's Home was an immediate success.⁵² It succeeded not only in a theatrical sense but in a very pragmatic way as well. There was a marked increase in the number of young men who volunteered their services for the reserves.⁵³ Quite clearly

⁵¹Daily Mail, July 2, 1906, 2.

⁵²Times, January 28, 1909, 10.

⁵³Ibid., February 15, 1909, 6.

the message of the "Invasionists" was having an effect.⁵⁴

This message was more profound than merely a demand for an increased military preparedness. Samuel Hynes is correct when he notes that ". . . all Edwardian invasion novels were polemical, and all were concerned to answer the question, what is the matter with England?"⁵⁵ Hynes notes further that the invasion scare was primarily a "Tory creation".⁵⁶ The values which the "invasion literature" sought to reestablish were those of self-sufficiency, loyalty, courage, discipline and honour: in short, those values which were thought to have built an empire. It was one of the principles of Conservatism that if the old values could be rekindled in the British people,

⁵⁴Howard Roy Moon, "The Invasion of the United Kingdom: Public Controversy and Official Planning 1888-1918", 2 vols., unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1968. Moon's thesis is a detailed study of governmental response to public pressure generated by the influence of "Invasion literature". He has demonstrated a direct relationship between public pressure on the government to take steps to defend against invasion and the proliferation and intensity of the "invasion literature" itself.

⁵⁵Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind, 44.

⁵⁶Though the "Invasion literature" reflected mostly Conservative political and social sentiment there were some notable exceptions. See H. G. Wells, The War in the Air (London, 1908); P. G. Wodehouse, The Swoop! or How Clarence Saved England: A Tale of the Great Invasion (London, 1909) and Saki (H. H. Munro), When William Came (London, 1914).

the danger to modern Britain could be surmounted. It was further believed that if the old values were not revived, Britain, through its own internal weakness, would fall prey to the foreign nation which best exemplified those values. The nation, quite clearly, would be Germany. This conceptualization of the situation served to intensify further the fear of Germany.

The most constant and in many ways the most outrageous source of Germanophobia was the popular press. This press consisted of the mass circulation dailies, a few of which could claim a million or more readers. The newspapers which tended as a matter of course to be Germanophobic were with few exceptions Conservative papers, belonging to either the Northcliffe or Pearson publishing empires.⁵⁷ These newspapers used the excitement and controversy generated by Germanophobia to increase their respective circulations. They counted on the instinctive patriotism of the working classes being aroused by tales of

⁵⁷ There were few exceptions to this general rule of which Robert Blatchford's socialist Clarion was perhaps the most notable example. The Radical press took a part in the dissemination of Germanophobia. Indeed the only Radical paper which managed to remain almost entirely free of Germanophobia was the Manchester Guardian. The naval scare of 1909 saw all the press illustrating a greater or lesser degree of Germanophobia. For an excellent discussion of the Manchester Guardian's independence see David Ayerst, Guardian.

Teutonic machinations. The sensationalist format of these papers lent itself to almost any form of popular hysteria. The bold headlines needed a subject which transcended the mediocrity of day-to-day life. The threat of a German invasion or the revelation of German plans to destroy Britain's commerce or empire provided the raw materials from which the various editors could fashion the outrage of the week.⁵⁸

The behaviour of the German Kaiser, as portrayed in the pages of the popular press, can be used as a barometer to measure popular Germanophobia.⁵⁹ William's actions and utterances, which were not always discreet, were exaggerated and distorted. The editors used the Kaiser as a personification of a militaristic, grasping and strutting Germany. Almost everything about the Kaiser could be manipulated to profit. His bombastic speeches and his unfortunate predilection for military uniforms were made to appear as the spirit of Germany incarnate. The middle or working class subscriber to one of these mass circulation dailies was persistently told that he had a great deal to fear from the Germans. The actions of the Kaiser appeared to substantiate that claim.

⁵⁸ Pound and Harmsworth, Northcliffe, 247-261.

⁵⁹ I am indebted to Professor Michael Howard of All

The first significant outbreak of Germanophobia in the popular press was, fittingly, initiated by the Kaiser. On January 3, 1896, William sent the famous "Kruger Telegram" to President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal. The telegram congratulated Kruger and his people for being able to defend their borders "without the help of friendly Powers". It was over this reference to "friendly Powers" that the press was filled with righteous indignation. William was portrayed as the meddler prepared to offer aid to those who mistreated British subjects. Predatory Germany, it seemed clear, was looking for the chink in Britain's imperial armour.⁶⁰ The Germans would have much to gain if they could establish a sphere of influence in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The vast mineral wealth of this area would be a valuable addition to the embryonic German colonial enterprise. The Boer inhabitants of these two small states were considered to be cousins of the Germans and therefore likely to accept German help. If the Germans could establish even a nominal control in the South African

Souls College Oxford, for this valuable suggestion. It is ironic that the Kaiser always despaired of the Germanophobia in the British press when it was often he who triggered that reaction.

⁶⁰ The Kruger Telegram was occasioned by the infamous Jameson Raid. See Elizabeth Pakenham, Jameson's Raid (London, 1960).

area, they would be in a position to jeopardize the safety of one of Britain's trade routes to India.⁶¹

The press had a field-day with William's diplomatic faux pas. Without having the slightest intention of doing so, William tapped the mainstream of Britain's growing Germanophobia. The fear of German commercial, imperial and diplomatic rivalry could be articulated in terms of the "Kruger Telegram". The popular press did not so much create the excesses of January 1896 but rather provided a forum in which existing fears could find an outlet. The greatest significance of the Kruger Telegram affair for the popular press itself was that the editors learned that Germanophobia was a highly saleable commodity. This lesson they never forgot, nor did they forget that the Kaiser himself had been the unwitting cause of their windfall.

From the outbreak of the Boer War on October 9, 1899, to its conclusion with the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging on May 31, 1902, the popular press was for the most part concerned with the progress of the South African

⁶¹For contemporary illustrations of the numerous fears elicited by the Kruger Telegram and its implications see, The Times, January 4-6, 1896; Morning Post, January 4-8, 1896; The Standard, January 4, 1896 and Daily Telegraph, January 4-7, 1896.

conflict.⁶² Yet, Germany was never really forgotten nor was it ever forgiven. As the British moved from the humiliating defeats of "Black Week" late in 1899 to the ignominious attempts to run down a few Boer guerillas, the memory of the German's spectacular military prowess during the Franco-Prussian War gained new and forboding significance. The British bungling stood out in sharp contrast to Germany's martial excellence. For every inefficiency in Britain which the war revealed the Germans could boast an unrivalled competence.⁶³ This was clearly the stuff from which editors could fashion a multitude of editorials which would keep the interest of their readers.

The termination of the Boer War did not bring about national euphoria. In many ways Britain's victory had been hollow. There were numerous charges of cruelty, incompetence and outright disgrace. There was a significant proportion of the population who believed that Britain had actually been weakened by her victory. This fear gave an

⁶² Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 190-226.

⁶³ Searle, National Efficiency, 54-57.

added impetus to Germanophobia on the domestic and diplomatic levels. As has been seen, Joseph Chamberlain's efforts to negotiate a treaty with Germany were met by strong disapproval. When Arthur Balfour's cabinet agreed to join the Germans during the winter of 1902-03 in a renewed effort to force Venezuela to repay outstanding loans, the popular press exploded in anger. It seemed to many editors who took part in the hue and cry that everyone in Britain, except the government, was aware of the dangers of associating too closely with Germany.⁶⁴ This explosion was quickly followed by yet another when, in April 1903, the government agreed to make the financial concessions necessary for the Germans to acquire adequate funding in order to build the Bagdad Railway.⁶⁵

On both of these issues the government was forced to reverse its initial decision. It became abundantly clear that popular Germanophobia, sustained and focused by the popular press, had become a political reality which the government had to notice. Significantly, the government which on these uncomfortable occasions ran afoul of popular sentiment was a Unionist administration. The Unionist

⁶⁴ See Daily Mail, December 16-17, 1902; February 2-6, 1903.

⁶⁵ For a contemporary response to the "Bagdad Bungle" see Daily Mail, April 4-9, 21-22, 1903; The Times, April 18-24, 1903; Pall Mall Gazette, April 9, 22, 1903.

leadership learned a lesson between 1899 and 1903 which it would apply for its own benefit in the years between 1906 and 1914. There was clearly much support to be had by playing on the popular fear of Germany. The editors of the Conservative mass circulation dailies knew this to be an axiom of their trade.⁶⁶ Unfortunately for the Unionist leadership, by the time this lesson had registered they were out of office.

When the next major outbreak of Germanophobia swept the popular press, the diplomatic situation of Britain had changed significantly. Once again Kaiser William was personally involved and was used in Britain to personify the treacherous Teuton. On March 31, 1905, William landed at the Moroccan port of Tangier. The arrival of the Imperial personage at this Mediterranean port provoked a torrent of abuse. The majority of the popular press called for an aggressive stand on the part of the British cabinet. They demanded a strengthening of the Entente so that Germany might have no doubts as to British intentions.⁶⁷ Fortunately

⁶⁶Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 263. Hale points out that by 1903 any proposal which bore the label "Made in Germany" was destined to face the hostile opposition of the press.

⁶⁷Pall Mall Gazette, April 1, 3, 1905; Daily Telegraph, April 3, 6, 1905; Daily Mail, March 31, April 1, 5, 1905. As was typical of such outbursts of Germanophobia the Kaiser became one of the primary targets of abuse. For example, Daily Mail, April 5,

the incident ended at the conference table rather than on the battlefield. The Algeciras Conference provided many weeks of German-baiting for the popular press. They believed that Germany had displayed her moral and diplomatic bankruptcy. Their many previous warnings about German duplicity seemed to be substantiated. At Algeciras Germany was being summoned to her own public humiliation, or at least this is how it appeared in the pages of the newspapers.

The next major eruption of Germanophobia occurred on October 28, 1908. The Daily Telegraph published remarks that Kaiser William had made the previous autumn while he was visiting his friend Colonel Stuart Wortley at Highcliffe Castle. The burden of the Kaiser's remarks was that he wanted good relations with Britain, that he had declined a Franco-Russian offer to join a coalition against Britain during the Boer War, that during the war he had sent his grandmother, Queen Victoria, a plan of operations on which Lord Roberts had obviously patterned his victory, and that the new German navy was being built with an eye to the development of the Japanese and an eventual Chinese fleet.⁶⁸

1905, 6, published an article entitled "The Antics of an Emperor". "The German Emperor has all the vices of a fashionable actor. He must hold the centre of the stage. The limelight of popular attention must always be thrown upon his august head. So ardent is his passion for advertisement that he cares not what he does to achieve it."

⁶⁸ Daily Telegram, October 28, 1908, 11.

It is quite clear that the Kaiser had intended no offence by these remarks. On the contrary, he had been attempting a little political fence-mending. Perhaps William's greatest fault in this matter as in many others was merely a lack of discretion.

The popular press had an entirely different interpretation. Indeed, they made little attempt whatsoever to paint William in anything but the darkest colours.⁶⁹ The Kaiser was once again personified as the typically mendacious German. He was attempting to sour the relations with Britain's new friends. He was lying about the raison d'être for Germany's growing navy, and to add insult to injury, he was casting a shadow over the reputation of Britain's most popular military figure. This was the kind of diplomacy the reading public had been taught to expect from the Germans. The "Daily Telegraph Affair", as the whole episode came to be known, was one of the most striking examples of the popular press's ability to manufacture a crisis. The important aspect for the historian is that the popular press produced this crisis primarily by re-working the fears which already existed. In the spring of the next year the popular press was handed a new set of

⁶⁹ Michael Balfour, The Kaiser and His Times (Harmondsworth, 1964), 289-91 and Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 314-22.

circumstances from which they were able to fashion one of the greatest examples of mass hysteria in British history.

In March 1909 began the famous Naval Scare which can be seen as the culmination of many years of Germanophobia. The public was led to believe that the failure of the Liberal administration to provide adequate funding for naval construction would result by 1912 in Anglo-German naval parity. Such naval parity could be easily translated into the ability to destroy British commerce and the Empire. Parity heightened the possibility of an invasion of Britain herself. The government was forced to adopt a major revision in its defence spending to satisfy the demands of the general mood of the time. That mood had, to a great extent, been created and nurtured by the popular press.

There were after 1909 many other outbreaks of Germanophobia in the popular press though none of them managed to have the same degree of impact as the naval scare. In 1911 a second Moroccan crisis had the press calling for British intervention. The Germans were once again portrayed as the swaggering bullies of Europe. Their intentions in Morocco were described in terms of imperial aggrandizement. Indeed, a small colonial dispute was represented as a major incident with world wide ramifications. Germany's apparent humiliation in Morocco was greeted with

cries of delight. The "wicked Hun", it was claimed, had been forced to back down in the face of British resolve to stand by their French ally. French culpability in the Moroccan crisis went without notice.⁷⁰

After 1911 the diplomatic tension between Britain and Germany began to ease. The appointment of Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg as Chancellor in July 1909 began to have an effect upon Anglo-German relations. Bethmann-Hollweg was perceived as a political moderate of Anglophile sentiments. His chancellorship promised the possibility of better relations than could ever have been achieved with his predecessor, Prince Bernhard von Bülow.⁷¹ In February 1912, encouraged by the new atmosphere in Berlin, R. B. Haldane, the Secretary of State for War, began his diplomatic mission to Germany. His intention was to bring about the end of the Anglo-German naval race. Although this effort did not meet with success, it did help to establish a period of Anglo-German rapprochement. This new spirit was reflected in an agreement over the Portuguese colonies

⁷⁰ For a detailed discussion of Germanophobia between 1911 and 1914 see Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 366-419.

⁷¹ Konrad H. Jarausch, The Enigmatic Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg and the Hubris of Imperial Germany (New Haven and London, 1973), 66, 108-16.

in Africa and in a compromise on the Bagdad Railway issue. Indeed, the situation was beginning to improve so much that many began to feel that real peace could be ensured for Europe.⁷²

The popular press did not reflect this spirit of rapprochement. The Haldane mission and subsequent efforts to establish a better diplomatic climate were met with stern warnings about the "real" German intentions. Rather than trying to aid in the realization of better relations with Germany the popular press treated its readers to a feast of Germanophobic tales. They produced spy scares, Zeppelin scares, diplomatic scares, military scares and a host of minor irritations. It seemed that the popular press was determined not to give up its Germanophobia even though it no longer had the same immediacy.⁷³

This reluctance on the part of the editors of the popular newspapers to abandon Germanophobia was understandable. Germanophobia was a very saleable commodity and it was essential to these men to sell their newspapers. They depended upon large circulations and anything which could guarantee a large readership was considered good

⁷² Peter Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments, 2: Unfinished Business 1911-1914 (New York, 1971), 236-76.

⁷³ Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 420-45.

regardless of its intrinsic merit. Yet a large circulation did not mean that these men enjoyed great political power. The influence of the popular press was limited. It could rarely move a government to establish new policy although it could cause modifications in existing policy as happened in 1909.

The influence of the popular press and consequently of its editors, was limited by two specific factors. The readerships of this press, regardless of its great size, had limited political power. The Registration Act of 1885 did not, as has so often been thought, alter the composition of the electorate in favour of the working class. For a variety of complex reasons, the 1911 Census revealed that only 29.7% of the total adult population was registered to vote.⁷⁴ Only about half of these voters would have been subscribers to the popular press. The other half and maybe even a majority of this restricted electorate constituted the readership of the elitist press. It was among the unenfranchised 70% of the total adult population that the popular press would have found its market. Such a situation did not lend itself to the creation of great political influence on the part of the popular press.

The second factor which limited the influence of the popular press was that its editors and proprietors lacked

⁷⁴Blewett, "The Franchise in the United Kingdom", 31.

the journalistic skills and reputations necessary to turn their charges into organs of political consequence. This fact is most dramatically illustrated in the case of Lord Northcliffe. This man was indisputably the greatest of Britain's press barons. By 1905, he had succeeded in gaining nearly everything he had desired in business with but one notable exception -- political influence. It is instructive to note how he proceeded to secure this last goal. In spite of his great wealth, his political connections and his ability to buy almost any paper, what Northcliffe desired most were the services of a skilled political editor. He turned first to J. L. Garvin and, after being denied, he sought the aid of L. S. Amery.⁷⁵ These were the type of accomplished men it was necessary to employ in order to gain political influence but it was precisely this type of editor who shied away from directing a mass circulation newspaper. The elitist press, on the other hand, attracted in abundance this calibre of editor.

The opinions of the governing classes were reflected by what can be called the quality of elitist press. This press was composed of weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies, which did not necessarily enjoy a large readership but rather had a

⁷⁵Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 7.

readership of political and social consequence. It was among the readership of these journals that, with a few notable exceptions, the leadership of Britain was to be found.⁷⁶ For this reason the elitist press was itself of great consequence. It spoke to and for those who had the power to determine governmental policy, be it foreign or domestic. The Germanophobia in this press was of greater import than that which appeared in the half-penny dailies. When the governing classes of Britain began to develop a fear of Germany the relationship between the two nations could not help but deteriorate.

The elitist press did not respond as quickly or in the same fashion as did the popular press to the apparent threat of modern Germany. But once the threat had been recognized it was often the elitist press editors who initiated the periodic outbreaks of Germanophobia. The fact that they could do this is illustrative of their unique position in British society. These editors were often close associates of those members of society who held governmental power. They had access to knowledge about foreign and domestic matters much sooner and in greater detail than the editors of most popular newspapers. This privileged position

⁷⁶The exceptions to this rule are at best only partial exceptions. Men such as Keir Hardie and John Burns would not have originally been members of the elitist press readership but it became essential reading for them as they gained political power. A. J. Balfour boasted that he never read a newspaper -- which is certainly not true -- but it was of little consequence for his private secretary J. S. Sandars

allowed them to comment upon issues or governmental policy before the popular press was even aware of the existence of a problem.⁷⁷

The popular press had become Germanophobic in 1896 with the publication of the Kruger Telegram. The elitist press moguls were also outraged by William's indiscretion but it would not be accurate to date their conversion to Germanophobia at this point. They tended to be generally more tolerant of the Kaiser whom they considered to be a relative novice in the field of diplomacy. After a brief scolding the elitist press laid the matter of the telegram to rest. It was not until the Boer War that the Conservative elements of the elitist press began to show signs of sustained Germanophobia.⁷⁸ The fact that it was the elitist Conservative press which demonstrated the greatest concern about the "German menace" was neither mere chance nor patent hostility. Conservatives saw in Germany features which frightened them and yet at the same time earned their admiration. It is this complex relationship between Germanophobia and Conservatism which must be understood before it is possible

read all the important journals and reported to his chief. Barbara Tuchman, The Proud Tower (New York, 1966), 62.

⁷⁷ Alfred Gollin, Balfour's Burden (London, 1965), 77-79.

⁷⁸ Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 227-67.

to evaluate fairly the intentions underlying Conservative editorial Germanophobia.

CHAPTER THREE
EDITORIAL GERMANOPHOBIA: MIRROR OF
EDWARDIAN CONSERVATISM

The Edwardian period was a time of pervasive anxiety. The disasters of the Boer War and the social and economic pressures of the early twentieth century occasioned a crisis of confidence to which British politicians had to make significant adjustments. The British Conservatives were particularly concerned. Their inherent pessimism, coloured as it was by their notion of Social Darwinism, led them to fear total and irreparable decline if remedial measures were not promptly undertaken. In order to highlight this sense of urgency many Conservatives wed their fear for Britain's future to the popular fear of Germany. That such a marriage of convenience had a sound political basis within the context of Edwardian Conservatism is not immediately discernible. The many components of that Conservatism must be understood if its Germanophobic constituent is to be appreciated for what it really was: part of the political battle between the Liberals and the Conservatives.¹

¹Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind, 15-34.

British Conservatism is typified by a lack of ideological rigidity. One may describe its parts with a greater or lesser degree of success but most attempts to delineate its boundaries tend to produce a distorted impression.² The Conservatism of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey was very much of this kind for they represented a ragbag of prejudices, beliefs and opinions which were only generally coherent. Conservatism traditionally has a remarkable capacity to assimilate new ideas and to react to novel political situations. This feature was very much in evidence during the Edwardian period. The vast majority of Conservatives rapidly accommodated Joseph Chamberlain's doctrine of tariff reform and employed this new element to enhance their more traditional values.³ Such flexibility accounts in large part for the longevity of late nineteenth-century Conservative governments and the popular appeal of Edwardian Conservatism. Despite its malleability, Conservative politicians brought to the

²R. J. Bennett, "The Conservative Tradition of Thought: A Right Wing Phenomenon?", Neill Nugent and Roger King, eds., The British Right: Conservative and Right Wing Politics in Britain (Westmead, Farnborough, Hants., 1977), 12-14.

³R. B. McDowell, British Conservatism 1832-1914 (London, 1959), 142, 159-68.

twentieth century a host of attitudes and opinions which can be readily identified as quintessentially Conservative.⁴

The dominant characteristic of Edwardian Conservatism was its attitude towards the nation. Conservatives were fond of calling their party the "national party" and in a strict sense this was true. They attempted to represent all classes in society rather than championing the interests of one group against another as Conservatives claimed the New Liberals did. This periodically difficult representation was predicated upon the traditional Conservative belief that the nation was much more than a mere legal entity. Conservatives viewed the nation as a living organism which should not be subdivided into warring factions. Because of the "organic" sense of nationhood the Conservatives were loath to separate immediate political concerns from the past and future development of their nation. Such a political perspective provided their party with a sense of coherence and purpose.⁵

⁴J. R. Jones, "England", 30-35.

⁵W. H. Greenleaf, "The Character of Modern British Conservatism", Robert Benewick, R. N. Berki, B. Parekh, eds., Knowledge and Belief in Politics (London, 1973), 178.

An extension of the Conservatives' concept of the nation was their nationalism -- which contrasted starkly with the Liberal emphasis on internationalism. Such nationalism ranged from the most ennobling sense of patriotism to the most ignoble type of jingoism. Regardless of where a Conservative's nationalism might be found in this spectrum, it typically was coupled to an insularity which could readily become xenophobic.⁶ When this xenophobia turned militant, it tended to be defensive rather than pugnacious. This defensiveness reflected the fact that by the Edwardian period the expansionist era of Britain was irrevocably gone. The time had come for consolidation. The adoption of Chamberlain's policy of fiscal protection was very much in keeping with the general attitude of the party. Tariff reform, most Conservatives believed, promised to protect sagging British industries and the welfare of Britain's labouring classes against the encroachment of vigorous foreign competition. The second great promise of tariff reform was that it would maintain Imperial unity.⁷

⁶Bennett, "The Conservative Tradition", 11.

⁷Greenleaf, "Modern British Conservatism", 192.

Disraeli is traditionally credited with uniting Conservatism and Imperialism.⁸ By the turn of the century the symbiosis was complete. The Conservatives were the Imperialists. To be sure, there were Liberal Imperialists and even Imperial Socialists, but the texture of Edwardian Imperialism bore the indelible stamp of the Conservative party.⁹ Disraeli, Salisbury, Chamberlain, Milner and a host of other Conservative luminaries had made Imperialism the province of their party.¹⁰ They viewed themselves as the guardians of empire. Yet even in this their defensive attitude was prominent. It was a Conservative administration which abandoned the dubious glory of "splendid isolation" for the pragmatic security of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 and the Entente Cordiale in 1904.

⁸See Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech of 1872 in R. J. White, ed., The Conservative Tradition (New York, 1957), 238-40.

⁹H. C. G. Matthew, The Liberal Imperialists (London, 1973), 3-36 and Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform (New York, 1960), 43-73.

¹⁰Alfred Milner, The Nation and the Empire (London, 1913), 234-43.

But the Balfour government remained committed to the primacy of the Empire. This was the key to both their foreign and defense policies. The diplomatic accommodation with France was in the first instance to serve imperial interests and, as will be shown later, Balfour's military reforms were designed to increase the efficiency of imperial defence rather than to stiffen the defenses of Britain herself.¹¹

In order to further imperialist concerns many Conservatives courted a social policy known as "Social Imperialism". In essence, it was hoped that this policy would prevent explosive social confrontations by imbuing the working class with a sense of imperial pride and participation. Such imperial pride was to be instilled through public lectures, pamphlet literature and organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the National Service League.¹² The working man was to see himself, not as part of an alienated class, but as an integral part of a great empire. Through this policy the Conservatives hoped to eliminate the popular basis of socialism and radical Liberalism. By speaking to

¹¹Michael Howard, The Continental Commitment (Harmondsworth, 1972), 9-30.

¹²Zara Steiner, Britain and the Origins of the First World War (London, 1977), 154-63.

the working man's sense of patriotism and "team spirit" the pernicious effect of divisive socialism might be averted. Harmony would also be fostered by careful budgeting and moderate social reforms, financed by indirect taxation, would improve working class health and efficiency. This social policy, of course, illustrates much more about the Conservatives than it does the imperial sentiments of the Edwardian working class. However, historians such as Bernard Semmel and Bernard Potter, claim that this policy of "imperialization" met with at least limited success. They believe that the working class was weaned away from the theory of class warfare. On the other hand, work done by A. P. Thornton and Richard Price suggests that the imperial idea suffered a "moral contraction" following the Boer War and that there was little in the way of working class enthusiasm for empire.¹³

The Conservatives' faith in the popular appeal of "nation" and "empire" reveals much about their broader conception of society. They were not prepared to countenance fundamental change in either the social or political structure of Britain. These two areas were to be regarded

¹³Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform (New York, 1960); Bernard Potter, Critics of Empire (New York, 1968); A. P. Thornton, Doctrines of Imperialism (New York, 1965) and Richard Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class (London, 1972).

as one. The social leaders were, they believed, the political leaders. Society was naturally hierarchical, with authority emanating from the top. This structure lent strength to the nation for it was an accurate reflection of the natural order. The attempts of both the Liberals and socialists to reorder artificially society according to their own formulas and laws met with great disapproval. Should the forces of reconstruction gain the upper hand, they would most certainly disturb those things which should be left untouched.¹⁴

The Conservatives' cautious approach to revisions in the social or political structure was rooted in their view of man. For the Conservative, man was a creature of passion, subject to frailty of reason and unbounded self-interest. He had a limited understanding particularly in the realm of politics. These flaws in human nature were permanent, they were part of the human condition. It was folly to suggest that this situation could be rectified through legislative wizardry. This belief provided the basis for Conservative opposition to socialist or Liberal plans to create a more just and equitable

¹⁴Lord Hugh Cecil, Conservatism (London, 1913), 159-98.

society. Any policy which was tinged by "utopianism" was considered to be unrealistic. The politicians who subscribed to utopian policies were perceived as being opportunists.¹⁵ It was these opportunists who would foment revolution for the sake of personal power.

The Conservative fear of revolution, particularly in the Edwardian period, is easily understood. The many disciples of Burke, such as Hugh Cecil and Strachey, believed that if the fabric of society were torn at any point, all of society would be weakened. One could not have piecemeal revolution. Therefore, in order to maintain the strength of the nation, and ultimately of the empire, the Conservatives were obliged to prevent revolution regardless of its extent or location in the political system. During the Edwardian period this was a mighty undertaking. Britain's faltering role as the world economic leader and the many pressures of modernization demanded that there be change. The Conservatives could either guide that change or give the lead to another party.

¹⁵Greenleaf, "Modern British Conservatism", 178.

Their own political philosophy demanded that they assume leadership. By a series of judicious reforms they could prevent revolution and build a stronger more unified nation.¹⁶

The Conservatives were eminently pragmatic men. They put their faith in that which was realistically obtainable, not in what they perceived to be questionable philosophies of social reform. The four major areas to which the Conservatives addressed themselves during the Salisbury-Balfour administrations are very revealing. Britain clearly required new policies in foreign affairs, defence, education and economics.¹⁷ Reforms could be initiated in the first three areas quickly and decisively. The new diplomatic relationships with Japan and France have already been mentioned. These agreements illustrated a marked departure from earlier foreign policies and originally they solved more problems than they created. The establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence demonstrated that the Conservatives were determined to

¹⁶McDowell, British Conservatism, 141.

¹⁷Robert Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill (London, 1970), 170.

correct the problems which had been the source of so much humiliation during the Boer War. The army and navy were to be modernized and made significantly more efficient, yet the valued traditions of the services were to be left intact.¹⁸ The Education Act of 1902 recognized the need for a more scientific and technological education for a greater number of students yet it did not disrupt the traditions so cherished by Britain's governing classes.¹⁹

The fourth area of Conservative reform could not be pursued so easily. Britain's economic problems were complex and of vital importance to both the nation and the welfare of the Conservative party. It was on this question of economic disruption that the socialists and radical Liberals were preparing to make a major stand. The Conservatives had to alleviate simultaneously Britain's economic problems and do it in such a manner as would rob their opponents of vital political ammunition. Chamberlain's policy of tariff reform appeared to meet both of these criteria. A protective wall of tariffs

¹⁸Albert Tucker, "The Issue of Army Reform in the Unionist Government, 1903-1905", Historical Journal 9 (1966):90-100.

¹⁹George Haines, Essays on German Influence upon English Education and Science 1850-1919 (Hamden, Conn., 1969), 122-60.

seemed capable of providing British industry with the breathing space necessary for recuperation while at the same time it promised to secure British jobs and make more comfortable the life of the working classes. All this could be done without the destructive aspects implied by other economic programmes. The social order need not be upset and Britain might once again prosper.²⁰

It was this last area of reform which led the Conservatives into severe political problems. They miscalculated the extent to which a large section of the electorate was dedicated to the principle of Free Trade. The threat to this policy drove many voters into the Liberal camp. The Liberals were ideologically committed to Free Trade. Unlike the Conservatives who could dismiss a policy once its practicality came into question, the Liberals were inextricably tied to this famous aspect of their political philosophy. When this and other vital issues were placed before the people in January 1906, Balfour's Conservatives were soundly defeated. This defeat had great ramifications for Edwardian Conservatism. After a

²⁰Milner, The Nation, 400-1.

decade of power the Conservatives were forced to play an unaccustomed role in the political wilderness.²¹

Regardless of the gravity of the problems facing Britain, the Conservatives had always felt that given the time and the opportunity they could provide workable solutions. At the very least Britain was being competently governed by a party whose sole concern was the welfare of the nation. After January 1906, the situation was drastically changed. The nation was in the hands of men, who, from the Conservative perspective, lacked the wisdom to perceive their own limitations. The Liberals had little recent experience of government. They lacked the reputation for firmness and decisive action. In short, a Liberal government could only add to Britain's problems. Their Liberalism seemed foolhardy. The world was not going to adapt itself to their faith in reason and fair-play.²²

The Liberal victory immediately brought to the fore another major aspect of Conservatism. Since William Gladstone's abortive attempts to legislate Home Rule for

²¹ Peter Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments, The Promised Land 1905-1910 (London, 1968), 1:22-30.

²² Maxse made the most uncompromising contemporary condemnation of the new government. See National Review 47, March, 1906, 1-8.

Ireland, the Conservative party had been the chief advocate of Unionism. Originally, there was nothing in Conservatism to make it the natural vehicle of Unionism. Indeed, if the Liberals had handled the matter with greater discretion they might have averted such keen Conservative opposition. The Conservatives recognized that the Liberals had excited much antipathy. They quickly wooed the widespread anti-Irish sentiment by adopting the cause of Unionism.²³ Such political expediency had stood them in good stead. Yet by 1906 they were obliged to defend Unionism regardless of its political merit. Their adoption of tariff reform had withered their popular support. They could not risk a further disruption of their electoral basis which the softening on the Home Rule issue was bound to create.

Besides worrying about domestic problems the Conservatives had cause to question Liberal intentions in foreign affairs. Although Sir Edward Grey, the new Foreign Secretary, was considered to be a sound man, many questioned the extent to which the Radicals might influence Britain's relationship with the continent. A new trend in foreign

²³ Blake, Peel to Churchill, 159-64.

policy had been established by the Conservative administration. Britain had been drawn closer to France by the 1904 Entente but this agreement raised the spectre of continental entanglement. Many Conservatives had realized that Britain could no longer stand aloof from Europe. Cut off from continental friendship, Britain and the empire were vulnerable. It was essential for Britain to conclude an understanding with at least one major European power. The Conservatives had chosen France. Chamberlain's earlier negotiations with Germany had met with stiff popular resistance and ultimately with diplomatic failure. The Entente Cordiale tacitly drew the British into the Franco-German animosity but this was a price that the Conservatives were prepared to pay. One of the greatest Conservative fears in 1906 was that the Liberals were not prepared to pay the same price.²⁴

²⁴On the development of Conservative policy before 1905 see, J. A. S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century (London, 1964); William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 2 Vols. (New York, 1935); George R. Monger, The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907 (London, 1963); Ian H. Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires (London, 1966); Samuel R. Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Zara S. Steiner, "The Last Years of the Old Foreign Office, 1898-1905", Historical Journal 6 (1963):59-90.

The most contentious foreign policy issue between the two parties was the nature of Britain's official attitude towards Germany. The Liberals have been perceived as being pro-German, the Conservatives as anti-German.²⁵ Such categorization has led to much misunderstanding. It would be more accurate to view the Liberals as Germanophiles and the Conservatives as Germanophobes. Germanophobia does not imply that the Conservatives hated the Germans or that they were anti-German. It merely indicates that the Conservatives feared the Germans. This fear, as will be seen, was a product of respect and admiration more than the result of international tension and anxiety. There was much about Germany that appealed to the Conservatives. Indeed, many of the ideals of Conservatism appeared to be reflected by Germany. This produced fear but only to the extent that many of those same ideals appeared to be ignored in Liberal Britain.

The Conservatives generally admired the German sense of Nation and national mission. The Germans appeared to display an exemplary patriotism and loyalty to the crown. But though Conservatives applauded this loyalty to the Kaiser, they were disturbed, if not frightened, by its potential for trouble. The Kaiser, unlike his uncle, was not a constitutional monarch. It was not incumbent upon him to accept the

²⁵P. M. Kennedy, "Idealists and Realists: British Views of Germany, 1864-1939", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 25 (1975):143-45.

advice of his ministers. The German government was constituted in such a way that it served the will of the Kaiser and not that of the German people. This situation was made even more volatile by William's apparent belief that he personified the will of Germany. The combination of power and unpredictability caused many Britons grave concern.

On the other hand, British Conservatives approved the fact that German political leadership was drawn from that class of men whose social position made them the natural leaders of their nation. Germany was not dissolving into warring factions. Great respect for authority appeared to permeate all major national activities enabling Germany to function as a united nation despite her recent unification. This unity engendered strength; a strength which by the Edwardian period had reached legendary proportions.²⁶

The Conservatives were particularly impressed and at the same time disturbed by Germany's Realpolitik. The Germans appeared eminently realistic in their appraisal of what they could accomplish internationally. German statemen seemed to appreciate the fact that both military and industrial strength were the final arbiters in international disputes. They put little faith in pacifist sentiment or international peace conferences. The Germans realized that their nation's security could only be purchased at the price of military

²⁶Searle, National Efficiency, 54-57.

supremacy. Conservatives were quick to translate this rule into naval supremacy for Britain. German realism also seemed to extend into the economic sphere. Germany was a protectionist nation. German history, it was argued, illustrated the wisdom underlying attempts to protect one's own markets from foreign encroachment.²⁷

There seemed to be a great many lessons which Germany could teach Britain, but one had to know how to interpret these lessons. The Germans were also perceived as a cunning people. The tenets of Social Darwinism indicated that if Germany were to fulfil her destiny, she would do so at Britain's expense. Patent Germanophiles, such as Haldane, were seen as a danger equal to those who completely ignored Germany. The two great nations would almost certainly be drawn into violent conflict especially if Britain appeared weak. This was a fact of international life. The greatest fear of the Conservatives was that the Liberals would allow Britain to deteriorate. The army and the navy required immediate and concentrated attention but the government was wasting precious financial resources on questionable social reforms. The economy needed firm management but the Liberals seemed prepared to let it continue its rudderless drifting. The entire nation needed to be unified and strengthened yet the Liberals pursued their own partisan goals. The combina-

²⁷Semmel, Imperialism, 108-10.

tion of German diligence and Liberal ineptitude was bound to prove fatal to Britain. British weakness would unquestionably invite a German attack.²⁸

Compelled by this sense of urgency and influenced by their own Conservatism, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey began the development of their editorial Germanophobia. The target for their journalistic assaults was not Germany but the Liberal government. Before July 1914 their papers consistently reflected the grudging admiration which typified Conservative attitudes towards Germany. That country was their model of modern nationhood. The German people were cast in an exemplary role. The highest degree of respect was shown for the German industrial growth. German culture was applauded as one of the finest achievements of the nineteenth century. The great military establishment of Germany stood as an example of what could be accomplished if a nation were properly directed. The editors gathered up these national attributes and flung them at their Liberal opponents.

Such attacks against the Liberal government were clearly Germanophobic. The editors consciously tried to enlist the element of fear in their efforts to embarrass and ultimately topple the Liberal government. By way of defence, the Liberals and their journalistic supporters accused Garvin,

²⁸Kennedy, "Idealists and Realists", 146-48.

Maxse and Strachey of being rabidly anti-German.²⁹ This charge cannot be substantiated. Although the editors were unquestionably Germanophobes, their Conservatism prevented them from becoming anti-German. A comprehensive examination of the editors' journals and correspondence reveals an admiration rather than an enmity for the German people. Even Maxse, the editor most often accused of exciting anti-German sentiment, could realistically claim that he participated in no prejudicial journalism against that people

It is the fashion among those who dislike the view with which the National Review had long been identified, to denounce us as "Anti-German", though our critics would be hard put to it to produce a single sentence from any number of the National Review revealing prejudice against the German people, whose many fine qualities none admire more warmly than we do, and upon whom we have never cast any aspersions, nor have we joined in the cheap ridicule to which German institutions and German ideals are occasionally subjected. . . . 30

Garvin could and did make similar claims with equal justification. In an Observer editorial, Garvin referred to his supposed enemies as his "beloved Germans".³¹ He was a voracious reader of the German classics and was a subscriber to no fewer than thirteen German newspapers.³²

²⁹These accusations are most typically found in the Manchester Guardian, the Nation, and the Westminster Gazette.

³⁰National Review, 52, October, 1908, 166.

³¹Observer, December 19, 1909, 6.

³²These newspapers consisted of the Berliner Tagesblatt, Simplicissimus, Jugend, Die Zukunft, Nuova

He was even prepared to accept the appointment of a German to one of the most important naval positions in the nation. When in the fall of 1911, Prince Louis of Battenberg was being considered for the post of Second Sea Lord, Garvin wrote to J. S. Sandars, Balfour's private secretary, that the Observer would not attack Churchill's decision.³³

As to the Battenberg case one can but say how one would treat it from an editorial point of view. Were the appointment once made I would not attack it. I would have an article very balanced, very historical, discussing the curious general problem of distinguished persons rising to high Command in countries other than their own and leading foreign forces against the land of their birth.³⁴

In 1912, after nearly twelve years of virtually constant warnings of the German menace, Garvin pressed on the Unionist leader, Bonar Law, an interview with a distinguished German visitor. His reasons for doing so are very revealing.

Antologia, Preussische Zeitung, Kolnische Zeitung, Die Zeit, Die Grenzboten, Preussische Jahrbücher, Marine Rundschau, Reichs Arbeitsblatt and Frankfurter Zeitung. This list was compiled from the Garvin papers.

³³Randolph Churchill, Winston Churchill, 2: Young Statesman 1901-1914 (London, 1967), 550-52.

³⁴Sandars Papers, Eng. Hist. 759 fols., Garvin to Sandars, September 28, 1911.

Sore against my will I am forced to trouble you on another matter. Professor Dr. Stern, a distinguished philosopher, writer and editor of Nord und Süd, an important monthly is in England sent with very weighty credentials; and he wants to print some Conservative opinions not touching politics, showing that the Radicals here have no monopoly on reasonableness, and that our respect for the great past, the great qualities in the German people are as unchanged as our conviction that we still have much to learn from them.³⁵

The Spectator often carried articles on the soundness of the German character and the vitality of German culture.³⁶ Strachey felt that many things about the Germans were good and worthy of imitation. He was particularly impressed by their willingness to fulfill the duties of citizenship by serving in the army. The Spectator's campaign for compulsory military service made frequent reference to this fact. Strachey attempted to shame his countrymen into following the fine German example.

It is unnecessary for us to waste many words in expressing our admiration for the German people's dedication to their country. It is their willingness to serve which has made Germany the great nation we see to-day. . . . Can we expect any less for our own people if we are to meet the challenge from our neighbour across the North Sea? ³⁷

³⁵ Bonar Law Papers, 26/2/33. Garvin to Bonar Law, April 18, 1912.

³⁶ Spectator, 96, May 26, 1906, 817; 99, November 9, 1907, 696; 101, July 18, 1908, 82; 103, July 3, 1909, 7.

³⁷ Ibid., 103, November 13, 1909, 772.

The issue of compulsory enlistment was a particularly difficult one for the editors as well as for their party. Germany's continental location demanded the existence of a large standing army. Her history demonstrated the necessity of military preparedness for she was vulnerable to attack from three sides. Britain, on the other hand, was a maritime power with a deep and abiding suspicion of an idle soldiery. Yet if Britain were to enhance her own security and if she were to enjoy any real diplomatic influence on the continent, she must be prepared to abandon her liberal prejudices against the only instrument which could accomplish both goals. The editorial policy of the Spectator reveals the tenacity with which the old biases survived. Strachey recognized as well as any man the need for Britain to increase the size of her army. Although he eventually came to give qualified support to the position of Lord Roberts and the National Service League, Strachey fought a long rear-guard action for voluntary service. His creation of the "Spectator experimental company" illustrated his commitment to the principle of voluntary service. He hoped to demonstrate through this experimental company that Britain could have both voluntary service and military preparedness.³⁸

³⁸For a discussion by Strachey on the importance of maintaining a voluntary service see, Spectator, 96, March 24, 1906, 448.

Garvin and Maxse suffered from none of Strachey's residual Liberalism but they, too, cautiously approached the question of compulsory service. Would men who had been inducted into a compulsory army be expected to serve at postings outside of Britain? Both editors argued that they should not if they had not specifically enlisted for that purpose. The whole point of compulsory service, they insisted, was the need to provide for the immediate defence of the British Isles. A large army in India would be of little value if the German army was in Middlesex.³⁹ These reservations on the part of all three editors tellingly illustrate the complexities which arose out of the necessity to meet the German military menace.

The three editors often spoke of the possibility of an Anglo-German war, though on no occasion prior to July 1914 did they suggest that Britain attack Germany or enter into any alliance for the purpose of supporting hostile action against that nation. We have seen already that the editors were Social Darwinists but of a school which owed more to Spencerianism than to Darwin's theory of evolution. They, along with many fellow Conservatives, believed in the

³⁹Observer, November 29, 1909, 8; National Review, 51, April, 1908, 303-16.

"survival of the fittest". This "scientific" belief accommodated itself most comfortably with their Conservatism for it argued for an organic state and for the recognition of power as a legitimate international necessity. But this theory had its darker side. The natural laws which provided for the rise of Britain might just as readily work against British interests in favour of a vigorous new race. Many Britons feared that this new race was already on the horizon. The failure to recognize this reality was judged to be as dangerous as the reality itself. Hence, the great fear of the Radicals who talked of peace conferences, international disarmament, military reductions, multinational co-operation and other follies which could not help but play into the hands of the Germans.⁴⁰ These men seemed to be denying the realities of international existence and this, as Garvin pointed out, could only end in disaster.

In every quarter of the globe the existing international order is founded on force, and in periods of what we call peace the balance of armaments stands between society and slaughter. People who attempt to blind this grim truth from the perception of mankind are working more effectively than any Chauvinist against the causes they profess, and are endeavouring in effect, whatever they may intend, to bring about the evils they abhor.⁴¹

⁴⁰For a detailed study of Radical peace efforts see, Morris, Radicalism Against War, 198-223.

⁴¹Observer, August 2, 1908, 6.

The real source of the editors' concern quickly shifted from the Germans to the idealistic Radicals who they feared could divert Liberal policies, both foreign and domestic, into unrealistic channels. As was demonstrated by their national efficiency movements, many Conservatives appreciated that an empire could be destroyed by domestic decay just as readily as by foreign aggression. The editors believed that Radical policies invited internal as well as external weakness. They maintained that naive political idealism was in every degree as dangerous to Britain as was being outnumbered by the German fleet.

The editors' pervasive fear of Radicalism was anchored in their own Conservatism. They totally mistrusted the Gladstonian notion of a moral order particularly in regard to international relations. Gladstone's "concert of Europe" was for them nothing more than star-eyed optimism although they unwittingly did accept the Gladstonian concept of limited intervention. The apparent Gladstonian revulsion over the empire further served to separate those who believed in the importance of the imperial mission and those who maintained that the empire demonstrated nothing more than man's "lust for domination". The Gladstonian willingness to grant Home Rule to Ireland served as a final illustration of the destructive nature of Radicalism. The men who followed in the tradition of Gladstone seemed no more aware

of the political realities of the world than had their master.⁴² Such political idealism contrasted sharply with the Conservatives' notion of practical politics. The sentiments expressed by the National Review were typical of those held by many Conservatives.

Our view is briefly that in the severe struggle for life among nations, strength must be met by equal or superior strength, resolution by equal or superior resolution, skill by greater skill, and that every attempt to treat Europe as a large Sunday School governed by sentimentalism and moralising will only cause disaster and confusion and will defeat the very objects which the sentimentalists and moralisers profess to have in view.⁴³

The editors continually demonstrated a near-paranoid fear of the Radicals gaining a decisive voice in the making of Liberal foreign policy. Radical idealism was deemed to be no match for German Realpolitik. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey considered it their responsibility to emphasize the dangerous reality of the international situation even at the risk of being labelled jingoists. Maxse's denunciation of the Radicals' appreciation of political realities was typically the harshest.

⁴²Deryck Schreuder, "Gladstone and the Conscience of the State" in Peter Marsh, ed., The Conscience of the Victorian State (Syracuse, 1979), 73-134.

⁴³National Review, 58, January, 1912, 678.

Though denounced as "jingoese" by jackasses, our single object in keeping the German question to the fore is to prevent a war with Germany, towards which we are drifting, thanks to the colossal ineptitude of politicians who imagine that they secure us against invasion by merely declaring it to be "impossible". We are not among the pessimists who regard an Anglo-German war as inevitable provided the Government and people will wake up and do their duty before it is too late. But there is only one way of preventing it, viz. by convincing the Germans, who are a practical people, that the risk is out of all proportion to the prize.⁴⁴

Garvin's warnings took precisely the same form as did his colleague's although he was generally more reserved in his language.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that there would be no danger on the other side of the North Sea but for the grave dangers on this side which take various forms which may be comprehensively summarized as a total inability or unwillingness to see things as they really are.⁴⁵

The Spectator pursued this same uncompromising tone. Strachey had so little faith in his opponents' political sagacity that he feared the Liberals might actually be drawn into the German sphere of influence. If this were accomplished the Germans would have achieved their goal of

⁴⁴National Review, 52, September, 1908, 7.

⁴⁵Observer, October 11, 1908, 6.

European hegemony without the need for war.

Let there be no mistake as to our attitude. We are convinced that the country is not safe in the hands of the Liberal Party as it exists to-day, or rather, we should say, of that coalition of Liberals, Irish Separatists, and Labour Members upon which the Administration rests. . . . The Liberals believe that they can secure the peace, not by unquestionable strength both on the land and the sea, but by an understanding with the German Government . . . any understanding with Germany would mean serving her purposes, her purpose whether right or wrong. That is too high a price to pay.⁴⁶

Such political animosity was in no way mitigated by Radicalism's growing reputation for entertaining pacifist sympathies. Pacifism in any form was for Garvin, Maxse and Strachey a folly to be cautiously avoided. The editors' reactions to one of the most famous pacifists of the Edwardian era, Norman Angell, illustrates the basic objections which they held. Angell's pamphlet, The Great Illusion, argued that modern war was economically irrational. He claimed that modern states had become so economically interdependent that it could profit no one to become engaged in a general war.⁴⁷ This thesis was quickly misinterpreted to read that modern war was economically impossible.⁴⁸ Such

⁴⁶Spectator, 106, February 4, 1911, 172-74.

⁴⁷Norman Angell, The Great Illusion (London, 1910).

⁴⁸H. Weinroth, "Norman Angell and the Great Illusion: An Episode in Pre-1914 Pacifism", Historical Journal, 17 (1974):551-74.

an optimistic view readily gathered a large following which Garvin, Maxse and Strachey believed it necessary to disperse. Angell's theory, they believed, postulated a greater harmony among nations than actually existed. They feared that Angell's work would lull Britons into a false sense of security. This would result in a lessening of pressure to maintain a strong navy and a decline in the level of British military preparedness. Such developments offended the editors' sense of political reality. Garvin made this point clear in private correspondence with Angell.

My situation upon the whole matter is very simple. I think that war will ultimately cease. I think that for my time and yours it will continue to occur, and that the first thing now, as in the past, is to be prepared for it.⁴⁹

Maxse's criticism of Angell moved along much the same lines. Unlike the traditional pacifists who envisioned an improvement in the moral state of man, Angell's theory required no such spiritual basis. Angell's pacifism was entirely secular in its nature, a feature which originally caused the traditional pacifists a great deal of alarm. The unencumbered nature of this new pacifism aided in gaining for Angell a wide and influential following. Such success by any pacifist worried the editors. Pacifism, they feared,

⁴⁹Garvin Papers, Garvin to Norman Angell, September 30, 1913.

struck at the very heart of their efforts to nurture a strong, patriotic citizenry. While not denying the benefits derived from pacifism, the editors argued that Angell would be rendering a greater service to mankind if he would preach his sermons where they were most sorely needed.

If this Mr. Norman Angell is sincerely devoted to Great Britain, and if he wishes his propaganda to be regarded seriously, why should he not take a turn in Germany and America where far more bellicose views prevail than in this country? Why should he concentrate himself on endeavouring to quench the feeble and flickering flame of patriotism which needs the utmost care and nursing if Great Britain is to keep her place among the Great Powers?⁵⁰

Strachey completely rejected the validity of Angell's theory. He pointed out that no economic factors had proven a sufficient force to prevent the many past wars, and he speculated that when national pride was involved mere economics could hardly be trusted to act as an effective restraint upon potential belligerents. He further suggested that "Norman Angellism" could prove to be a grievous embarrassment to Britain if she were the only nation to be persuaded by the siren song of pacifism.⁵¹

⁵⁰National Review, 60, January, 1913, 881.

⁵¹Spectator, 110, January 4, 1910, 6.

The attitudes of the three editors towards Britain's foreign policy were shared by many Conservatives. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey supported the abandonment of splendid isolation and called for closer ties to France. They proposed a defensive type of foreign policy while being aware that any ties to the continent were accompanied by responsibilities to protect friends and ward off potential enemies. They did not believe that Britain's foreign policy should be antagonistic towards any nation but the realities of Europe had to be met. As usual, Germany played a large role in their considerations. Any failure to come to terms with the reality of the new German Empire would almost certainly be fatal for Britain.

The old theory of splendid isolation must go by the board. The British Empire cannot stand aloof from European struggles, because the balance of power is more vital to us to-day than ever before. A German Empire, embracing Germany, Holland, Belgium, Austria and perhaps Turkey, with ports and fortresses at Calais, Cherbourg, Trieste, Antwerp and Amsterdam, would conquer us without firing a shot.⁵²

This awareness of the need for Britain to play a much more significant role in Europe was essentially defensive in nature as was often revealed most clearly by Strachey.

⁵²
National Review, 55, December, 1910, 725.

We have no ambitions in Europe except the simple and pacific one of helping to maintain its equilibrium. If the scale of power tilts one way or the other from the particular poise at which it had settled after ages of pushing and pulling, all Europe is thrown into a ferment of anxiety.⁵³

Garvin liked to describe the practical aspects of Britain's new relationship with Europe, particularly with regards to France. He firmly believed that there existed a community of interests with France. The realities of modern Europe indicated quite clearly that if France fell Britain would be sure to follow.

The vital secret of the entente cordiale is that it depends upon a correspondence of real interests, as urgent, as complete, as permanent in its nature -- so far as human foresight can judge -- as has ever existed between two great and neighbouring peoples. The truth is so simple that it is easily remembered, and so profound that forgetfulness of it would be fatal. For the Republic and the island alike it is as stern a fact as could be stated in terms of platitude that united they stand, and when they are divided they will fall.⁵⁴

Despite the editors' vigorous defence of Balfour's foreign policy they displayed a typical Conservative insularity in their comprehension of foreign affairs. If a foreign development did not have an immediately recognizable impact upon British interests, the editors would tend

⁵³Spectator, 99, November 16, 1908, 761.

⁵⁴Observer, May 24, 1908, 6.

to give such an event little regard. Such insularity on their part was most significantly displayed with regard to the Balkans. Assassinations, coups, revolts and even wars in this area were often given the most superficial coverage. The editors displayed little awareness of the fact that Germany had an important stake in the outcome of the various Balkan disturbances. They saw the role of Germany and the Triple Alliance on the whole as being primarily defensive. At the end of the Balkan war of 1913 Strachey wrote with a great degree of confidence that the war had illustrated the essentially defensive and peaceful nature of the Triple Alliance.

. . . so long as the Triple Alliance is not successful in aggression we wish it may long continue. So far as it is a league of defence it deserves the goodwill of every man. In that capacity it can never come into conflict with the Triple Entente which is simply a league of peace itself. . . . The proved weakness of the Triple Alliance is a reassuring fact for the whole world. For many years the smaller States especially have regarded the Triple Alliance as a predatory bogey. They will be justified henceforth in calming some of their fears with the recollection of what happened in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913.⁵⁵

The most telling failure of the editors to evaluate realistically the significance of the Balkans for inter-

⁵⁵ Spectator, 111, October 11, 1913, 554.

national relations was demonstrated with the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. There was no mention either in their journals or their correspondence of possible German intervention in what they perceived to be an internal Austrian problem. Their lack of understanding in this matter illustrates the essentially domestic orientation of their Germanophobia. Even though they warned of the possibility of a German European empire they failed to see many of the steps by which such an empire might be created.

The editors suffered from no such myopia when it came to looking out for the interests of the British empire. As befitted good Conservatives Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were staunch imperialists. They believed that the empire guaranteed the continuance of Britain as a great nation. They further held that the welfare of the working classes depended upon continued imperial vigour, for the empire not only developed noble national sentiments but directly provided markets, food and raw materials necessary for a high standard of living. Should the empire be destroyed, the editors argued, Britain would readily fall under German domination. The British people would be weakened and Britain's commercial strength would be dissipated. Germany was portrayed as the hungry wolf who waited only for the British flock to scatter before striking. Thus anything which could lead to a weaker empire was

attacked by the editors as playing into the hands of the Germans. The editors' employment of Germanophobia on this issue was a thin veil for the Conservatives' traditional contempt for "Little Englanders".⁵⁶

The Conservative cause par excellence was not the empire but the maintenance of the navy. Naval supremacy was essential if the empire was to be held together. Britain's fortunes had been gained by control of the high seas and any challenge in this sphere was regarded as a direct threat to the nation's welfare. Conservatives believed that the navy was the first line of British defence. It represented greatness and security. The formation of the German "risk fleet" was bound to antagonize a significant proportion of the British population and at the same time excite the most active concern on the part of the Conservative party. A German fleet was looked upon as a luxury not a necessity as was the case for Britain. When the German fleet was combined with the greatest army in Europe it provided the occasion for the greatest degree of British anxiety.

⁵⁶ National Review, 46, February, 1906, 959.

Garvin, Maxse and Strachey skilfully worked this anxiety into a political tool to be used against the Liberal administration. The cause of naval supremacy had wide popular appeal. If the editors could excite enough public outrage at the possibility of naval reductions, they could force the government to divert money away from other less desirable causes. Ultimately, it might be possible to topple the government which was so remiss in its duty to protect the national interest. Hence, the naval race provided an election issue of the first magnitude. It was a tangible issue which could be presented in the most simple and concrete terms. One had but to count battle-ships. This approach suggests, quite correctly, that the editors had little faith in the sagacity of the modern electorate. Garvin's letter to Sandars prior to the January election of 1910 is representative of the typically Conservative attitudes held by all three editors.

The Americans talk of an electioneering final as "a cannon-ball campaign!" Now what's to be our cannonball? Ought it not to be defence? (Our whole creed means that, tariff being commercial defence, social reform, social defence and so on). But of course by defence in this connection I mean the navy! We want something bold and broad and vivid to strike the national imagination and perplex the others. Only one thing will do that . . . the Two-Keel-to-One- Standard. That would increase the sense of security; important to the national instinct. It would inspire enthusiasm with party and would take the

country. It would be intelligible to the duller elector. It would be navally sound; and it's first class politics.⁵⁷

In order to accomplish these various Conservative goals the editors had to present an image of Germany which was both frightening yet instructive. Hence, they developed an entire rhetoric of Germanophobia which conveyed their political views in a simplified yet effective fashion. This rhetoric consciously sought to emphasize the Prussianization of Germany. The complexities of the German nation were submerged behind the omnipresent militarism with which Prussia had traditionally been identified. The editors saw, quite correctly, that the Prussians were the masters of the new Germany. Britain faced the nation of von Moltke, not that of Goethe. The British people must be made aware of the metamorphosis which had overcome the whole of non-Prussian Germany. Germany, they claimed, had not so much been unified as had Prussia's name been written in large letters across the whole Empire. If Britain were to survive in a world governed by the tenets of Social Darwinism, she must be made aware of the true nature of her chief antagonist. The Radical press and the Liberal government seemed innocent of any knowledge of the homogeneity

⁵⁷ Balfour Papers, 49795/14, Garvin to Sandars, December 20, 1909.

in the modern German character. They stubbornly insisted
 58
 upon the myth of German pluralism.

In a determined effort to counteract this myopia, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey developed a rhetoric of Germanophobia which could be utilized in virtually all situations. Without having to restate the obvious ad infinitum, the editors could convey their impressions of modern Germany by the very words that they used when discussing any aspect of Germany or Anglo-German relations. Eventually their rhetoric acquired enough significance that the editors could intersperse various key words in articles which had no direct relationship to Germany. The reader was consequently informed that a certain situation should be examined in the light of the Anglo-German rivalry. By a skillfull employment of words or phrases their journalistic appeals were made to convey more than the immediate significance of a particular article.

The rhetoric of Germanophobia that the editors developed was not done in unison. Each man developed his own form and intensity of rhetoric over a period of years. The editors portrayed Germany as militarily mighty and

58 Kennedy, "Idealists and Realists", 142-43.

internally united while Britain was made to appear weak, deluded and divided. This was perhaps best displayed by Garvin's continual reference to the Kaiser as "William the Conqueror" and Britain as "England the Unready". Strachey's constant comparison of "Weltpolitik" to what the editor called the "Ostrich policy" of the Liberal government further highlighted what was considered to be the central difference in foreign policies. Maxse dwelt upon the "Blood and Iron" policies of Germany while condemning the "Peace-at-any-price Brigade" in Britain.⁵⁹

The term which is found in the journals of all three editors, though most memorably in the National Review, is "Potsdam Party". Maxse originally employed this term to label those in the Liberal cabinet whom he felt to be most dangerous. He eventually expanded this term to include the majority of the Liberal party with the notable exception of Sir Edward Grey. The term "Potsdam Party" was useful in three ways: it implied that certain members of the government had loyalties outside the nation; it provided a coherent analysis of actions taken by the government which were not in the best national interest; and it reminded the reader of the militaristic nature of modern

⁵⁹ Observer, March 8, 1908, 6; April 5, 1908, 7; Spectator, 98, February 9, 1907, 201; 107, July 29, 1911, 165; National Review, 58, October, 1911, 415; 62, November, 1913, 367; 48, November, 1906, 384.

Germany -- Potsdam being the ancestral home of the Hohenzollerns. Maxse also developed the term "Potsdammerung" which was unique to his journal. "Potsdammerung" referred to the fall of Britain through the influence of the Potsdam Party.⁶⁰

The rhetoric of the editors was most often displayed when they discussed the future of the British and German navies. It was apparent to the editors that if Germany were to find her "place in the sun", she would develop an unrivalled navy. The inability of the British "Little Navyites" to comprehend this simple fact suggested that too many people in responsible positions were living in a "Naval Fool's Paradise". It was self-evident to the editors that "Naval Supremacy" and "National Safety" could not be separated. Britain could not trust the "Jackbootery" inherent in the policies of a nation "on the Make". Virtually any means would justify the end, for in this case, the failure of the government to recognize the reality of the German menace and the need for national strength would result in disaster.⁶¹

⁶⁰ National Review, 48, September, 1906, 10; 47, October, 1906, 178; 48, November, 1906, 384.

⁶¹ Observer, September 3, 1911, 6; Spectator, 102, March 20, 1909, 44; 97, September 8, 1906, 316; 103, July 4, 1909, 4; National Review, 53, April, 1909, 170; 52, October, 1908, 166; 51, May, 1908, 503.

Such Germanophobic rhetoric clearly displays the Conservative bias of the editors. They presented a Germany of awesome strength but this strength was always gauged in comparison with Liberal weakness. This rhetoric reflected their fear for Britain much more than it did their actual fear of Germany. Their comments and criticisms were not directed at the Germans but rather at the government of their own country. The Liberals were the objects of their abuse. The rhetoric of Germanophobia was the language of political battle between the Liberals and Conservatives.

The Germanophobia of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey was an expression of their political anxieties. They were responding to what they believed was a very dangerous domestic situation. Their choice of Germanophobia as a vehicle of expression reflected their journalistic skill. They knew how to attract attention. They were consummate editors who could conduct long and effective newspaper campaigns. They appreciated the concerns of their readers and knew how to turn those concerns to political advantage. The pervasive fear of Germany readily lent itself to editorial exploitation. The editors merely redirected that fear towards the Liberal government. The fact that a fear of Germany existed only reaffirmed their Conservative values. When Britain was once again strong

there would be no need for any fear and the first step towards that renewed strength was the re-establishment of a Conservative government.

CHAPTER FOUR

APPRENTICESHIP IN GERMANOPHOBIA 1899-1905

The editorial practice of linking Conservative fears of Liberal policy to national fears of German intentions was a product of a long apprenticeship in the use of Germanophobia. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had first to learn that British suspicions of Germany were sufficiently intense to be harnessed as a force which could alter government policy. Such a lesson was originally derived from the editors' expressions of legitimate concern about the proliferation of anti-British sentiment in Germany. During the period 1899 to 1905, this reflexive Germanophobia began to take on a new dimension which superficially resembled the popular Germanophobia which found expression in the half-penny dailies. Yet, unlike the popular press, the Germanophobia of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey was devoid of the belligerent racism and Kaiser-baiting so typical of the mass circulation newspapers. Instead, the three editors learned to exploit the image of a menacing Germany in order to give impact and immediacy to their partisan editorial opinions. The process by which they gained this expertise must be investigated for it will reveal the emergence of a distinctive and powerful variety of Germanophobia which has thus far eluded historical detection.

The outbreak of the South African War in October 1899 excited Britain's journalists. The euphoric expectations exhibited in the first few weeks of conflict quickly dissipated as reports of unanticipated military reverses reached London. British frustration reached its height by mid-December. During a single week the Boers inflicted three major defeats upon British forces. This "Black Week" shook British confidence at its foundations. The incredible had happened. The celebrated British army was being humiliated by a "handful of Boer farmers". The British government, under the leadership of the venerable Lord Salisbury, acted decisively in rectifying the situation in South Africa. Sir Redvers Buller was replaced as commander-in-chief by General Frederick Roberts with Herbert Kitchener as his chief of staff. Massive reinforcements were then quickly sent out from Britain in the hope of obtaining a decisive victory.¹

While this action by the Unionist government alleviated Britain's most pressing military problem, it gave rise to new concerns. Roberts' reinforcements had all but denuded Britain of any effective non-naval defensive force. Many elements of the British press questioned the

¹L. S. Amery, ed., The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902 (London, 1905), 3:331-34.

wisdom of leaving Britain so vulnerable in the face of a decidedly hostile Europe. Pro-Boer sentiment dominated the continent fuelling the fears of the boisterous "interventionist" press. Britain, they claimed, should expect an imminent invasion by one or a combination of her European neighbours.² The major disagreement in the press centred not on the possibility of invasion, but on the probable identity of the invader. France, Russia and Germany each had their nominees. Among those who came to believe that Germany represented the greatest menace to Britain were the three young journalists, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey.

In 1899, none of these three men had as yet reached journalistic prominence, although their talents were beginning to attract attention. Maxse had been the editor of the National Review for five years, and already his tenacity and his uncanny ability to tap informed sources had been demonstrated. His journal was a staunch defender of "British life" and his Conservative allegiance was fully established.³ Strachey had been in command of the Spectator for only a year but in that short time he had turned the weekly into the leading organ of Liberal Unionism.⁴ Like

²Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 190-226.

³Christian, "Leo Maxse and the National Review", 68-110.

⁴Morrell, "Strachey and the Spectator", 87-100.

his friend Maxse, he was a strong advocate of British imperialism and had no sympathy for Radical "Little Englanders". Garvin had just arrived in London but he had been preceded by a good reputation. Supported by the pro-Boer Liberal Unionist Leonard Courtney of the Fortnightly Review, Garvin soon established himself as one of the more gifted leader writers of the Daily Telegraph.⁵ During this year Garvin's political biases underwent a major transformation as he moved from his earlier Radicalism towards Conservatism. Significantly, before 1899, none of these men had followed the popular press lead by engaging in any form of journalism which might be called Germanophobic.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Boer War, Maxse visited Germany while on a tour of Europe. Although Anglophobia was a common occurrence in the European press, Maxse was shocked by the viciousness of German Anglophobia. He returned to Britain convinced that Germany was set upon the destruction of Britain and her empire and that any thoughts of a political agreement with her were foolhardy. In the November issue of his journal he reported that,

⁵Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 13-19.

It would indeed be strange if we had any illusions still left on the subject of Germany's feelings and policy toward this country, after the number of gratuitous object-lessons which have been afforded us. Bitter commercial rivals we have been for years, and now it would seem that the German Chauvinist has persuaded himself that the dissolution of the British Empire is almost within the range of practical politics, and that Germany ought to secure a reversionary interest in its assets. We affirm that German policy has lately been directed, in the first place, to inciting Russia to attack us . . . and, in the second place, after meeting with an unexpected failure, now attempts to levy political blackmail on us. . . .⁶

On this question of Britain's official attitude towards Germany, Maxse for the first and only time in his career, vigorously disagreed with Chamberlain. In his famous Leicester speech of November 30, the Colonial Secretary proposed an Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic alliance among Britain, Germany and the United States. This plan met a cool enough reception in both Britain and Germany, but Maxse wanted to be certain that this scheme was entirely dead.⁷ The National Review began a campaign to dissuade Britain from becoming "entangled" with Germany. Maxse feared that the men in power did not understand the virulent Anglophobia in Germany which provided the key to German intentions. The

⁶National Review, 34, November, 1899, 325.

⁷Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 2:659-60.

significance of the new German navy became patently clear for the German government was exploiting ". . . this Anglo-phobia to float a new fleet which is avowedly directed against ourselves".⁸

Earlier, Maxse had been alarmed over the 1898 German Navy Law. This apprehension was intensified by a second naval bill which was to be introduced into the Reichstag in 1900. A strong navy would give expression to Germany's ambitions while the Boer War afforded the occasion for the realization of German Weltpolitik. In an article entitled, "The Present Feeling in Germany Towards England", the National Review warned that Britain must be on guard against German Anglophobia.⁹ The article claimed that Britain dare not lose her naval supremacy for at that moment she would invite a German invasion. In his February editorial, Maxse further warned of a possible German-inspired continental alliance against Britain. To counteract this apparent German scheming, Britain would be forced to adopt a defensive foreign policy. The best method of accomplishing this policy was to open lines of communication with France and Russia, to

⁸National Review, 34, January, 1900, 655.

⁹Ibid, February, 1900, 867-874.

avoid all diplomatic approaches to Germany and, above all, "to keep our powder dry".¹⁰

The nightmare of a continental alliance against Britain continued to haunt Maxse as well as many others throughout the winter of 1900, but by spring the immediate danger seemed to have passed.¹¹ German plans, he claimed, had been thwarted. It was to be hoped that Britain had learned many valuable lessons from her winter of danger, not the least of which was that "Great Britain should remain clear of all entangling engagements with Germany, and, above all, should never support German interests against Russian interests".¹² Maxse's maxim was not to be followed.

In May of 1900 the Boxer rebellion broke out in China. The seriousness of this rebellion was magnified by the struggle in South Africa. Britain was militarily over-extended and had no hope of unilaterally rebuffing Russia's bid for territorial interests in China. The Yangtze Agreement

¹⁰Ibid., 811-12.

¹¹Edward T. Corp, "Sir Charles Hardinge and the Question of Intervention in the Boer War: An Episode in the Rise of Anti-German Feeling in the British Foreign Office", Journal of Modern History 51 (June, 1979):D1071-84.

¹²National Review, 35, April, 1900, 193.

of October 16 tacitly recognized British weakness. Britain and Germany agreed to work together to maintain an open trade policy in those areas over which they exercised commercial influence.¹³ Here was the situation which Maxse feared; Britain and Germany working in tandem against Russia. Yet the editorial policy of the National Review represented nothing if not realism in foreign affairs. When the possibility of the Yangtze Agreement was being considered Maxse bitterly opposed ". . . paying blackmail to the Berlin Government".¹⁴ After the signing of the agreement Maxse condemned the diplomatic myopia of Salisbury's government, but realizing that Britain had little alternative, laid the whole matter to rest.¹⁵

Strachey's conversion to Germanophobia was markedly slower than that of Maxse, reflecting to a large extent his own embattled political situation. Besides fighting a rear-guard action against the Liberal party's Home Rule aspirations, Strachey faced, by early 1899, a threat to his own fiscal orthodoxy. In a speech given on January 18, 1899, Chamberlain seriously questioned the validity of maintaining

¹³Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 2:711-46.

¹⁴National Review, 36, September, 1900, 5.

¹⁵Ibid., November, 1900, 328-29.

a policy of Free Trade in a world which was becoming increasingly protectionist.¹⁶ The Spectator immediately came to the defence of Free Trade arguing the value of maintaining principles in the face of temporary problems.¹⁷ This episode marked the beginning of the deterioration of relations between the two men, although the final break did not occur until 1903.

With the outbreak of war, the Spectator moved resolutely to the support of the Unionist government and the British war effort. Although Strachey reported the extent of Anglophobia in Europe, he did not immediately identify German Anglophobia as being any more threatening than that found in France or Russia. Throughout the spring of 1900, the Spectator followed the progress of the German naval bill without showing any signs of suspicion or hostility. In April, Strachey assailed Maxse's claim that Britain must abandon splendid isolation in order to form defensive alliances against Germany. But he likewise took issue with Chamberlain's claim that Britain should form an alliance with Germany.

¹⁶Times, January 19, 1899, 7.

¹⁷Spectator 82, January 21, 1899, 76.

We want to be friendly with all Powers who will be friendly with us, and should be most careful not to be lead into supporting any one State to the injury or depression of the others. At the present moment, Germany is undoubtedly the European Power most in the ascendant. That is per se right enough, and should in no way be regarded as a ground for trying to pull Germany down. At the same time, that ascendancy need not and should not be stimulated by artificial support from us.¹⁸

During the general election of October 1900, Strachey lent qualified support to the Unionist party. This support was based more on his dislike of the Liberal "Pro-Boers" than on any faith in the sagacity of Salisbury's administration. Strachey's unusual lack of commitment reflected the fatigue both he and the country experienced as war dragged on. His observation that ". . . the country is jaded, and for the moment feels little or no enthusiasm for men or causes", illustrates the lethargy which permeated many of Britain's leading journals.¹⁹

Strachey's lethargy vanished a few months later when, with the most peculiar timing, he found himself in the ranks of the Germanophobes. The Kaiser's visit to his dying

¹⁸Ibid., February 17, 1900, 226; March 10, 334; March 31, 434; April 28, 586.

¹⁹Ibid., 85, September 22, 1900, 357.

grandmother and his emotional conduct during her funeral caused many Germanophobic newspapers to reverse their attitudes towards him.²⁰ William was no longer depicted as "the cunning King of the Huns" but as a "loyal and loving grandson". The intimate relationship between the British and German royal families was given much play while outstanding disagreements were all but forgotten. Alarmed, perhaps, by the effect such reports might have upon Britain's relations with other nations, or worried that Britain was being drawn into a German orbit, Strachey moved immediately to qualify the outpouring of praise for the Kaiser. The editor even qualified the words of the King himself. Edward conferred upon the German Crown prince the coveted Order of the Garter. Strachey commented that the honour

. . . was a very proper sentiment, but it must not of course, be construed to mean that we have entered upon any agreement with Germany of a nature hostile or aggressive towards other Powers. On the Continent, Sovereigns and statesmen are too apt to talk of being leagued to secure peace when they mean war, but needless to say there was no such sinister meaning behind the King's words.²¹

William's departure from Britain on February 5 saw many articles and editorials predicting a new age of under-

²⁰See Times, Daily Telegraph, Morning Post, Daily News, and Pall Mall Gazette news reports and editorials for February 5 and 6, 1901.

²¹Spectator 86, February 2, 1901, 158.

standing between Britain and Germany. Strachey refused to join in this chorus of optimism, preferring instead to exercise the caution so typical of his journalism.

We are delighted at the better understanding with Germany, and realise that a large part of it is due to the deep family feelings of the Emperor, but we must not forget also that Germany is keenly interested in coming to a good understanding with us, and that there is not the slightest ground for supposing that we must make any sacrifices to obtain German friendship.²²

The goodwill the Kaiser's visit elicited in Britain was not reciprocated in Germany. The sympathies of the German press lay solidly with the Boers and they expressed great displeasure with their Emperor's apparent friendliness with the Boers' oppressors.²³ Strachey was surprised and angered by the hostile German response to the Kaiser's state visit. It was the great outpouring of Anglophobia from the German press which pushed Strachey into the camp of the Germanophobes. Without awaiting further developments, Strachey set about warning his fellow countrymen of the menacing German hatred for Britain.²⁴

²²Ibid., February 9, 1901, 190.

²³Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 235-36.

²⁴Spectator 86, March 23, 1901, 337.

The reaction of the German press to the Kaiser's visit excited the fears of the third of our journalists. By 1901, Garvin still had no journal of his own but his personal views can be gauged by studying the works written under the pseudonyms of "Calchas" in the Fortnightly Review, and "X" and "Pollex" in the National Review. German Anglophobia convinced Garvin that hatred of Britain ". . . now belongs to the whole category of German fixed ideas".²⁵ He realized that this development menaced his own country, but he was one of the few who saw that Germany could also be affected. For Garvin the real cause of Anglo-German tension was not so much economic or naval rivalry, although these were of great concern, but simultaneous British strategic weakness. The nation which could first conclude a treaty with either France or Russia would emerge as the most secure. In the light of this situation the Germans' blatant Anglophobia appeared foolishly self-destructive. Too much noise from the German press might rouse the Salisbury government from its slumber.

How long does Teutonic Anglophobia suppose that isolation for all practical purposes could be averted in Europe if England were driven to range herself with Russia and France -- a change which would improve our relations with the United States -- and Italy were withdrawn in that case from the Triple Alliance?²⁶

²⁵Fortnightly Review, 75, April 1901, 577.

²⁶Ibid., 579.

Garvin perceptively identified the cycle of fear in which both the German and British press were being enveloped. In an article entitled, "The Crisis with Germany and Its Results", Garvin sympathetically described the mire in which the presses of both nations were caught. Yet even he found no way out of this trap and was forced to continue moving with the current of events.

The vague and apathetic ill-will of the masses against rival countries is defined and aggravated by journals endeavouring to be effective. When the public mind is successfully excited, the journals are stimulated to further effectiveness. Finally the agencies and the correspondents on both sides intervene with a delectable exchange of extracts. The countries which began by writing of each other end by writing at each other, and the vicious circle is complete.²⁷

Thus, by early 1901, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey fully subscribed to the opinion that Germany represented a powerful threat to British welfare. They had been drawn to this position by the surge in German Anglophobia which had developed at the outset of the Boer War.²⁸ This was very much a reflexive Germanophobia. The three men were responding to the provocations from the German press. They were not, as was the

²⁷Fortnightly Review, 76, December, 1901, 934-948.

²⁸Pauline R. Anderson, The Background of Anti-English Feeling in Germany, 1890-1902 (Washington, 1939), 285-360.

case with the popular press, engaging in provocative and inflammatory journalism on their own accord. Yet they were not satisfied merely to react to German press initiatives. They sincerely believed that Britain was in danger and that it was their professional responsibility, as the "watch-dogs" of the nation, to sound the alarm. They began what Maxse described as a "Campaign of Education". There must be no doubt in the minds of the British people, and particularly in the mind of the British government, that Germany posed a real threat. The editors' objective could be stated quite simply -- to be forewarned is to be forearmed. The first step was to make their nation conscious of the fact that the Anglophobia in the German press was being stirred by the German government. In this effort all three journalists participated, although the efforts of Maxse and Garvin exceeded those of Strachey. The National Review outlined what was now one of the tenets of the three men's Germanophobia -- the conspiracy of the German leaders.

The genesis of the Anglophobia movement, which has now reached such a grotesque pitch throughout the German Empire, is not, as is commonly supposed, a spontaneous uprising of the people against the reputed misdeeds of the British, nor has it spread upwards from the bottom. On the contrary, it has

been spread downwards from the top; and though the top may at moments be nervous as to the inconvenient excesses of the bottom, it is the top which is the causa causans.²⁹

Garvin's articles frequently relayed the same message. From the very beginning Garvin accepted the inevitability of Anglo-German hostility. His conception of Social Darwinism, as the eternal struggle between great powers, dictated that

German hostility, in a word, does not depend upon the Boer War. It was not excited by that cause and will not disappear with it. It is permanent, because rooted in a conscious rivalry of interests such as has hardly existed before between two peoples.³⁰

In October 1901, the campaign of the editors was lent unwitting assistance by a speech from the ubiquitous Chamberlain. Replying to Campbell-Bannerman's charges that the British army was using "methods of barbarism" in its war against the Boers, Chamberlain claimed that the army was doing no more than the Germans had done during the Franco-Prussian war.³¹ The German press exploded in outrage. How dare Chamberlain compare Germany's battle for nationhood with

²⁹National Review, 38, December, 1901, 938.

³⁰Fortnightly Review, 76, December, 1901, 938.

³¹For Campbell-Bannerman's speech see Times, June 15, 1901 and for Chamberlain's speech see ibid., October 26, 1901.

Britain's war for colonial acquisitions.³² The furor Teutonicus which was directed at Britain came not only from the press but also from the Reichstag and, most tellingly, from the Chancellor himself.³³ Here was the irrefutable proof of the official nature and sanction of hostility towards Britain. Anglophobia was, as Maxse noted, ". . . the normal development of a great national movement".³⁴ The British press, with the notable exceptions of the pro-Boer Manchester Guardian and the radical Daily News, newly acquired by the Quaker George Cadbury, rushed to the colonial secretary's defence. Excited by the polemics in both the British and German press, Anglo-German relations rapidly deteriorated.

The press battles continued throughout November and December and into January 1902. As unedifying as this episode may have been, it did have a significant diplomatic result. In a speech given at Birmingham on January 6, Chamberlain completely renounced any hopes he had for an Anglo-German understanding. He declared that Britain must go it on her

³²Anderson, Anti-English Feeling in Germany, 334-37.

³³Michael Balfour, The Kaiser and His Times (Harmondsworth, 1964), 235-36.

³⁴National Review, 38, December, 1901, 478.

own in "a splendid isolation".³⁵ The vast majority of the British press, both Liberal and Conservative, were delighted by this announcement. Maxse was in the forefront of those who praised this new development. He solemnly declared that Britain's relations with Germany were ". . . more satisfactory than they have been for several years. We have ceased to be a diplomatic satellite of that Power, and appear to have closed a perilous and humiliating chapter in our history".³⁶

Chamberlain's indignant call for the maintenance of splendid isolation did not tell the whole truth, for on January 30, 1902, Britain signed an alliance with the government of Japan. Although this diplomatic development was not due entirely to the deterioration of Anglo-German relations, it was certainly facilitated by the unfavourable perceptions of Germany.³⁷ The British press was divided in its response to the Anglo-Japanese alliance. At best, the alliance was a mixed blessing. By strengthening Britain's position in China and the Pacific, the government risked antagonizing the Russians further, particularly on the Indian border. Increased Russian hostility could only stiffen the Dual

³⁵Times, January 7, 1902, 6.

³⁶National Review, 38, February, 1902, 624; see also Fortnightly Review, 77, February, 1902, 206-16.

³⁷G. W. Monger, "The End of Isolation: Britain, Germany and Japan, 1900-1902", Transactions of the Royal

Alliance against Britain. If Britain could not come to a better understanding with France, she risked continued isolation from the continent. Such a situation could work to no one's advantage save Germany. This line of thought dominated the Spectator's appraisal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Maxse, on the other hand, took an entirely different approach. Disregarding the ramifications of the new alliance for future Anglo-Russian relations, Maxse proudly claimed that the alliance ". . . signifies our emancipation from the German yoke which we have borne so meekly for so many years".³⁸

The spring of 1902 witnessed the victorious, if tardy and tarnished, conclusion of the war in South Africa. Long before the guns had ceased a great cry had gone up for reforms in the army in particular and the nation in general. We have already observed that Garvin, Maxse and Strachey played significant roles in the quest for national efficiency.³⁹ All three men believed that a step had been taken in the right direction when on July 11, 1902, Arthur Balfour succeeded his

Historical Society, 5th Series, 13, 1963, 103-21.

³⁸National Review, 39, March 1902, 1.

³⁹See Chapter III.

uncle as prime minister. Strachey enthused that ". . . no British statesman ever became Prime Minister with such complete acquiescence among both friends and foes".⁴⁰ Maxse called Balfour "the man of the hour", while Garvin described him as "a leader born and bred".⁴¹ But this enthusiasm for the new prime minister quickly waned. Balfour failed to inject fresh blood into the largely discredited Unionist cabinet. Virtually all of the press complained of the retention of what was generally known as "the old gang". Indeed, the only member of the cabinet who could count on any widespread support was Chamberlain but this was more than offset by his journalistic detractors. The new prime minister's wisdom was seriously questioned. The journalists' lack of faith in his diplomatic abilities showed itself a few months later when it became known that the Kaiser was to pay a visit to Britain in November.

The extent to which Strachey had become committed to Germanophobia became clear in the articles he wrote prior to the Kaiser's visit. Strachey was deeply suspicious of Germany's intentions. What had the Kaiser in mind when he

⁴⁰Spectator, 89, July 19, 1902, 72.

⁴¹National Review, 39, August, 1902, 849 and Fortnightly Review, 74, December, 1902, 897.

met the new prime minister? Strachey believed that the Kaiser's intentions were simple enough to deduce.

A very little reflection will show that the German Emperor has the very strongest inducements to try to obtain a hold over our foreign policy sufficient to make the world believe that Germany and England would stand together in a moment of stress. If he can achieve such a result . . . his present precarious position is greatly benefitted.⁴²

Two weeks later, Strachey's warning became more direct. He clearly feared the Kaiser's demonstrated ability to move popular opinion in Germany's favour.

While the German Emperor is amusing the British bulldog with pats on the head and "Good dog!" blandishments and the genial offer of his best biscuits, his servants in the background are quite openly getting ready sticks and chains and muzzles with which, when the proper time comes, to capture the dog and make sure that he will bite no more.⁴³

The Kaiser's arrival in Britain was greeted with yet a further warning from the Spectator.

To keep Russia and Britain and France and Britain apart, and further, if possible, to make Russia and France believe that Britain is tied to Germany, and so is incapable of coming to any agreement with those Powers, has become the most pressing interest of Germany. The general object, then, of the German Emperor's visit may safely be assumed to be the making of ill-blood between us and Russia and France.⁴⁴

⁴²Spectator, 89, October 4, 1902, 481-84.

⁴³Ibid., October 18, 1902, 558.

⁴⁴Ibid., November 8, 1902, 688-90.

Strachey's warnings were welcomed with the greatest appreciation by the National Review. Maxse, momentarily abandoning his usually firm rule of never following other journalists' initiatives, praised the Spectator for its perspicacity.

The subject of our foreign relations has been admirably dealt with in two recent articles in the Spectator, which can hardly be accused of being governed by anti-German prejudices. The Spectator confirms our information to the effect that it is "the fixed intention of the German Emperor to try to entangle us in some form of alliance, or at any rate to make the rest of the world think that we are so entangled," and it discusses his motives with convincing lucidity. The Triple Alliance has lost its reality, and would collapse at any serious crisis. It is therefore only natural that a Power in such a very "precarious position" as Germany should want our benevolent assistance, but, as the Spectator points out, we should ask ourselves "will it be worth our while to agree to her overtures?"⁴⁵

When the Kaiser's visit came to an end without any announcements of a political character, Maxse was overjoyed. He complimented the Times, the Morning Post, the Daily Mail, the Globe, and most of all the Spectator for voicing the strong desire that the Kaiser's visit should result in no new political understanding.⁴⁶ It seemed to Maxse that

⁴⁵National Review, 40, November, 1902, 319.

⁴⁶Ibid., December, 1902, 449.

Downing Street was finally emancipated from the Wilhelmstrasse. This was vitally important to him as it was to Garvin and Strachey. Britain must not only be free from diplomatic engagements with Germany but must also appear to be diplomatically unencumbered. This near fanatical concern for appearance was one of the earliest distinguishing marks between the Germanophobia of the Unionist and the Liberal-Radical quality press. Whereas the latter was anxious to avoid the reality of an Anglo-German engagement, the Unionist press, and Garvin, Maxse and Strachey in particular, worked to dispell even the illusion of such an engagement. In this work they were soon frustrated.

By mid-December it became known that Balfour had agreed to join the German government in a debt-collecting sortie against President Castro's Venezuela.⁴⁷ The Unionist press was incensed. Had not the British government learned after the Yangtze Agreement that Germany should not be trusted? What machinations had taken place to entangle Britain in the web of German foreign diplomacy? With near total unanimity the British press condemned the cabinet decision.⁴⁸ This episode became known to the press as

⁴⁷For the diplomacy of the Venezuelan episode see British Documents 2:153-174.

⁴⁸The chief exceptions were the Edinburgh Scotsman and the Daily Telegraph.

the "Venezuelan Mess", the title originating, appropriately enough, from a bitter article written by Maxse.

We hoped to rejoice our readers at the opening of the New Year by the welcome announcement that the British Empire had at last been liberated from that malign and mysterious influence which has so long dominated our Foreign Policy. Providence, however, intervened at the eleventh hour, and this country finds itself -- at the very moment when freedom seemed to be in sight -- once more relegated to the old familiar Anglo-German treadmill. It would be idle to disguise the fact that it is a bitter disappointment to those of us who have been humbly endeavouring to educate our masters to the desirability of having an independent Foreign Policy. . . . What can be said in defence of statesmen who turn their backs on all the lessons of the past . . .? ⁴⁹

Strachey was among the many editors who professed shock at what they viewed as the government's flagrant disregard for public opinion. The Spectator attacked the government during all of January and February of 1903. Strachey consistently made the point that the dislike of the German "alliance" was a non-partisan issue which served to unite all political factions against the government.

Nothing has been more striking in connection with the Venezuelan imbroglio than the failure of the Government to diagnose and to comprehend public opinion in this country and in America. . . . They

⁴⁹National Review, 40, January, 1903, 669.

evidently did not realise that the British public would resent the Alliance not merely as a false step in policy, but as something so utterly distasteful that it would call forth loud protests from the most loyal supporters of the Administration, and for the time submerge party distinctions and unite the whole nation in its disgust and indignation.⁵⁰

Strachey's claim that the Venezuela affair submerged party distinctions was only partially correct. Although papers of all shades of political opinion opposed working hand in glove with the Germans their reasons for doing so differed. The attitudes expressed by Maxse and Strachey were uniquely Unionist for they represented a concern for Britain's image in the eyes of her European neighbours. These men, quite clearly, were sensitive to Britain's diplomatic image. Maxse wrote of Germany's ability ". . .to parade John Bull as a satellite, and of showing all of Europe that a so-called Great Power is so abject in its attitude towards Germany that the more offensively it is treated the more obsequious it becomes".⁵¹ Strachey made his case even more firmly. "It is very nearly come to this, that he who is the friend of Germany is the enemy of the rest of the world".⁵²

⁵⁰Spectator, 90, January 17, 1903, 76.

⁵¹National Review, 41, March, 1903, 5.

⁵²Spectator, 90, February 7, 1903, 204.

Balfour's government enjoyed a short reprieve from such journalistic pressure with the concluding of the Venezuela treaty of February 14. In a public address given at Liverpool, Balfour further mollified his critics by announcing the reorganization of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Although neither Balfour in his speech, nor Garvin, Maxse and Strachey in their accounts of the speech, specifically mentioned the German menace, it is clear that all of them believed that Britain was taking a deliberate step to protect herself against Germany.⁵³ This belief was later confirmed with the publication of the Elgin War Commission Report on August 25 of that year.⁵⁴ The organization of Britain's military had been a haphazard affair. Balfour's proposal appeared to be a decisive move to ensure that there would be no repetition of the South African blunders. Maxse gave his full support to Balfour's proposal calling it ". . . an exemplary illustration of statesmanship".⁵⁵ Garvin was no less laudatory, referring to the establishment of the committee as ". . . the beginning of a new era of sanity".⁵⁶

⁵³Times, February 14, 1903, 11.

⁵⁴Nicholas d'Ombraïn, War Machinery and High Policy, Defence Administration in Peacetime Britain 1902-1914 (London, 1973), 25-73. See also Report of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa.

⁵⁵National Review, 41, March, 1903, 97.

⁵⁶Fortnightly Review, 79, June, 1903, 960.

Strachey concurred with his colleagues' opinions and offered Balfour his warmest congratulations.⁵⁷

The prime minister's period of grace was short-lived. In March 1903, the German Bagdad Railway Company sought the aid of British financiers in securing a substantial loan and the cooperation of the British government in gaining a rail terminus at Kuwait.⁵⁸ Encouraged by Lansdowne, the cabinet was prepared to look favourably upon this venture for it was felt that British participation would guarantee at least a small amount of control.⁵⁹ At the same time, Maxse was in Paris renewing his profitable contacts with important French diplomats and politicians. One of these contacts was M. Constans, the French Ambassador to Constantinople. Constans informed Maxse that the British government was prepared to aid a German company in building a railway to the Persian Gulf. Maxse rushed back to London to "sound the alarm".⁶⁰

The April edition of the National Review vigorously assailed the government for what it called the "Mesopotamian

⁵⁷Spectator, 90, February 21, 1903, 281.

⁵⁸British Documents 2:175, 179-81.

⁵⁹Wolf, Diplomatic History of the Bagdad Railway, 42.

⁶⁰L. J. Maxse, Germany on the Brain or the Obsession

Mess". What Maxse lacked in facts he made up for with polemics. The government had been duped again, but Maxse was determined that this would be the last time. He called for "Home Rule in Foreign Policy", claiming that Britain was being forced to work for German colonial interests. Lord Lansdowne was attacked for trying to convince British financiers that their interests were best served by giving money away to the Germans. The National Review then called for an explosion of public protest against the British government.⁶¹

Maxse knew that there was hope of protest from some of his fellow journalists. Directly upon his return from Paris, Maxse sent a note to Strachey asking him to come immediately to Ryder Street.⁶² Maxse appears to have informed his friend of his findings in Paris and solicited the Spectator's aid in the battle against the Bagdad Railway scheme. The next issue of Strachey's paper criticized the

of a Crank: Gleanings from the National Review 1899-1914 (London, 1915), 90.

⁶¹National Review, 41, April, 1903, 170.

⁶²Strachey Papers, 6/2/1, Maxse to Strachey, March 27, 1903.

government in much the same way as had the National Review.

There is only one way in which to treat the German propositions as regards the Baghdad line, whether made direct or through able financiers, British or cosmopolitan, and that is to have nothing whatever to do with them. This being so, the Government, if they are wise, will allay public anxiety by giving the country an early assurance that the rumours as to their contemplated action have no foundation. . . .⁶³

The Daily Mail and the Morning Post followed with comparable articles on the Bagdad affair -- perhaps inspired by Maxse's personal initiative.⁶⁴ In the following days other London papers joined the cause to create a monumental outcry against British participation in the Bagdad Railway. On April 7, Gibson Bowles, a maverick Unionist M.P. and a frequent contributor to the National Review, pressed Balfour, in the Commons, as to the position of the government in regard to German overtures about the railway.⁶⁵ Balfour replied unsatisfactorily that the government was merely considering the proposal submitted by the Bagdad Railway Company. Yet in a private letter from Lord Lansdowne to

⁶³Spectator, 90, April 4, 1903, 520.

⁶⁴Daily Mail, April 4, 1903, 4; Morning Post, April 6, 1903, 5.

⁶⁵Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th Series, 120:1247-8.

Sir Ernest Cassel, one of the British financiers involved in the Bagdad project, Lansdowne conceded that public pressure was forcing the government to curtail continuation of further consideration of the company's proposal.

. . . a serious attempt was apparently being made to discredit the enterprise and to render it impossible for H(is) M(ajesty's) Government to associate themselves in any way with it, upon the ground that it was closely connected with the German government and detrimental to British interests. We felt that, until we were better able to judge the proportions which this hostile movement might assume, it would be desirable that we should avoid giving it any further encouragement.⁶⁶

No soothing words from Balfour were enough to stop the press campaign. Having been too often "betrayed", the Germanophobe press could not be put off so easily. Although the government failed to consider the international ramifications of cooperation with the Germans, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were very much alive to the effect British actions might have upon Britain's relations with Russia. In an angry article entitled, "The Baghdad Entanglement", Strachey voiced a commonly shared fear that Germany might be drawing Britain into a potential conflict with Russia. He reiterated

⁶⁶British Documents 2:185. Gooch and Temperley identify this "serious attempt . . . to discredit the enterprise" as the efforts of the National Review and the Spectator.

that he was not writing out of ". . . any foolish prejudice in regard to Germany", but although it might be worth Germany's while to quarrel with Russia ". . . it decidedly is not worth ours".⁶⁷

On April 23, Bowles once again pressed Balfour in the Commons as to the government's intended reply to the German company. This time Balfour stated that the government would not support the company's proposal on the grounds that the company was predominantly under German control and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of Parliament.⁶⁸ This may not have been the real reason for the government's decision, but that was of little consequence. The efforts of the German company had been soundly defeated and Strachey was delighted to

. . . record the decision of the Government to refuse their assent to the overtures made to them in regard to participation in the Baghdad Railway scheme. . . . The catastrophe was prevented not so much through the carefulness and skill of the driver as owing to the remonstrances and warnings from the guard whose special business it is to blow the post-horn, -- i.e. the Press.⁶⁹

In a letter of congratulations from Maxse to Strachey the underlying fear of the editors was clearly

⁶⁷Spectator, 90, April 18, 1903, 596-7.

⁶⁸Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 4th Series, 121:222.

⁶⁹Spectator, 90, April 25, 1903, 645.

revealed. They had enjoyed a brief victory, but they believed that what they had done had far reaching diplomatic consequences.

The Spec. was magnificent on the Baghdad Railway. If we had not "blown the gaff", the British Public would have been presented with a fait accompli in the beginning of April, and the war between Russia and England, for which Germany has worked for the last twenty years would have been brought a step nearer.⁷⁰

This harmony of effort among Garvin, Maxse and Strachey was very shortly to be replaced by the clash of divergent interests. On May 15, Chamberlain delivered his celebrated Birmingham speech which proposed that Britain abandon Free Trade for what he described as tariff reform. Garvin and Maxse immediately moved to support Chamberlain. The National Review served as the platform for both these men. Realizing that the argument for tariff reform would have to be presented in a careful, well documented fashion, Maxse began to include large special supplements in his monthly publication. Strachey responded to these efforts with a clarion call to all true Free Traders. His Spectator quickly became a leading organ of the Free Trade movement. Not surprisingly, the National Review became Strachey's primary target.

⁷⁰Strachey Papers, 10/9/6, Maxse to Strachey, April 21, 1903.

The journals continued to battle over fiscal policy into the spring of 1904. Even the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war provided little more than a small diversion. None of the men were keen to see a war in the Pacific but all maintained that Britain must honour her treaty obligations to Japan.⁷¹ The journalists' sensitivity to Britain's diplomatic image during this war reflected their concern that their country should appear trustworthy. This would be essential if Britain were to secure a strong continental arrangement which could off-set the powerful German position. In April, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey saw the realization of one of their most cherished dreams.

On April 8, 1904, the British and French governments signed the famous Entente Cordiale.⁷² The entente settled all major outstanding Anglo-French colonial disputes, but more important, it represented a true diplomatic revolution.⁷³

⁷¹National Review, 42, January, 1904, 666-67; Spectator, 92, February 13, 1904, 244; Fortnightly Review, 81, March, 1904, 415-30.

⁷²The text of the Entente Cordiale is to be found in British Documents 2:374-98.

⁷³Williamson, The Politics of Grand Strategy, 15-29.

The editors believed that Britain had finally realized the need for a friend in Europe and had chosen France over Germany. The nature of this revolution was not immediately appreciated by all. Significantly, the Liberal press -- imperialist and radical alike -- viewed the entente only in terms of its colonial ramifications. The editorials in the Daily News, the Daily Chronicle, the Westminster Gazette and the Manchester Guardian spoke only of the colonial benefits to be derived from an understanding with France. They looked forward to a secure empire and a reduction of imperial expenditures.⁷⁴ Such facile optimism was not shared by Garvin, Maxse and Strachey for they saw the entente in an entirely different light.

All three journalists greeted the news of the entente not merely as a single victory, but more important, as a vindication of their whole campaign since the Boer war. It had been during that war that the three men had independently determined that Britain must settle her outstanding grievances with at least one major power other than Germany. The countries which they selected as possible candidates for reconciliation were Russia and France, although it was the

⁷⁴Daily News, April 9, 1904, 6; Daily Chronicle, April 11, 1904, 4; Westminster Gazette, April 11, 1904, 5; Manchester Guardian, April 11, 1904, 5.

former that had received the earliest consideration. It was felt that if Britain's interests in India and China were secured by treaty, then British energies could be concentrated against potential German threats.⁷⁵ The signing of the Anglo-Japanese treaty forced the three men to give primary consideration to an Anglo-French treaty, though they continued to work for better relations with Russia. The basis of their appeal was that since Germany threatened both French and British interests, a defensive understanding between the two nations was highly desirable. The success of Edward VII's state visit to France in March 1903 immediately seemed to place Anglo-French relations on a more amiable footing.⁷⁶ The journalists quickly exploited this situation by calling upon the government to follow up the good work of the King.⁷⁷ Thus, when the entente was formally signed, the journalists could express a great deal of personal satisfaction. Their

⁷⁵See in particular, Garvin's article, "The German Danger in the Far East", National Review, 36, October, 1900, 178-95 and Strachey's "British Foreign Policy", Spectator, 87, November 2, 1901, 648-49.

⁷⁶British Documents, 2:364-73.

⁷⁷National Review, 41, May, 1903, 351-52; Spectator, 90, May 2, 1903, 688.

view of Britain's diplomatic position appeared to have been completely vindicated. The myth of Britain as a German pawn had been dispelled and British statesmen could come to terms with their French counterparts. "After all," as Maxse noted, "it was only natural that the French should view us with the deepest suspicion so long as we behaved like secret members of the Triple Alliance, and guarantors of the odious Treaty of Frankfurt."⁷⁸

There was also a rare satisfaction with Balfour. The journalists could feel that the prime minister was awakening to the diplomatic realities of the day. Although none of the men were happy about Balfour's uncertain leadership in the tariff reform debate, he had at least obtained a measure of security for Britain. On the domestic scene, his efforts were considerably less credible. His cabinet was breaking up and his party was being battered in by-elections.⁷⁹ Yet the three journalists, including Maxse, believed that the real problem stemmed from Balfour's "retainers" and not the leader himself. This attitude is revealed in a letter sent to Garvin from Maxse following the signing of the entente.

⁷⁸National Review, 41, May, 1903, 351-52; Spectator, May 2, 1903, 688.

⁷⁹John Ramsden, The Age of Balfour and Baldwin, 1902-1940 (London, 1978), 13-14.

As before I think we should bite the people about Balfour leaving him alone as far as we can. Since we last had a talk I happened to meet him at a dinner where there was only one other man besides my host, and we had a very long talk until about midnight on all sorts of things, mainly foreign Policy, and the impression I got was that if only Balfour saw more "white men" he might become a white man. He seemed to me to be curiously receptive, though of course one may be misled by that very delightful and appreciative manner, but I had it out with him over the Baghdad Railway and other things, and came away regretting that he lives so much among sycophants and rotters. We touched on Preference, but I felt that he never really grasped its importance, and this is where the trouble lies. We must make him realize its importance. In the course of argument he did accidentally admit that "the German Navy is directed against England", so I think we have not wholly laboured in vain, because only a year ago he was laughing at this idea.⁸⁰

The generally felt relief about the entente was not unmixed with concern for the future safety of Britain. Strachey's report on the signing of the entente had expressed a view similar to that of Maxse. Yet Strachey added another element which, although it appeared to have little significance at the time, indicates that he was sensitive to the variety of interpretations one might make of the entente. His report can be seen as a warning to the Liberal press that the entente was not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end.

⁸⁰ Garvin Papers, Maxse to Garvin, May 14, 1904.

We have no belief in Utopias, or in those sudden improvements in human nature which, in the judgment of enthusiasts, will one day enable the nations to disarm; but we wish to point out, and to point out strongly, the immense advance in common-sense which such arrangements indicate.⁸¹

Garvin also warmly applauded the new era of Anglo-French understanding but he, too, warned that the Germans would be furious about the recent diplomatic developments. The entente was not the great guarantee of peace which the Liberal press claimed, for the Germans would surely respond to it by yet another increase in the size of their fleet. The chief value of the entente, for Garvin, was that it freed Britain from petty colonial bickering and allowed her time and money to prepare for the real peril which at that moment was being constructed in German dockyards.⁸²

Though Garvin, Maxse and Strachey could claim that sensible realism had won a skirmish in April, the "war" had yet to be won as the fragile Anglo-French entente was only the first step towards a more secure and reasonable foreign policy. What was required was a firm alliance with France which would serve notice to the Germans that both Britain and France were prepared to resist German attempts at

⁸¹Spectator, 92, April 16, 1904, 592.

⁸²Fortnightly Review, 81, May, 1904, 765-77.

European hegemony. Nothing short of an alliance, they feared, would prevent the Germans from trying to regain the upper hand. Such a position set these three men apart from all manner of Liberal press opinion and distinguished even from the great majority of their Unionist colleagues.

The next logical move for the Germans, they believed, was to break the new entente before it had time to develop further. King Edward's visit to Kiel in June was the occasion for renewed warnings about German intentions. As usual, Maxse led the chorus of Cassandras.

It is highly important for unofficial England to appreciate the temper and policy of Germany at the present time because . . . there is every reason to anticipate in the near future yet another effort by the German Government . . . to re-establish that quasi-suzerainty over British policy which it exercised until a year ago. . . . we cannot help fearing that as Downing Street remained the unquestioning victim of the Wilhelmstrasse for an entire generation -- it is liable to relapse should the watchdogs of the Press at any moment relax their vigilance.⁸³

Strachey warned that the Germans would attempt to use the King's visit to embark upon a new Anglo-German project. Even if this did not have the effect of breaking the entente, it would certainly detract from its value. A new cooperative venture comparable to those which had concerned Venezuela and Persia would, Strachey claimed, free the Germans from

⁸³National Review, 43, June, 1904, 528.

their present diplomatic isolation and undo the efforts of British statesmanship. The entente, according to Strachey, had been the best piece of work done in foreign affairs for the last fifty years. ". . . it would be the height of folly to detract from it . . . by committing a bêtise with Germany."⁸⁴

The depth of Garvin's concern can be measured by an article he wrote entitled, "The New German Intrigue: A Note of Warning". In spite of the fact that Britain's Japanese ally was at war with Russia, Garvin continued to press for the inclusion of that country in the Anglo-French entente. He firmly believed that the entente would have no real defensive value until the German's room for diplomatic manoeuvring had been completely restricted.

Either our rapprochement with the Republic must in the long run be extended by an understanding with the ally of the Republic, or the entente cordiale will not be permanent. Either France and Russia must both be reconciled to England, or Berlin will pursue with more tenacity than ever, the old plan of manipulating both France and Russia against England.⁸⁵

The Entente Cordiale was not the only cause for guarded optimism in 1904. Both the government and the nation appeared to be awakening to the need for a militarily pre-

⁸⁴Spectator, 92, June 4, 1904, 866.

⁸⁵Fortnightly Review, 82, September, 1904, 385-402.

pared Britain. The publication of the Esher Committee report in April was met with strong approval. The report proposed among other things that an Army Council be formed and a permanent secretary for the Committee of Imperial Defence be established. Such modifications in the existing system would give the British military the capacity of strategic planning similar to that of the German General Staff.⁸⁶ Maxse was particularly pleased with this prospect.

No scheme devised by human hands can possibly be flawless, and it is not difficult for fault-finders to pick holes in the present plan. But the governing fact is that if the Esher Report be rejected, we may say good-bye to any prospect of putting the British Army on a serious footing, while if it be adopted we shall certainly have an infinitely more efficient force than we have ever had before, or than any of us ever hoped to have.⁸⁷

The journalists also lent extensive support to Lord Roberts' work for the National Service League. By 1904, Roberts had resigned from the army in order to dedicate himself to the campaign for compulsory conscription. Garvin and Maxse worked with Roberts in order to get conscription accepted as an official policy of the Unionist party. Such efforts met with as much controversy as cooperation. In

⁸⁶d'Ombrian, War Machinery and High Policy, 35-45.

⁸⁷National Review, 43, April, 1904, 192.

January, 1905, Garvin began his brief and unhappy editorship of the tariff reform weekly, the Outlook. In the first issue under Garvin's tutelage, the Outlook carried a long article espousing the virtues of Roberts' cause.

National service is first of all desirable in the interests of the individual whom it would make a more efficient individual for all purposes. Next we need it in the interests of peace since the belief in our military weakness brought on the South African war, and may yet precipitate a greater conflict that would otherwise have been avoided. Our radical reactionaries, who tell us that we should not adopt manhood service for the quaint reason that it would give us "too much power", forget that you cannot have too much power if the preservation of peace is in the first instance your object. Again, we advocate manhood training in the interests of those assumed to be most opposed to it -- the "blue-water school". The admiralty in time of war would be released from an oppressive anxiety and safeguarded against a very serious danger.⁸⁸

Unlike Garvin and Maxse, Strachey did not lend unqualified support to Roberts. He remained suspicious of conscription, believing that a voluntary militia was more in keeping with British traditions. Despite the philosophical difference, the three men enjoyed a close working relationship on the issue of military preparedness. This harmony was also to be seen in their attitude towards the navy. All three journalists believed that the British navy must never forfeit its world supremacy. On October 21, their concern

⁸⁸Outlook, 15, January 7, 1905, 9.

in this area was greatly reduced by Balfour's appointment of Admiral Fisher as First Sea Lord. Fisher was one of the most dynamic officers in the navy and was very aware of the threat posed by the growing German navy. One of his earliest actions as First Sea Lord was to order a redistribution of the fleet, concentrating its strength in the Channel and the North Sea.⁸⁹ The journalists fully approved of this action believing that the policy was a recognition of political realities.

The Board of Admiralty are to be congratulated on their new scheme for the strategic distribution of the Fleet. The old distribution of our ships of war had become obsolete, and a new one was imperatively demanded to meet modern conditions, not only as regards steam, but also as regards our foreign policy.⁹⁰

The expectations of the editors for Britain's military and diplomatic security seemed bright in the early months of 1905. The domestic situation, by contrast, was in a deplorable state. The Unionist government was disintegrating. Balfour seemed incapable of firm leadership.⁹¹ The three editors temporarily abandoned their Germanophobia as they busied themselves with the battle over fiscal reform. Suddenly, however, their Germanophobia was rekindled

⁸⁹ Marder, The Anatomy of British Sea Power, 483-514.

⁹⁰ Spectator, 93, December 17, 1904, 996.

⁹¹ Kenneth Young, Arthur James Balfour (London, 1963), 198-222.

when the Kaiser made his spectacular landing at Tangiers at the end of March 1905. It is clear that none of the editors had anticipated such a dramatic move on the part of the Germans, but they immediately analysed the German plan. On the day after the Kaiser's provocative visit, the Spectator detailed German diplomatic thinking. Because the Russians were occupied in the Far East, the Germans were momentarily free from the fear of "the war with two fronts". This afforded them the opportunity to test the new Anglo-French agreement. It was the Germans' intention to illustrate to the French that Britain was an untrustworthy friend and that if France wished to remain secure she must do so by aligning herself with Germany. The primary task of the British government was to prove the German illustration false.⁹²

Garvin declared the Tangiers adventure to be ". . . nothing short of a studied provocation". The Germans, he claimed, were testing Britain's commitment to the entente.⁹³ Maxse concurred with this appraisal, characterizing the Tangiers visit as ". . . a direct challenge to Great Britain

⁹²Spectator, 94, April 1, 1905, 465. For the German interpretation of the Moroccan crisis see, Norman Rich, Friedrich von Holstein, Politics and Diplomacy in the Era of Bismarck and Wilhelm II (Cambridge, 1965), 2:678-95.

⁹³Outlook, 15 April, 1905, 376.

no less than to France".⁹⁴ Both men called upon the Balfour government to support France in the face of this unwarranted aggression. The editors were thus anticipating events before the Moroccan situation actually became critical. Their suspicions were shortly to be substantiated as the Germans began to apply pressure to the French government in order to convene an international conference on Morocco.⁹⁵ The three editors viewed the German threat to French Morocco as a direct threat to the security of Britain herself. Strachey warned that if the Kaiser were allowed to humiliate France without Britain making the necessary response, the entente would, in effect, be dissolved.⁹⁶ The National Review adopted exactly the same tone.

While some experts are of the opinion that the Morocco adventure . . . is simply another piece of Imperial bluff which should not be taken too seriously, many shrewd observers who are anything but alarmists incline to the view that Wilhelm II considers that the moment is approaching for which he had long sighed when the War Lord will be able to take the field in all his glory.⁹⁷

Garvin's Outlook conveyed the same warning.

⁹⁴National Review, 45, May, 1905, 376.

⁹⁵E. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 196-211.

⁹⁶Spectator, 94, May 13, 1905, 702.

⁹⁷National Review, 45, June, 1905, 565.

The Emperor threatens France with political and military disasters if his demands for Morocco are not satisfied. Those same disasters would shortly befall Britain if the spirit of our entente with France is not strictly observed. The goal of German foreign policy is clear . . . but this, so many refuse to see.⁹⁸

The operative term in all of these articles was "war". The editors believed that Britain could not allow France to drift into the German orbit merely because Britain refused to take decisive steps to give meaning to the entente. This point of view was not peculiar to these three editors, though they were its most forceful advocates. The Unionist press in general tended to support the view that France could not be left alone to meet her fate. It was the Liberal press -- imperialist and radical -- which claimed that Britain was not obliged to risk war for the sake of French colonial ambitions.⁹⁹ Though the Liberals cheered the creation of the entente, it became clear that they had an entirely different interpretation of its significance. Indeed, the Manchester Guardian went so far as to suggest that the German case in Morocco had merit.¹⁰⁰

Needless to say, the editorial position of the Liberal press infuriated Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. Of what were the Liberal journalists and politicians thinking? Had they

⁹⁸Outlook, 15, May 13, 1905, 668.

⁹⁹Daily Chronicle, May 20, 1905, 5; Daily News, May 22, 1905, 7.

¹⁰⁰Manchester Guardian, May 18, 1905, 6.

not just a year before sung the praises of sound Anglo-French relations? How could they be so blind to the fundamental interests of Britain? Garvin accused the Liberal press, and the radical Daily News in particular, of ". . . a treachery unparalleled in our whole history".¹⁰¹ The National Review thundered that ". . . there can be little doubt but that Great Britain is the ultimate objective of Kaiser Wilhelm's present campaign".¹⁰² Strachey called upon all "right thinking" men to realize that French safety and British safety were one and the same thing.¹⁰³

The resignation of the French foreign minister, Théophile Delcassé, on June 6, was seen as a victory for the Germans and a sound defeat for the entente. This created, so Strachey claimed, a new situation in Europe in which Germany was supreme. This situation required Britain to take the greatest care for once again she faced Germany alone.¹⁰⁴ This was unquestionably an overstatement, but it

¹⁰¹Outlook, 15, May 20, 1905, 735.

¹⁰²National Review, 45, July, 1905, 745.

¹⁰³Spectator, 94, May 27, 1905, 775.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., June 10, 1905, 845.

reveals Strachey's concern. This same concern was reflected in the pages of the Outlook.

For the moment the Kaiser is scarcely less than the dictator of Europe. He holds a position of actual and potential power almost Napoleonic in its range and effectiveness. He is head of the greatest and most scientific army in Europe, and perhaps in the world. His navy . . . is an instrument of admirable potency, fashioned with that meticulous carefulness which thirty-five years ago made Germany invincible on land.¹⁰⁵

Maxse's anger was directed, not at the Germans, but towards the government officials who he now claimed had neglected the importance of British military might. He lashed out at Balfour for his ineffectual leadership and warned that the "Imperial plot" could only be curtailed by the immediate recognition of the realities of power.

We shall never be able to exercise our legitimate influence as a pillar of European peace so long as we deliberately cultivate military impotence. This is the A B C of Foreign policy, and it is no credit to our Parliamentary Mandarins that they sedulously ignore the problem which oppresses every thinking Englishman.¹⁰⁶

On July 9, the general public was officially informed that France had agreed to German demands for a conference on

¹⁰⁵Outlook, 15, June 24, 1905, 894.

¹⁰⁶National Review, 45, July, 1905, 757.

the Moroccan crisis.¹⁰⁷ The editors related the diplomatic developments from this announcement until the convening of the Algeciras conference in January 1906. Their opinions on this matter became noticeably more subdued, perhaps realizing that the Germans had not achieved substantive victory. Yet their attention remained firmly directed toward Germany's diplomatic offensive. After having gained ground against France, the German diplomats appeared to turn their gaze towards Russia. This was the cause of grave concern.¹⁰⁸

The relations between Britain and Russia, though strained by the Pacific war, remained intact. The Dogger Bank incident of October, 1904, had excited a great deal of popular passion and pushed the two nations to the brink of conflict. Fortunately, French mediation prevented the dispute from deteriorating into war. Yet this incident and the general feeling of ill-will between Britain and Russia slowly pushed the latter towards the German camp. This diplomatic drift culminated in a meeting between the Tsar and the Kaiser at Björkö Bay on July 23 and 24, 1905. Although the press had no way of knowing what settlement, if

¹⁰⁷E. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 234-58.

¹⁰⁸National Review, 44, December, 1904, 585.

any, had been made at Björkö, their columns were full of suspicion.¹⁰⁹ It seemed to many that Germany was trying ". . . to plaster Russia with a German label". If a Russo-German rapprochement were to take place, Britain would once again be in a dangerous diplomatic situation. But perhaps the German plan could be thwarted, if only the government would move quickly and decisively to offer Russia British friendship. This point of view was shared by a number of leading journals and was championed especially by the National Review.

Englishmen have their own solution for straightening out the present European tangle, and it is somewhat significant that papers of such divergent views as the Outlook, the Spectator, and the Westminster Gazette, should simultaneously advocate a comprehensive settlement of the outstanding differences between Russia and Great Britain with a view to an Anglo-Russian entente. There is undoubtedly a large and growing body of opinion in this country in favour of such a policy if it would be practicable. . . .¹¹⁰

The spectre of a Russo-German treaty was lent further menace by the fear that, should the Wilhelmstrasse succeed in isolating Russia from France, the latter would find her-

¹⁰⁹National Review, 46, September 1905, 1-2; Spectator, 95, July 29, 1905, 141; Outlook, 16, August 19, 1905, 211.

¹¹⁰National Review, 46, October, 1905, 190-93.

self in an untenable diplomatic position.¹¹¹ This situation would oblige France to pursue a policy of perpetual compromise vis-à-vis Germany, and such compromise would have the effect of reducing the Anglo-French entente to the point of political uselessness. Britain would be effectively isolated in the face of the German colossus on the continent. The stakes were high and resulted in an ever increasing intensity in British Germanophobia.

Yet this Germanophobia was not uniform. Since the outbreak of the Moroccan crisis, press opinion about how the German menace should be confronted had clearly divided into two factions. The basic issue of contention was whether or not British security demanded the consideration of a possible war against Germany. These two factions were further distinguishable by their political affiliations. Those journals which refused to consider a war under any circumstances were, for the most part, associated with the Liberal party. The journals which did not rule out the possibility of war tended to have Unionist connections. This is not to suggest that the Unionist press was engaged in war-mongering. Their greatest fear was that Britain

¹¹¹E. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 294-310.

would be forced into a war at a time and under conditions which most favoured Germany. The loss of the French entente would certainly be unfavourable to Britain and could possibly convince the Germans that their golden hour had come. Hence the readiness of the Unionist press to consider war as a means of maintaining the integrity of the Entente Cordiale.

A large number of newspapers which fitted into that broad category called Liberal-Radical similarly feared Germany as a potential adversary. But the outstanding distinction in their Germanophobia was that they believed nothing should be done which might provoke the Germans. The notion of arming for peace seemed to them an absurdity typical of militaristic thinking. They consistently advocated the path of negotiation and, if necessary, arbitration, a course of action the Unionist papers generally declared to be suicidal.¹¹² This "pacifist press" had shared in the rejoicing at the signing of the Entente Cordiale. Indeed, many of these papers -- and their historians -- had claimed that the signing of such a monu-

¹¹²For a discussion of the "pacifism" of the Radical press see Morris, Radicalism Against War, 34-52 and Keith Robbins, The Abolition of War, the 'Peace Movement' in Britain, 1914-1919 (Cardiff, 1976), 7-26.

mental treaty had been a victory for Radicalism.¹¹³ Yet in their idealistic aspirations they failed to consider how German Realpolitik might view this "treaty of peace". The Unionist press adopted a considerably less sanguine position. The entente was only as sound as its ability to face what they regarded as an inevitably German challenge.¹¹⁴

This division in the British press was dramatized in October when the Parisian daily, Le Matin, published a series of articles which suggested, among other things, that Britain had offered Delcassé military support in the event that France should find herself at war with Germany over the Moroccan dispute. Both the Liberal and Unionist press questioned the veracity of the French report but differed sharply as to its implications. The Liberal press

¹¹³Two striking examples of such over-simplification are to be found in A. J. P. Taylor's The Trouble Makers, Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792-1939 (London, 1957), 110-11 and A. J. A. Morris's Radicalism Against War 1906-1914 (London, 1972), 10-11. Both historians support the position that the Unionist government "took over Radical policy". In order to substantiate this claim, both men cite as their authority, articles which appeared in the Speaker. Yet this paper, under the editorship of J. L. Hammond, was a notoriously partisan organ of the Radical wing of the Liberal party. The two men further failed to consider the editorial positions of any Unionist papers. Had they done so they would have found, at least in the case of those papers edited by Garvin, Maxse and Strachey, an enthusiasm for the entente which equalled, if not exceeded, that of the Radical press.

¹¹⁴Kennedy, "Idealists and Realists", 137-56.

was appalled that the Unionist cabinet or any of its members would consider making such an offer to France. Such an action would be a perversion of the true intentions underlying the formation of the entente. The attitude expressed by the Manchester Guardian typified Liberal opinion.

. . . we cannot shake off the feeling that our Government was guilty of some terrible indiscretion . . . which is certain to injure us greatly both in Germany and in France. It is an awful reflection that our Government should have put it in anyone's power to advertise our willingness under certain contingencies to go to war with Germany.¹¹⁵

The Unionist press, both popular and quality, had no such hesitation about the reasonableness of an offer of military aid to France. The Daily Mail, the largest of the mass circulation dailies, illustrated the type of Germanophobia common to this press. Its reports contained elements of truth, speculation and editorial bias, woven together in such a fashion that even the most discerning reader would be taxed to see the difference.

. . . if France were assailed, England would mobilise her fleet, seize the North Sea-Baltic Canal, and land 100,000 men in Schleswig-Holstein. The French Government was informed that if it wished this offer should be recorded and made to it in writing. No one could doubt that England would keep her word. . . .¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Manchester Guardian, October 13, 1905, 6.

¹¹⁶ Daily Mail, October 9, 1905, 7.

The quality Unionist dailies displayed the same type of attitude as did their popular press counterparts. Although less sensational in presentation and without the same pugnacity, newspapers like the Pall Mall Gazette maintained a firm commitment to French security.

A variety of quasi-demi-semi-official statements . . . now endorse the view we have taken from the first of the truth about the British "offer", namely, that the 100,000 men for Schleswig-Holstein were a good deal too circumstantial to be convincing, but that France had, and has, good reason to know that in the event of a wanton attack upon her British support would not be empty "moral".¹¹⁷

The reports of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey most closely resembled those of the quality Unionist dailies. All three men carefully denied that a specific offer of aid had been extended to France, but they made it clear that France would expect such aid should the need arise. The Outlook presented a detailed report of the articles which appeared in Le Matin, and then made an unmistakable declaration of support for France.

It is impossible to credit all the stories in Le Matin, particularly with regard to the claim that Lord Lansdowne committed England to an invasion of Schleswig-Holstein and the seizure of the Kiel Canal. Yet, it is entirely credible . . . that France could anticipate immediate

¹¹⁷Pall Mall Gazette, October 14, 1905, 2.

military assistance from this country should she be made the victim of a wanton attack.¹¹⁸

The Spectator maintained a comparable editorial position.

Whatever else is true, it is not true that the British Government made the ridiculous offer to land an army of a hundred thousand men in Schleswig-Holstein, or disclosed some opera-bouffe plan to seize the Kiel Canal. That is not the way in which great States offer to lend each other aid while peace is still undisturbed. But while, in common with every sane person, we must refuse to credit any such wild talk, it is no doubt true that assurances were given of British friendship, and even of aid if France were wantonly invaded. To stand by France to the last if she were made the victim of an unprovoked attack was no doubt the most instinctive decision of the British Government, as of the British people.¹¹⁹

In the following weeks, the tensions created by German attempts to create a Russo-German entente and the fury created by the French press revelations subsided. The Tsar backed away from the Björkö treaty when it became clear that his position had no French support.¹²⁰ The

¹¹⁸Outlook, 16, October 14, 1905, 501.

¹¹⁹Spectator, 95, October 14, 1905, 552.

¹²⁰E. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 296-98.

controversy over the Matin article faded against the turmoil created by an imminent general election. Still the rift between the Liberal and Unionist papers continued. Could the Germans be trusted? What really was the nature of modern Germany? And finally, what was the most appropriate British response to this eminently powerful European nation? The Unionist and Liberal press provided completely different, even antagonistic answers to these perplexing questions.

Thus, in the period 1899 to 1905 began the myth that the Unionist press was Germanophobic, while the Liberal press was, in the terms of its opponents, Germanophile. Both sides feared Germany; the difference lay in how they responded to that fear. The Liberal response was to establish the Anglo-German Conciliation Committee and similar organizations. The Unionists called for military preparedness.¹²¹ The added aggravation of a general election campaign served to heighten the differences between these two schools of thought. The Liberal press unjustly blamed the Unionist press for the strained diplomatic relations with Germany. They attempted to associate the Liberal party with reasonable negotiations and the Unionists with war-mongering. Such an editorial ploy was clearly visible in the Daily News.

¹²¹Kennedy, "Idealists and Realists", 145.

The Liberal Party will never accept as its watchword the ravings of the Teutophobe Press, which has for years been stirring up strife between two friendly peoples. Nor will it for an instant go surety for France against Germany as well as for Japan against Russia. We are for the friendliest relations with our nearest neighbours; but we are none the less anxious for a peaceful understanding with Germany.¹²²

Such branding of all the Unionist press with the same "Teutophobe" label was effective, but demonstrably unfair. The Daily News was trying to associate the excesses of the popular press with the quality press in an effort to discredit the latter for it was the quality press which carried the greatest weight with the limited Edwardian electorate. This editorial tactic became common among the quality Liberal press. Even a Radical editor of the calibre of H. W. Massingham adopted this policy. In the Rowntree owned Nation, the editor ran articles such as "The Worst Journalism" and "The Harmsworth Brand" which specifically claimed that there was little or no difference among Conservative-Unionist newspapers.¹²³ Obviously, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey did not initially appreciate the powerful thrust of this attack for they made no move to parry it. They would have done well to do so for the Liberal press

¹²²Daily News, October 13, 1905, 6.

¹²³Nation, July 20, 1907; July 18, 1908.

continued to employ this tactic for the entire period prior to the Great War.¹²⁴

In order to dismiss this fallacy, it is more illuminating to note what Garvin, Maxse and Strachey did not do, rather than detail what they did do. The three editors did not, as was common with the popular press, employ any racial prejudice when discussing Germany. Nor did they use the Kaiser as a target for ridicule. Though they often suspected the Kaiser of diplomatic machinations, their respect for monarchy prevented them from exploiting the comic potential in William's character. One cannot find a single example of the chauvinism which was so typical of sensationalist journalism. In fact the very opposite is true. The three editors were highly critical of their nation and the Unionist government and not at all inclined to boast of qualities they feared Britain had lost. In the same vein, one is hard put to find any evidence of jingoism. The editorials of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey most often counselled the greatest degree of caution when dealing with the Germans. Finally, it is impossible to substantiate the claim frequently made by the Liberal press that these editors, along with the rest of the Unionist press, were trying to foment an Anglo-

¹²⁴See Caroline R. Playne, The Pre-War Mind in Britain, An Historical Review (London, 1928), 116-18.

German war. In reality, the three editors feared that such a war would end in a German victory.

The electoral campaign in the last month of 1905 gave rise to bitter antagonism in the press. Foreign affairs, and Germany in particular, were one of the major issues over which partisan journals clashed. As is typical of an election a certain degree of obfuscation, if not patent fabrication, took place. The Liberal press successfully interpreted sincere concern about Germany's economic and military prowess as war-mongering jingoism. The impressive Liberal victory at the polls seemed to support the effectiveness of this editorial tactic. It only remained for the Unionist press to find a way by which a comparable editorial policy could be employed against the new Liberal government.

Three Unionist editors already had the necessary tools at hand. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had originally been concerned only to make their nation and their government aware of what they perceived to be the German menace. They seemed to find little trouble in awakening public opinion on this matter, but the government proved considerably more difficult. The Venezuela and Bagdad affairs had forced the editors to turn on their own leaders. These efforts met with complete success. The skilful manipulation of Germanophobia could, quite clearly, be a very powerful editorial weapon. But this weapon had proven to be a two-

edged sword. The Liberal press had portrayed this slashing as German-style sabre-rattling. Such criticism partially discredited Garvin, Maxse and Strachey -- it did not disarm them. Shortly after the establishment of the new government the three editors began to discover that a Liberal administration was even more vulnerable to editorial Germanophobia than had been its Unionist predecessor. The editors and the Liberals shared little if any common ground. This meant that the new government afforded a much broader target. The editors consequently learned to broaden the application of their proven editorial weapon. As will be shown, all this took place with limited regard for the historical realities of Germany's own intentions.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HEYDAY OF GERMANOPHOBIA 1906-1911

Garvin, Maxse and Strachey did not immediately fall upon the idea of exploiting the German menace as a means of combatting the new Liberal government. The delay in the development of their editorial Germanophobia was caused by their own tardiness in recognizing the depth of the Liberal administration's reform intentions. When it became clear that the Government wished to finance large social reforms by reducing expenditures on defence the editors responded with their campaign of editorial Germanophobia. They used their Germanophobia to attack all aspects of government policy that they felt to be detrimental to Britain's true interests. They maintained such editorial policies until late 1911 when particular domestic and foreign developments obliged them to moderate their opposition to the Liberal government. But until that time their editorial Germanophobia so flourished that this period may reasonably be called the heyday of Germanophobia.

The general election of January 1906 resulted in the return of a Liberal administration which enjoyed an over-all majority of 84 seats. Campbell-Bannerman was consequently freed from the restraints of his 1905 political

affiliations. The Liberal party had little need to be concerned with the wishes of either their Labour or Irish Nationalist supporters. It appeared that they had even less cause to worry about the Unionist party which had been reduced to 157 members. Even Balfour had been unseated though he was able to return quickly to parliament.¹ The post-election Unionist party was significantly transformed for the majority of Unionists in the Commons were now Tariff Reformers.

This development potentially jeopardized Balfour's leadership because he had not yet made a binding commitment to Tariff Reform.² The major party dissensions of the new session, it seemed, would reside in the Unionist ranks.

The divisions which afflicted the Unionist party were reflected by their traditional journalistic supporters. This was especially true in the case of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. Garvin maintained his personal support for Balfour's leadership although he hoped that Balfour would see the advantages of a total commitment to Tariff Reform. Garvin could most accurately be described as a Balfourite

¹ Times, January 30, 1906, 11.

² Neal Blewett, "Free Fooders, Balfourites, Whole Hoggers. Factionalism Within the Unionist Party, 1906-10", Historical Review 11 (1968):95-124.

although that term says more about his conception of how the Unionist party should be constituted than about his faith in the sagacity of Balfour's leadership.³ Maxse felt that the election had illustrated the wisdom and popularity of Tariff Reform and he pressed Balfour to clarify the Unionist Party's fiscal position by making an uncompromising statement of support for Tariff Reform.⁴ This attitude represented Maxse's traditional predilection to support Chamberlain rather than the official party leader. Maxse maintained his position until 1911 when he demanded Balfour's resignation for failing to subscribe to the primacy of Chamberlain's fiscal policy. Strachey's approach to the 1906 election is perhaps the best illustra-

³ Ibid., 102. Blewett describes Garvin as a "Whole Hogger", placing him with men such as Austen Chamberlain, F. E. Smith and Leo Maxse. This clearly is not the case. Garvin placed the welfare of the Unionist party above its commitment to Tariff Reform. Indeed Garvin's recommendation to Balfour in 1910 to make Tariff Reform contingent upon a referendum rather than a necessary part of the Unionist election platform illustrates the distance between himself and the real "Whole Hoggers".

⁴ National Review 46 (February, 1906):954.

tion of the persistent division in the Unionist ranks.⁵ He had advised Unionist Free Traders to vote for the Liberal rather than the Unionist party.⁶ He felt that such a revolt would force the Unionist leadership to cease its unfortunate flirtation with Tariff Reform. Strachey believed that the return of the overwhelming Liberal majority provided ample justification for his own position and for the sanctity of Free Trade. He greeted the new Liberal administration with pleasure, not because he had altered his political allegiance but because he believed that the Liberal victory would exorcise Chamberlain's evil caprice from the otherwise pure spirit of Unionism.⁷ It was his conviction that the Liberals would soon be ejected from power and that a purified Unionist party would once again assume its rightful role as the government.

The political expectations of all three editors were soon frustrated. Balfour did not use the occasion of his party's humiliating defeat to forge a new Unionism

⁵H. W. McCready, "The Revolt of the Unionist Free Traders", Parliamentary Affairs 16 (1962):188-206 and Rempel, Unionists Divided, 151-170.

⁶Spectator, 96, January 13, 1906, 45.

⁷Ibid., January 20, 1906, 85. "As Free-traders, we welcome the complete victory that has been achieved over the cause of Protection and so-called Fiscal Reform with

which was either completely committed to Tariff Reform or completely committed to the principles of Free Trade. He preferred to wait upon events, calculating that the Liberals would bungle their way out of office. The general election had reduced his position in the House of Commons but nothing, he thought, could reduce the Unionist hegemony in the House of Lords. He had but to wait until the Liberals tried to force some unacceptable legislation through the upper house. The Lords would reject it, an election would be called, and the Liberals would be sent into the political wilderness.⁸ Balfour based his political hopes upon this scenario and he came within a few seats of being vindicated in the general election of January 1910.⁹ But such negative opposition, which depended upon the cooperation both of the rank and file and other party leaders, did not appeal to Unionists of a more aggressive nature -- particularly Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. It soon be-

intense relief. The country had decided -- as we always believed it would decide -- to maintain Free-trade, and we are thus preserved from the terrible dangers to the nation and the Empire that must have been imminent had any other verdict been given at the polls."

⁸Roy Jenkins, Mr. Balfour's Poodle (London, 1954).

⁹David Butler and Anne Sloman, eds., British Political Facts 1900-1975 (London, 1975), 182.

came obvious to many that if the official opposition were to do more than score debating points in the Commons the impetus must come from a source other than the Balfourite leadership of the Unionist party. It was against this background of political frustration, division and inertia that Garvin, Maxse and Strachey began independently to develop their editorial Germanophobia.

The opening of the Algeciras Conference on January 16 provided the first opportunity for comment upon the new government's skill in foreign affairs. It was important that the French should feel that they could count upon Britain's unwavering support in their dealings with the Germans. Maxse felt that the Liberal leader in his first foreign policy speech as Prime Minister had failed to grasp the significance of Britain's position as the arbiter of Europe. He wrote in the National Review:

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who has a genius for saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, succeeded in arousing the apprehensions of our friends and allies abroad, though he caused delight, not unmingled with contempt, in less friendly quarters (particularly Germany, which regarded his speech as an incentive to further naval expansion), by announcing the revival of the Gladstonian foreign policy, and by a violent diatribe against British armaments which appropriately concluded with this suggestive sentence: "Do not let us mind if in their folly they call us Little Englanders." This passage caused almost as much consternation in France as in England, and brought a well-merited rebuke on our egregious Premier from the Temps which emphasised the danger of talking such

twaddle at the present critical moment, when the peace of the world to a large extent depends on the power of Great Britain.¹⁰

In the same issue Garvin wrote an article which echoed Maxse's concern but framed the argument in more generalized terms.

Whether war breaks out will depend chiefly on the attitude of this country. If Germany sees that we are determined not to tolerate the humiliation of France . . . Germany will keep the peace. She is hardly prepared to risk the destruction of her trade and industries and the possible rise of a continental coalition against her. If our statesmen, in their love of peace, should hesitate to act, and refrain from energetic measures, the danger of war would be very great.¹¹

Strachey did not share this point of view. At this time he did not fear that the government would renege on what he perceived to be its obligation to France nor did he believe that Britain's naval power would be allowed to decline. Indeed the launching of the Dreadnought on February 10 emphasized for Strachey the government's commitment to British naval supremacy.¹² Strachey also believed that the Liberals would be receptive to the idea of creating a national reserve from which the regular army

¹⁰National Review 46 (February, 1906):959.

¹¹Ibid., 997.

¹²Spectator, 96, February 17, 1906, 243.

could draw additional troops in times of national emergency. Hence in March 1906, Strachey announced the inauguration of the "Spectator Experimental Company". It was his plan to demonstrate that one could produce a company of thoroughly competent soldiers in six months.¹³ The purpose of this militia was threefold: it would strengthen Britain's defensive position by providing a large body of trained men; secondly, it would tend to strengthen the sagging morale and physical condition of British manhood; and thirdly, it would help to produce men who understood the obligations of citizenship.¹⁴ The overall effect of the militia would be to improve Britain's declining position particularly vis-à-vis Germany. Strachey presented his plan to the new Secretary of State for War, R. B. Haldane, who was prepared to look favourably upon this enterprise.

The summer of 1906 did not witness the emergence of any journalistic campaign against the Liberal government's foreign or military policies even though the third German Naval Law was ratified on June 5. The energies of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were spent in advocating their

¹³Ibid., March 24, 1906, 448.

¹⁴Ibid., September 24, 1906, 424.

respective policies. No more than the Unionist party itself, were they capable of mounting a sustained and organized assault upon Campbell-Bannerman's government. The sense of ennui in Unionist ranks was such that Maxse accused Balfour and his followers of suffering from a "Sleeping Sickness".¹⁵ Unfortunately for the Liberals it was Haldane himself who provided the occasion for a coherent and effective campaign against their administration.

When Haldane became Secretary of State for War he promised that he would enhance Britain's military position.¹⁶ This statement had been greeted with relief by those who were suspicious of the Liberals' commitment to a militarily powerful Britain. Despite the prominent position occupied by Liberal Imperialists, the Liberals had a reputation of being a party of pacifists. In the September issue of the National Review Maxse was able to reawaken old fears by reporting that Haldane had failed to live up to his post-election promise.¹⁷ Instead of increasing the size of the regular army the total number of soldiers had been

¹⁵National Review 47 (August, 1906):881.

¹⁶Stephen Koss, Lord Haldane: Scapegoat for Liberalism (New York, 1969), 45-53.

¹⁷A. J. Morris, "Haldane's Army Reforms 1906-08: The Deception of the Radicals", History 56 (1971):17-34. Morris's article illustrates the difficulty Haldane faced

allowed to decline. Maxse's expressions of outrage, though dressed in the finest colours of patriotism, poorly concealed his partisan intentions. The Unionist administration had sought likewise to reduce the large annual expenditure on the army but their efforts had never sparked such barbed criticism.¹⁸ The new and untrusted government could not be allowed to lay its tarnished hands upon so sacred a trust. Here, Maxse believed, was his point of departure for a systematic assault upon his political foes. Suddenly the Liberal administration seemed vulnerable to attack. Maxse called the government a "disorganized hypocrisy" for ". . . different Ministers tell different stories to different audiences, while some Ministers tell different stories to the same audience".¹⁹ More significantly Maxse claimed to have located the existence of the "Potsdam Party" within the heart of the Liberal cabinet itself.

Once the label "Potsdam Party" had been attached to the Liberal administration the way was clear for his own vigorous assault upon the government. Maxse successfully linked his own fear and suspicions about the Liberal government to the generally held fear of Germany.

in trying to please any political segment. In his efforts to appease all political segments Haldane could satisfy none.

¹⁸Tucker, "The Issue of Army Reform", 90-100.

¹⁹National Review 48 (September, 1906):7.

We are convinced that were the British public aware of certain intrigues against our good relations with France, the intriguers -- whether Cabinet Ministers bent on bootlicking pilgrimages to Potsdam, or journalists, living in the pocket of the German Ambassador in London, who derive their inspiration, if nothing more substantial, from the German Press Bureau -- would receive short shrift. People would cease to listen to their admonitions if their tainted origins and sinister purpose were appreciated.²⁰

Maxse's major journalistic policy was to associate everything which he disliked about the Liberal government with some nefarious German plan. He accused the government of abandoning the nation to German interests. Each minister who incurred Maxse's displeasure was portrayed as a Germanophil. The attacks in the National Review were often vicious and always excessive but periodically they were also humorous.

As the wrecker of our Regular Army, Mr. Haldane is naturally a persona grata on the Spree. But he is being rapidly "cut out" by Lord Tweedmouth, who bids fair to become persona gratissima. A few more years of the present régime at the Admiralty would so weaken British Sea-power as automatically to transfer our sceptre to the "Mailed Fist" without the disagreeable necessity of fighting.²¹

²⁰Ibid. (October, 1906): 177.

²¹Ibid. (November, 1906): 384.

Throughout 1907, Maxse developed the potency of his attack. He began by deploring the Liberals' failure to maintain adequately the army and soon expanded his critique to encompass Liberal diplomacy, naval and fiscal policies, Radical insensitivity to imperial needs and any other policy he detested. Each extension of Maxse's attack was initiated not by an event in Germany, as he would often have his readers suppose, but by some action on the part of the Liberals. The budget of February 1907, with its naval economies, elicited a stinging rebuke from Maxse.

What are we doing to meet the rapidly advancing German peril? Nothing, less than nothing. We are actually weakening our defensive forces by sea as well as by land. To judge by the speeches of Ministers, and the statement in the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament, Free Trade England alone among the great Powers cannot afford to finance her armaments, and is compelled to endanger her existence by fatal economies. While our Protectionist competitors are rapidly increasing their navies as well as their armies, though navies are in their cases mere luxuries, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues are rending the air with their pitiful whines for Disarmament; but they can no longer bemuse the British public on this score. . . .²²

At the Imperial Conference of 1907, British statesmen talked about lessening world tensions and the desirability

²²Ibid., 49 (March, 1907):4.

of mutual disarmament. Maxse saw disarmament as a thoroughly ridiculous plan.

It is all important to clear our minds of cant in discussing international questions, because in pretending to be so much better than our neighbours, we are suspected of pursuing our material interests under cover of high-sounding cosmopolitan and humanitarian professions. As regards Disarmament, our sentimental statesmen have drifted into a thoroughly false position owing to their lack of imagination -- a gift the Duke of Wellington described as knowledge of what is going on "on the other side of the hill," and which may nowadays be defined as knowledge of what is going on on the other side of the North Sea.²³

The efforts by many journalists to lessen the tension between Britain and Germany met with no better reception in the National Review. When a delegation of British journalists went to Germany in May, Maxse was quick to predict the failure of their mission.

A certain number of British journalists, under the amiable auspices of Mr. Spender, the editor of our very pro-German contemporary, the Westminster Gazette, have deemed the moment opportune to pay a pious pilgrimage to Potsdam and other Anglophobe shrines in Germany. As the visit of the German journalists to this country last year had absolutely no effect in mitigating their rancour, it would be foolish to expect any satisfactory results from the return visit -- on the German side, though doubtless the Westminster Gazette will be more gushing about Germany than ever, and the Daily News and the Tribune if possible more anti-British.²⁴

²³Ibid. (April, 1907):178.

²⁴Ibid. (June, 1907):519.

By the beginning of 1908 Maxse had developed his entire repertoire of Germanophobia. He had managed to accuse most members of the Liberal cabinet of some conspiracy with the Germans. The thrust behind all of his writing was the theory that the Liberals were pacifist anti-Britons who wished to deliver Britain and her empire into the hands of the Prussian Junkers. The fact that this charge was pure nonsense is undeniable but the premise underlying Maxse's work had merit. He believed that if he could publicly taint the Liberal government with enough suspicion he could render their efforts futile. Their ability to make any far-ranging changes in the British constitution or in the structure of British society would be looked upon as attempts to weaken the nation. Maxse realized that most of his readers believed that Britain really was facing a determined challenge from Germany and he simply took that belief and flung it at his political opponents.

By the late fall of 1906 Strachey was also able to find serious flaws in the Liberal government. Their attempts to pass an Education Bill, a Trade Disputes Bill and a Plural Voting Bill had all met with Strachey's displeasure.²⁵ He began to recognize the proportions of the dilemma in which he was to remain until the outbreak of

²⁵ Ensor, England, 391-93 and Alfred Havighurst,

the war. The Unionist party was unrepentant of the heresy of Tariff Reform while the Liberals courted socialism.²⁶ Strachey was obliged to choose from the lesser of two evils. He chose Unionism because it was free of the greatest evil in his own personal catalogue of evils -- socialism. As early as April 1906, Strachey had identified disturbing socialist tendencies in the Liberal administration which he felt were going unchallenged by the Unionists.

Where are the Conservatives? Are they all asleep, all drugged into unconsciousness by the sophistries of the Tariff Reform League? To judge by what has happened in Parliament during the past month, there are no Conservatives or Moderates left, at any rate in the Unionist Party. The House of Commons has been filled with wild schemes of a Socialistic kind proposing to dissipate not merely the material resources of the nation, but, what is infinitely more precious and more difficult to redeem, the moral strength of the people. One would have imagined that the lead against these dangerous schemes would have come from the remains of the Unionist Party, and that men would have arisen among them to show that even though following Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour in their fiscal proposals, they had not abandoned the whole of their Conservative or Liberal Unionist opinions.²⁷

Twentieth Century Britain (New York, 1962), 95-97.

²⁶H. D. Bralley, "St. Leo Strachey and the Politics of Dilemma", 134-58.

²⁷Spectator, 96, April 7, 1906, 524.

The beginning of 1907 saw Strachey's complete and irreversible alienation from the Liberals. He was certain that they were committed to the path of socialist reform which, for Strachey, was tantamount to a policy of national self-destruction. The Liberal proposal to fund social reform, such as an Old Age Pensions Bill, by revolutionary changes in the national budget, was for Strachey beyond the pale.²⁸ He saw such innovations as being destructive of the fabric of a strong nation.

We believe that large social reforms are needed, but in the direction, not of State aid and State pauperisation, but of encouraging individual action and strengthening the thews and sinews of the nation. Instead of debilitating the country by adopting the substance, if not the name of Socialism, we would brace it by getting rid of a great deal of the legislation which now impairs individual effort and weakens the power of the people. Instead of extending the operation of the Poor Law, we would once again bring it within the sane and narrow limits so wisely prescribed in 1834. Instead of calling an unemployed class into existence, and in effect letting it be known that men who do not care to make the painful effort to find work and to keep it will be relieved by the State, and of announcing that no man need trouble to provide for his old age or regard it as part of the duty of the family to provide for those of its members who have ceased to be capable of doing active work, we would make it clear that it is the prime duty of

²⁸H. V. Emy, "The Impact of Financial Policy on English Party Politics Before 1914", Historical Journal 15 (1972):119-120.

the State to encourage self-help in the individual and to prevent the destruction of the family, still the most efficient of all forms of insurance.²⁹

Strachey became increasingly hysterical about what he perceived to be torrents of socialist legislation. Instead of socialism which would enervate Britain, he felt that universal male military training was needed, not just for defence but to stiffen the resolve of the common man against the corrupting luxury of socialism.³⁰ On June 24, 1907, Campbell-Bannerman introduced a resolution into the House of Commons which, if made law, would have made the House of Lords subordinate to the Commons. Strachey saw this resolution as an attack upon the last barrier which could protect Britain against socialism.³¹ The time had come for Strachey to rally all the forces he could against the insidious evil of socialism but, unfortunately for him, few prominent Unionists shared his fears.³² Strachey

²⁹Spectator, 97, January 12, 1907, 41.

³⁰Ibid., 98, April 27, 1907, 663.

³¹Ibid., 98, June 22, 1907, 964.

³²This is not to imply that Strachey's feelings about Socialism were unique. Indeed there had been a long tradition of anti-Socialist activity prior to 1907. See Bristow, "The Liberty and Property Defence League and Individualism", 761-89.

had made the mistake of labelling Tariff Reform as a socialist policy. The Unionists, the great majority of whom were Tariff Reformers, were not about to abandon their fiscal policy to go chasing after Strachey's banshee. Indeed Strachey was attacked rather than aided. Garvin wrote a stinging article in the National Review in which he retorted that Free Trade was a socialist policy.³³ Undaunted by his initial failure, Strachey in October 1907 wrote an article entitled "The War Against Socialism" in which he pleaded for a party truce.³⁴ Again the vast majority of Unionists would have no part of Strachey's plan. The results of his campaign to form a united front against socialism so depressed the editor that he contemplated resignation from his paper and on January 18, 1908, he offered its editorship to his cousin, Lytton Strachey.³⁵ The future biographer of Queen Victoria refused the offer and Strachey continued his quest for a rallying cry which would unite all Unionists.

³³J. L. Garvin, "Free Trade as a Socialistic Policy", National Review 50 (September, 1907):51.

³⁴Spectator, 98, October 26, 1907, 596.

³⁵Michael Holroyd, Lytton Strachey: A Biography (Harmondsworth, 1971), 1:369.

The February 1 edition of the Spectator reveals Strachey's realization of a far more effective argument to use in his quest to unite the Unionists in their assault upon the Liberals. Strachey turned the fear of "National Decadence" into a coherent and cogent argument against Liberal administrative policy. By drawing on two popularly accepted ideas, the comparison of Britain to Rome and the belief in Social Darwinism, Strachey was able to arouse fears which already existed but had not been effectively applied in criticism of the Liberals. In a final master stroke, perhaps done as an afterthought, Strachey incorporated a touch of what was to become his major weapon against the Liberals and his rally-cry for the Unionists -- Germanophobia.

Rome fell, not because the hordes of barbarians arrived and humiliated her -- that was only the superficial reason -- but because her spirit, her ancient resisting power -- in a word, her character -- had departed. The Romans had lost their independence in advance through the enervating and pauperising doles of a Government which played at being a Universal Providence. The Goths and Huns overcame men who were no longer proud and resourceful soldiers, but spiritless pensioners of a sentimentally benevolent State.³⁶

³⁶Spectator, 100, February 1, 1908, 179.

Few readers could miss Strachey's point. Most had been tutored in the history of Rome and all had been exposed to some variety of Germanophobia. The comparison of the two empires and the suggestion that they might share similar fates at the hands of the same protagonist could leave few readers unmoved. Strachey could not slay the socialist monster with this attack but he could give his own warnings a greater degree of credibility. Strachey continued from this point to criticize the socialist aspects of the government but he also prophesied that socialism could bring more than moral ruin -- it could bring about the physical destruction of Britain herself.

The tactic of employing the fear of Germany to embarrass and criticize the Liberal administration reached new heights on Sunday, February 2, 1908.³⁷ One week earlier Garvin had edited his first edition of the Observer. He had used the time between the two editions to amass information with which to launch a devastating assault upon Liberal naval policy. Garvin charged that if the Liberals implemented planned reductions in naval expenditure, the Germans would be able to gain naval parity by 1912. The editor was aided in this work by his friend and informant,

³⁷Observer, February 2, 1908, 6-7.

Admiral Sir John Fisher. As First Sea Lord, Fisher was able to supply Garvin with information which was so accurate that when used as the basis for editorial criticism it left the Liberal cabinet no choice but to meet Garvin's charges directly. The combination of Garvin, Fisher and the Observer proved a most potent political force. The first blow delivered by this combination landed with telling impact. The Cabinet and many of its supporters were intimidated by both the accuracy and the force of the attack. In two superbly written articles Garvin highlighted the failure of the Government to ensure Britain's continued naval supremacy and outlined a programme of naval construction which was identical to the plan advanced by Admiral Fisher.³⁸

The effect of Garvin's work did far more than just excite public opinion about the size of the navy and the safety of Britain. Garvin was actually able to drive a wedge into the Liberal government itself. As the Cabinet came under increasing pressure to maintain or augment the size of the naval estimates, many of its supporters in the government were obliged to give second thought to their own

³⁸Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 40-46.

willingness to support the Cabinet. Large naval increases, justified or not, would limit the amount of money available to pursue other governmental policies. Many of the Liberals and their Labour supporters preferred money to be spent on programmes which they believed to be of greater national importance.³⁹ J. A. Spender shrewly summarized the Cabinet's dilemma.

If the Navy Estimates now appear without an increase, it will be alleged that the Government have sacrificed the public interest to party pressure; if they appear with an increase, it will equally be alleged that they have been forced into a decision which they themselves think unnecessary by threat of resignation on the part of the Sea Lords or certain members of the Cabinet.⁴⁰

Garvin maintained his pressure on the government through all of February for he intended to cause as much damage to the Liberals' reputation as was possible. He even made the effort to associate past Liberal programmes with the intentions of the Campbell-Bannerman government.

³⁹See H. Weinroth, "The British Radicals and the Balance of Power 1902-1914", Historical Journal 13 (1970): 653-82, and by the same author "Left-wing Opposition to Naval Armaments in Britain Before 1914", Journal of Contemporary History 6 (1971):93-120.

⁴⁰Westminster Gazette, February 10, 1908, 8.

The Government have done what even Mr. Gladstone's last Ministry could not succeed in doing. For the first time in the greater part of a generation naval needs have been deliberately sacrificed to party exigencies.⁴¹

On March 7, 1908, Imperial Germany unwittingly aided Garvin in his campaign against the Liberals. On that date the German equivalent of the Dreadnought was launched. The appearance of the Nassau gave weight and urgency to the claims of the Observer. Garvin took this occasion to draw together many of the elements of popular Germanophobia and direct the revitalized fear at the Liberal government.

. . . with every ship launched by Germany the Kaiser comes nearer to concentrating in his hands the greatest combined military and naval force that has yet been possessed by any modern people. German maritime power, unlike the naval strength of any other people, may be -- and will be if we suffer ourselves to be played with -- the medium for an invasion by a second William the Conqueror.⁴²

On March 26 Garvin borrowed a criticism from Maxse and attacked the government's reduction of the Army estimates. This was a logical extension of his own policy embarrassing the government for its failure to provide adequately for the Navy. Since Haldane had been at the War Office he had managed to reduce the Army estimates by

⁴¹Observer, February 23, 1908, 6.

⁴²Ibid., March 26, 1908, 6.

almost £4½ million.⁴³ Garvin, perhaps encouraged by the success of his campaign against naval reductions, determined to wage war against the whole of Liberal defence spending. Once again his editorial was highly political in its nature and was not a deliberate challenge to Germany.

Mr. Haldane has been accused of seeking military efficiency by a process of baptismal regeneration. He is undoubtedly substituting names for things to a perilous extent. We do not wish to be unjust to him. Any Minister of the party to which he belongs works under hopeless conditions. He is never adequately supported except when he is unmaking the Army as rapidly as possible by disbanding men and reducing Estimates.⁴⁴

On April 4, 1908, Campbell-Bannerman officially resigned his Prime Ministerial duties.⁴⁵ There was no dispute within the Liberal ranks as to who should be his successor. Herbert Henry Asquith had served in the House of Commons for almost twenty-two years before he was called to be Prime Minister. He had been Home Secretary under Gladstone and Rosebery and had served as Campbell-Bannerman's Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had been the heir-apparent since September 1905 when it had become obvious to the leading men of the party that Lord Rosebery would never assert his own claim to leadership.⁴⁶

⁴³Ensor, England, 408.

⁴⁴Observer, March 26, 1908, 6.

⁴⁵Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments 1:149.

⁴⁶Matthew, The Liberal Imperialists, 112-20.

Asquith moved quickly to consolidate his new cabinet. The greater part of the old Campbell-Bannerman cabinet was left in place but a few crucial changes were made. Lord Tweedmouth was replaced by Reginald McKenna as First Lord of the Admiralty and Lord Crewe replaced Lord Elgin at the colonial office. More significantly, David Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Winston Churchill, entering the cabinet for the first time, became President of the Board of Trade. The addition of the latter two men made the new cabinet a volatile assembly over which Asquith exercised limited, if judicious, command. The fact that Asquith was able to harness the powers of such a gifted yet divergent group speaks well of his ability as Prime Minister.⁴⁷

The policies of the new administration were not initially different from those of Campbell-Bannerman. The cabinet was reform-minded and at the same time sensitive to the need to run efficiently the affairs of the nation. Asquith's government met with the same confused and ineffectual Unionist opposition as had that of its predecessor. Balfour was still under the handicap of a small, internally divided opposition party. The best card in his hand remained

⁴⁷Cameron Hazlehurst, "Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908-1916", English Historical Review 13 (July, 1970): 502-31.

the House of Lords. He believed that, like Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith would eventually be forced by the Radical wing of his party to pass some unacceptable legislation which the Lords, and ultimately the voters, would reject. Yet Asquith faced one major change in the Unionist attack which Campbell-Bannerman had not been obliged to contend. This change was the emergence of fully developed editorial Germanophobia.

Garvin, Maxse and Strachey exhibited an immediate dislike for Asquith's new government. Rather than showing any signs of repenting for their past sins, the Liberals seemed as determined as ever to bring about the decline of British greatness. By placing the purse-strings of the nation in the hands of a notorious Radical, Asquith demonstrated his commitment to the destruction of Britain's financial stability. The inclusion of Churchill, a political turncoat, in the cabinet heightened Unionist fears about the integrity of the new administration.

The one significant difference between Campbell-Bannerman's policies and those of his successor was that Asquith was prepared to allow the introduction of non-contributory Old Age Pensions. The possibility of such a plan had been discussed on many occasions but it had never been formulated into a bill. Because the first budget over which Asquith presided showed a clear surplus, the

new Prime Minister felt that the time had come to give official support to one of the programmes dear to the hearts of his Radical supporters.⁴⁸ The major shortcomings of Asquith's plan, which was politically sound within the context of his own party, was that the surplus in the budget had been created by the reduction of the army estimates and that the man who sponsored the bill was Lloyd George -- the "Radical opportunist".⁴⁹

Strachey was the first of the three editors to question the intentions of the Asquith government. His sensitivity to the threat of socialism woke him to the dangers of a Liberal government operating with a surplus budget. Believing as he did that the Liberals could soon turn a surplus into a horrendous deficit he cautioned his readers that

. . . considering the dangers of the European situation, and therefore the necessity of strong armaments, there is only one way of keeping taxation within reasonable bounds, and that is by the avoidance of large expenditures on so-called social reforms.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Ensor, England, 408.

⁴⁹Havighurst, Twentieth Century Britain, 98.

⁵⁰Spectator, 100, April 11, 1908, 565.

Garvin and Maxse disagreed with Strachey as to the potential threat of Old Age Pensions legislation. As social imperialists they believed that some social reform was necessary. Indeed they argued that a degree of social reform could stave off the real socialists coming to power. Garvin pointed to Germany as an illustration of a strong nation which tolerated a sensible degree of reform in order to prevent social revolution. He argued that small concessions insured the government against being overthrown while at the same time reforms inspired a greater degree of patriotism.⁵¹ Maxse took the tack that social reform could reasonably and innocuously be financed by the indirect tax created by Tariff Reform. He coupled this belief with the claim that Tariff Reform could partially finance Britain's two-Power standard.⁵²

Though the three editors disagreed about the significance of Asquithian reforms, they were in complete agreement about Asquith's failure to recognize the defence requirement of the nation. None of the editors was prepared to achieve social reform at the expense of national defence.

⁵¹Observer, July 12, 1908, 6.

⁵²National Review 51 (May, 1908): 512.

They feared that the two chief Radicals, Lloyd George and Churchill, were prepared to purchase popular legislation with defence funds. This fear transformed Lloyd George and Churchill into the chief villains of the Liberal government. To the editors, these two men symbolized all that was frightening about the Liberal administration. Lloyd George and Churchill were political outsiders who had, by some capricious fate, been drawn into the vortex of political power.⁵³ The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade were made to appear as instruments, unwitting or otherwise, of German Weltpolitik. The arguments advanced for this theory were unfounded but they were persuasive and based upon a sincere concern for the well-being of the nation. In practice this hostility meant that nearly every legislative initiative taken or supported by either of these men was challenged on the grounds of a broad concept of national security. Because these two ministers were clearly the most active members of the cabinet, the editors were rarely at a loss for stirring articles with which to fill their journals.⁵⁴

⁵³See Randolph S. Churchill, Winston S. Churchill (London, 1967), 2:239-47, and Peter Rowland, Lloyd George (London, 1975), 200-11.

⁵⁴Bentley B. Gilbert, The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain (London, 1966), 250-67, 314-18. Gilbert details the extensive roles played by Lloyd George

This antagonistic relationship between the editors and the government continued with little modification for the remainder of 1908 and into the early months of 1909.⁵⁵ The beginning of the "Casablanca Affair" and the publication of the Kaiser's celebrated remarks in the Daily Telegraph on October 28 did virtually nothing to intensify the attacks by the three editors upon the Liberal government. This was not the case with the massive popular press which turned both incidents into causes célèbres. Even Asquith seemed more disturbed by the implications of another Franco-German Moroccan dispute than did any of the editors. The Prime Minister went so far as to sound out Balfour's intentions should the situation deteriorate further.⁵⁶

and Churchill in laying the foundations of the modern welfare state.

⁵⁵Between the summer of 1908 and the early spring of 1909 all three editors made constant appeals to the nation not to allow the financing of social reform at the expense of national defence. For examples of this press campaign see, Observer, July 19, 1908, 6, August 2, 1908, 6, October 11, 1908, 6, October 25, 1908, 6, November 29, 1908, 6, January 17, 1909, 6; National Review 51 (July, 1908):685, (August, 1908):851, 52 (September 1908):7, (October, 1908):166, (January, 1909):723; Spectator, 101, July 18, 1908, 80, August 22, 1908, 252. November 28, 1908, 865, December 5, 1908, 928, 102, February 20, 1909, 288.

⁵⁶Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments, 1:204-09.

Garvin, Maxse and Strachey noted these incidents in their journals but they were not used as a means of criticizing the Liberals. The great escalation in the campaign against the government came in March, 1909, with the famous "Naval Scare".

The Naval Scare which was orchestrated by the Germanophobe popular press was already in progress by the time Garvin, Maxse and Strachey entered the fray.⁵⁷ The main issue was whether the government should finance the building of four, six or eight Dreadnoughts.⁵⁸ The Radicals called for four; Reginald McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, and other moderate Liberals were prepared to accept six; while Admiral Fisher and the "Jingoist" popular press argued for eight. Because of his unique relationship with Fisher, Garvin took the lead in the naval discussion and it is to his activities which one must look.

Throughout February and most of March 1909, the Observer delayed its attack upon the government's efforts to establish a compromise over the navy estimates. On March 14, the Observer guardedly agreed with the govern-

⁵⁷Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, 327-65.

⁵⁸For a detailed discussion of the political and financial issues involved in the naval scare see, Marder, Dreadnought to Scapa Flow 1:177-85.

ment's new navy estimates for the year 1909-10.⁵⁹ The government's plan as accepted by the cabinet called for the immediate construction of four Dreadnoughts and allowed for the construction of a further four if the need should arise. The Observer took umbrage at this latter provision but resisted the temptation to move to a full-fledged attack. Exactly one week later, after the official Opposition had attacked the government over its failure to take into account an increase in the German naval programme, Garvin struck out in one of the most inflammatory articles of his career.

To-day, under a full sense of responsibility, it is our duty to lay before the country a statement and a proposal each as grave as a newspaper has ever made. We stand in a crisis of national peril such as for two hundred years has never threatened us in peace or war. By an act of moral treachery which would justify us in armed reprisals now, a foreign Power has doubled its naval programme in secret, and has gained six months start in a conspiracy against our life.⁶⁰

Garvin called for the immediate construction of eight Dreadnoughts as the only means to prevent the loss of Britain's naval supremacy. Few things could be more

⁵⁹Observer, March 14, 1909, 8.

⁶⁰Ibid., March 21, 1909, 9.

certain to divide the cabinet than a battle over navy estimates. It was also clear that almost nothing could be engineered which would so draw on the time and attention of the chief Radicals in the cabinet. A. M. Gollin has examined the obvious strategic aspects of Garvin's press campaign in the spring of 1909 but there is still an element which has not received due attention.⁶¹ This element is the purely political motive behind the pressure Garvin applied to the government.

Garvin, as well as other astute Unionist editors, pressed his attack against the government, not solely to gain four more Dreadnoughts, but in an attempt to out-manoeuvre Lloyd George. They all realized that in April 1909, Lloyd George would introduce his first budget. The previous budget had been shaped by Asquith and had been personally presented to the Commons by the Prime Minister. The budget of 1909 would be the work of the brilliant and feared Radical, Lloyd George. It was likely that Lloyd George might use the opportunity presented by a budget to try to break the strangle-hold the Unionist party still imposed on the Liberal government. The work of the government had been seriously hindered by the Unionist majority

⁶¹Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 68-92.

in the House of Lords. Since 1906, Balfour had enjoyed a high degree of success in preventing what were considered to be excessively radical measures from becoming law. The Liberals were increasingly frustrated by the Lords which either vetoed their bills or amended them beyond recognition. The fear of many Unionists was that Lloyd George would introduce a radical budget which could significantly alter the political and social structure of Britain, and which, because of parliamentary procedure, could not be vetoed by the House of Lords.

There had been previous political rumblings which could be interpreted to suggest that the government was planning to take this very course of action. As early as December 11, 1908, in an address to the National Liberal Club, Asquith told the assembled members that the government intended to use the budget to solve the problem of the Lords' domination over the Commons.⁶² In Liverpool on December 21, Lloyd George struck another ominous chord when he attacked Lord Lansdowne, the Unionist leader in the House of Lords.

⁶²The Times, December 12, 1908, 6.

We cannot consent to accept the present humiliating conditions of legislating by the sufferance of Lord Lansdowne. This nobleman has arrogated to himself a position he has usurped -- a sovereignty that no king has claimed since the ominous days of Charles I. Decrees are issued from Lansdowne House that Buckingham Palace would not dream of sending forth. We are not going to stand any longer the usurpation of King Lansdowne and his Royal consort in the Commons.⁶³

Winston Churchill, the other "Radical opportunist", did his part to set Unionist pulses racing when, in a speech delivered at Birmingham on January 13, 1909, he suggested that the Liberals were prepared to go to the country with their new budget.⁶⁴ This could only mean that the Liberals had a budget which the House of Lords would like to reject. Thus Lloyd George's first budget was much feared, for what the Liberals were prepared to applaud, the Unionists were prepared to fight.

The viciousness, and indeed the frenzy of Garvin's attack upon the Liberals' navy estimates, can be seen as an attempt to preempt Lloyd George's budget. If the Liberals could be made to feel politically insecure it seemed reasonable to expect that they would not venture a radical budget. Garvin was playing his trump card when he finally

⁶³Lloyd George, quoted in Elie Halévy, The Rule of Democracy 1905-1914 (London, 1961), 6:286.

⁶⁴Daily News, January 14, 1909, 5.

decided to join the navy scare. He was not, as A. M. Gollin claims, being used as the disseminator of Admiral Fisher's propaganda, but rather he was cultivating Fisher for any information which might force the Liberals into a passive and defensive position. Garvin was not the wide-eyed innocent in regards to Fisher that Gollin would have his readers believe.⁶⁵ Fisher was a manipulator and Garvin knew it. As early as May 1907, Fisher had actually admitted that he played with statistics for his own purposes. While telling others that the nation was in peril, he had written to Garvin that "You must take my word that we are 3 times more powerful than Germany and ready for instant war -- but the truth is I don't want anyone to know the truth."⁶⁶

Now, two years later, during the naval crisis of 1909, Fisher discovered that the feared extension of the German naval programme had been highly exaggerated. He passed this information on to Garvin in a letter with instructions to tell no one and to burn the letter.⁶⁷ Garvin carried on his own naval campaign long past the time when he knew the truth of the situation. If there had not been a naval scare in the spring of 1909, Garvin would have been

⁶⁵Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 72-76.

⁶⁶Garvin Papers, Fisher to Garvin, May 8, 1907.

⁶⁷Ibid., Fisher to Garvin, May 28, 1909.

obliged to invent one, just as he had done in the spring of 1908.

Maxse and Strachey, though not having the same sources of privileged information as Garvin, were moving along similar lines. Neither man participated in the earliest phase of the naval scare. Like Garvin they held off their attack until March when the naval estimates of the government were officially made known. Then they struck with a vengeance. Maxse blasted the "Little Navyites" for condemning Britain to a position of servitude under the German masters.⁶⁸ Strachey accused the government of living in "A Naval Fool's Paradise" for the Germans were efficient builders who could build in secrecy.⁶⁹ They both demanded that the government concentrate its efforts on maintaining Britain's naval supremacy and painted dark portraits of a world in which the Germans had gained naval parity.

The three editors eventually won the battle for the eight Dreadnoughts but by the time this occurred it was very anti-climactic. What they judged to be an even greater peril to Britain than an insufficient fleet had come into existence. On April 29, 1909, Lloyd George introduced his

⁶⁸National Review 53 (April, 1909):170.

⁶⁹Spectator, 102, March 20, 1909, 444.

famous "People's Budget" into the House of Commons. Because of ever increasing expenditures -- much of it on new Dreadnoughts -- the Chancellor of the Exchequer was faced with a deficit of £16,000,000. In order to meet these expenses Lloyd George expanded the direct tax base. He called for a significant increase in inheritance tax and increased the tax on unearned increment in value in land which changed hands and increased the levies on tobacco and spirits.⁷⁰

The Unionist opposition was quick to call Lloyd George's legislation the "Soak the Rich Budget". Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were united in their belief that the budget was a giant step on the road to a socialist state. They clearly believed that Lloyd George wished to provoke the House of Lords to reject the bill and they attributed to him the darkest kind of political machinations. Garvin's first article after the introduction of the budget was a succinct statement of the fear felt by many Unionists.

⁷⁰For a complete break-down of the Lloyd George budget see, Halévy, The Rule of Democracy, 6:291-96.

The full gravity of the issue raised by the Budget may be stated in a sentence. Mr. Lloyd George, as his supporters and opponents will agree, proposes a financial revolution which can only be prevented by a constitutional crisis. For about motives and objects there need be no mistake. Mr. Lloyd George's mind is not primarily set upon his financial business, but rather upon the political future. The Budget may be regarded as the joint work of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade. It is their joint manifesto to all the demagogic forces in the country. They expect Liberalism to shed its more moderate members. By the union of advanced Liberals with the forces they think Labour to possess they hope to create a Radical-Socialist party of the future. That is the plain aim. To this the whole finance of the Budget is subsidiary.⁷¹

Lloyd George's apparent readiness to usher in a socialist state did nothing to reduce the fervour with which the three editors pursued their demands for a militarily strong Britain. Indeed the budget only served to intensify their Germanophobia. If Britain were to become a socialist state, as Lloyd George seemed to be planning, the nation would be incapable of maintaining its position vis-à-vis Germany. Britain would lose her supremacy at sea and consequently her position in the world. Hence, throughout the months of May to October, the three journals were filled with warnings of the dire results which would befall Britain if the budget were to become law. But regardless of how far afield the editors travelled in their efforts to

⁷¹Observer, May 2, 1909, 10.

awaken the nation to its present peril, they always returned to the same point. The revolutionary changes implied by Lloyd George's budget, whether it was passed or fought at the expense of a constitutional crisis, would make Britain a weaker nation -- and if Britain were weak she would be vulnerable.

Lloyd George's Limehouse speech of July 31 was a major reverse for the Unionists since it brilliantly struck them where they were most vulnerable. Lloyd George depicted a party of property trying to protect the interest of the well-to-do at the expense of the honest hardworking poor.⁷² It was revolutionary rhetoric at its finest and ". . . drove the Tory party off its mental balance".⁷³ It seemed that Lloyd George would leave no stone unturned in his effort "to socialize" the nation. The rhetorical excesses of one side merely led to a similar excess on the other side. The possibility for compromise, if it ever existed, was destroyed by the Limehouse speech. Balfour determined after Limehouse to instruct the Lords to reject the budget. This decision was supported by the great majority of Unionists.⁷⁴ Garvin's article entitled

⁷²Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments, 1:223-26.

⁷³J. A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics (London, 1927), 1:231.

⁷⁴Neal Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the

"Revolution by Budget" is illustrative of the intensity with which all three editors conducted their anti-budget campaigns.

This Budget is an unparalleled betrayal of the financial interests of the Fleet. Not one farthing is voted out of the whole mess of fresh taxation towards the construction of the eight Dreadnoughts, and it is a fact, incredible as it may seem, that Germany in the current financial year is spending a larger sum than we are devoting to the same purpose. Upon these grounds alone the Peers would be justified in refusing to accept the Budget as a whole and in remitting to the judgment of the people the whole system of juggling with the financial needs of national defence which this Budget represents.⁷⁵

The budget finally came to the vote on November 4, 1909. It passed the House of Commons with a majority of 230. On November 30 the Lords rejected the budget by a majority of 275 and precipitated a general election.⁷⁶ The Liberals, it seemed, had just what they wanted. The Unionists had blatantly violated the principles of parliamentary democracy and their public humiliation was at hand. Unfortunately for the Liberals the Unionists were not prepared to stand silently in the pillory and face public scorn. Aided by their many journalistic supporters, the Unionists went on the offensive.

People (Toronto, 1972), 75-82.

⁷⁵Observer, September 5, 1909, 6.

⁷⁶Ensor, England, 417.

The main issues for the Unionists were the budget, the reform of the House of Lords, the implementation of Tariff Reform and finally, but most dramatically, the naval question.⁷⁷ These were the "official" issues for the Unionists. Unofficially Germanophobia began to gain an ever increasing importance. On January 4, Balfour lent his own prestige to the Germanophobes in a speech given in Hanley. The leader of the opposition skilfully linked the German menace to the need for a strong naval policy.⁷⁸ This speech did not mean that Balfour was prepared to accept Germanophobia as official Unionist policy but it did indicate his willingness to employ Germanophobia to buttress the naval issue.⁷⁹

The campaign during the election was, for Garvin, Maxse and Strachey, little different from the campaign they had waged against the budget. All three editors widened the basis on which they presented their arguments and found opportunities to advocate the fiscal policy of their choice. Yet fundamentally they presented the same grave warnings about the future of the nation should the budget be passed.

⁷⁷Blewett, The Peers, 116-29.

⁷⁸Times, January 5, 1910, 7.

⁷⁹Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 129-31.

Garvin's journal was in the forefront of the effort to remove the Liberals.

The Radical-Socialist-Nationalist Coalition is a standing conspiracy against the guarantees for naval supremacy and the safety of the State. Out with them, if you value security. In face of the German law settling construction for years ahead any vote for a Budget that made financial provision for only half the ships which the Government itself admits we need -- this sounds like an almost incredible contradiction, but is literally true -- would be a direct vote for naval insecurity.⁸⁰

The National Review adopted much the same approach during the election though Maxse's forthright style of journalism gave the issues an even sharper edge.

The protagonists on both sides are fully conscious of the seriousness of the problems arising out of the Budget and the alternative policy of Tariff Reform, single-Chamber government, the unity of the United Kingdom, and the grim tragedy of unemployment. But few of them yet realize not only that the British Constitution is a stake, but that we are gambling with the very existence of England and the Empire.⁸¹

Recent events have taught us that a vote for the Unionist Party is a vote for England. A vote for the Radical Party is a vote for Germany. The German press cannot conceal its passionate desire for the Urites and the downfall of England.⁸²

⁸⁰Observer, January 2, 1910, 6.

⁸¹National Review 54 (January, 1910):709.

⁸²Ibid., 749.

Strachey was somewhat more restrained than either Garvin or Maxse though he made exactly the same argument.

We fully admit that Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, and possibly a majority of their colleagues, are at heart as anxious as their opponents to maintain the Navy in an efficient State. If, however, the Liberal Party wins at the polls it is impossible to pretend that the result will not injuriously affect the cause of naval preparation. Though they may not realize it, the power to insist on adequate preparation will have passed from the moderate members of the Cabinet, and they will be obliged to acquiesce in what is now being sedulously suggested as a substitute for a supreme Navy -- namely reliance on some sort of agreement with our chief rival on the sea.⁸³

The results of the January election represented a moral victory for the Unionists though they did not win the election. The great Liberal majority in the Commons evaporated. They were returned with 275 members who were opposed by 273 Unionists. The Unionists had actually managed to gain a larger popular vote and in England more seats. They received 3,127,887 votes while the Liberals managed to gain only 2,880,581.⁸⁴ Garvin, Maxse and Strachey could feel some sense of pride in having contributed to the Liberals' decline. They believed that the cry for the

⁸³Spectator, 104, January 15, 1910, 81.

⁸⁴Butler and Sloman, British Political Facts, 182.

security of the nation had had an effect.⁸⁵ It seemed that relating socialism to national disaster had enjoyed some popular success. Perhaps the true accolade for the limited Unionist success belongs where Maxse placed it, upon the head of Garvin.

. . . a member of our own profession, Mr. J. L. Garvin -- who recently received the tribute of a special diatribe from the Chancellor of the Exchequer -- has played a conspicuous part in the making of history during the last few months -- indeed a far greater part than the public have any idea of. It was Mr. Garvin who, almost single-handed, lifted the Opposition out of the Slough of Despond last August, when for a brief moment the scuttlers appeared likely to get the upper hand, and panic seized important journals and influential politicians. Mr. Garvin set to work to destroy what he aptly termed "the fallacies of funk," and succeeded in educating the Party to the duty of following their leaders in the policy of submitting the Budget to the country.⁸⁶

Unfortunately for the Unionists their time of jubilation was short lived. The Parliament of 1910 was entirely different in its composition from its predecessor. Among the Liberal Coalition and the Unionists were 40 Labour members and, more significantly, 82 Irish Nationalists. This alignment of members dictated what course of action the government would be obliged to pursue. If the Liberals wished to pass their budget they would need to seek the

⁸⁵Blewett, The Peers, 117.

⁸⁶National Review 54 (February, 1910):897.

support of the Irish Nationalists. The Irish Nationalists were prepared to support the Liberals but for a price -- Home Rule. The Liberals had little alternative but to comply with the Irish wishes yet they could not grant Home Rule in the face of the Unionist House of Lords. Therefore to remain securely in power the Liberals were forced by political circumstances to present a bill which would have the effect of making the House of Commons indisputably superior to the House of Lords. That is to say, the Liberals could stay in power, but only at the cost of a major constitutional reform.

Neither Garvin, Maxse or Strachey immediately saw the relentless logic of the new political situation. They firmly believed that the Liberals had been soundly chastised for their attempts to pass a "revolutionary budget" and they maintained that the will of the electorate was against any form of radical reform. After the election the editors would have considered any form of constitutional reform unconscionable. The people, it seemed, had clearly spoken in favour of a strong nation and the political supremacy of the Irish was seen as a momentary political aberration. Garvin firmly maintained that the nation was ". . . faced by the plain likelihood of another General Election within six months or less."⁸⁷

⁸⁷Observer, January 23, 1910, 8.

Asquith moved quickly to consolidate his political position and to introduce the legislation which would be necessary to maintain the support of the Irish. In March he introduced a resolution which would allow other measures to become law without the consent of the Lords if they passed the Commons in three successive sessions. He also introduced a resolution which would reduce the length of parliament from seven years to five. These resolutions were passed by the Commons by April 14, 1910. The celebrated Parliament Bill was then introduced and on April 27 the budget was also passed.⁸⁸ The Lords now had to decide how far they were prepared to go in resisting what they saw as a clear challenge from the Liberals.

Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had been caught off-guard by the alacrity and determination displayed by Asquith but they immediately knew why he was trying to remould the constitution. Asquith was clearly going to accommodate his Irish colleagues and this meant the eventual appearance of a Home Rule Bill. The editors agreed that Home Rule was completely unacceptable. They quickly produced one of the oldest arguments for the retention of Ireland and dressed it in new garb.

⁸⁸Ensor, England, 420.

Great Britain can never consent to any measure of Home Rule, or to anything which might lead up to Home Rule. Had we no regard for Irish interests, with which ours are indissolubly bound up, the law of self-preservation would veto the lunacy of setting up a Transvaal at our doors, which in due time would become a German base of operations against Great Britain.⁸⁹

Beyond agreement on the Irish issue, which had not as yet come to the fore, there was once again much uncertainty as to what course of action might be suggested for the Unionist party. The editors continued to warn the nation of the German menace and the government's inability or unwillingness to provide for the security of Britain. But this journalistic tactic no longer had the same political significance as it had once enjoyed. After April 1910 the real theatre of political conflict had moved from the electorate into Parliament itself. The fears and concerns generated by the Germanophobes had only passing relevance to the major issues of the day. Germanophobia could play little or no part in the battle against constitutional reform.

In the midst of this turmoil, Edward VII died. Garvin took the opportunity to propose what he called

⁸⁹National Review 55 (March, 1910):6.

"The Truce of God".⁹⁰ The editor asked that there should be convened a conference composed of the leading politicians of the major parties. The function of the conference would be to resolve, behind closed doors, the issues which threatened the domestic peace and, consequently, national security.⁹¹ To this plan the leaders of the Liberals and the Unionists reluctantly agreed and they met for the first time on June 17. Twenty-two meetings later, on November 10, the constitutional conference terminated having been ruined by the very issues it had been called to resolve. The truce ended, and the combatants took their struggle back to the country.⁹²

The general election of December 1910 was conducted along far more emotional lines than the earlier election of that year. The Unionists believed that they had to curtail a nefarious plan which would ruin the nation. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey continued to employ the German menace as a campaign tool against the Liberals but by now it appeared in a very stylized form. In the December 11 edition of the Observer, after a lengthy diatribe about the Liberals' myopia in regard to Germany, Garvin wrote one of his clearest statements about his conception of his own party.

⁹⁰Observer, May 8, 1910, 10.

⁹¹Searle, National Efficiency, 177-96.

⁹²Gollin, The Observer and J. L. Garvin, 184-203.

We, and we alone, are the national party of Britain. We, and we alone, are the party that is solid for a supreme fleet, a strong Constitution, and an inviolate Crown. We, and we alone, are the party of the people standing for the direct vote and real majority rule. We, and we alone, are for independent and patriotic Government free from the Redmonite yoke.⁹³

Strachey used a variation of the old argument which claimed that only the Conservatives truly knew how to handle foreign affairs.

The chief dangers connected with the Radical attitude of mind are to be found in the region of foreign politics. There the British Radical shows a most extraordinary impenetrability and want of appreciation of facts. He finds it impossible to recognize that all countries are not governed by public opinion. Judging by himself, he cannot believe that the theories of the school of blood and iron really have weight in the world.⁹⁴

Maxse went further than either of the other editors. Indeed one might claim that he was reaching the brink of paranoia.

The balance of power continues to be held by a disloyal faction subsidized by foreign gold, contributed not so much by the friends of Ireland as by the enemies of England, namely, the Irish Americans and the German Americans who have recently entered into a close political partnership in the United States for the avowed purpose of dismembering the United Kingdom and of placing us at the mercy of Germany in the event of war.⁹⁵

⁹³Observer, December 11, 1910, 10.

⁹⁴Spectator, 105, November 12, 1910, 786.

⁹⁵National Review 56 (January, 1911): 718.

The results of the December general election were even more frustrating than those of January.⁹⁶ The "Wizard" of the Liberal party, Lloyd George, had been held in check but the message of the Unionists had failed to reach the electorate. The Liberals were returned to office with 272 seats, identical to the result of the Unionist effort. Yet the strength still lay with the Liberals who could draw on the 84 Irish Nationalist and 42 Labour members.⁹⁷ Asquith could claim that he had an indisputable mandate from the people. The reforms of the Liberals were certain to be passed. Balfour could not argue against three consecutive electoral triumphs. The Unionists were no longer just a defeated party, they were a demoralized party. They were suffering the strains of factionalism -- the perennial curse of the party which fails to gain power.

The three editors made brave efforts to overcome the disarray of their own party. They refused to accept the fact that the country was prepared to allow the Liberals to conduct their "constitutional revolution". Almost in desperation now, the editors made their last futile effort to use the German menace to rally the nation at its moment

⁹⁶Blewett, The Peers, 195-206.

⁹⁷Butler and Sloman, British Political Facts, 182.

of madness.⁹⁸ The year 1911 was definitely becoming the nadir of Unionist aspirations. It was certainly the beginning of the decline of Conservative editorial Germanophobia. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey began to realize that Germanophobia was not a sufficient force to win elections.

The legislative record of 1911 represents a list of consecutive defeats for the Unionist party and its supporters. The House of Lords battled in vain against the bill which would strip it of its legislative veto powers. On May 23, the Parliament Bill was once again introduced into the Lords. It was met by the fanatical resistance of a group of peers who were christened the "Die-Hards".⁹⁹ Garvin and Maxse associated themselves with this group which was led by Lord Willoughby de Broke and the Earl of Halsbury. But the efforts of these men were to no avail. On August 10 the Lords passed the Bill by 131 votes to 114.¹⁰⁰ Garvin was

⁹⁸Observer, February 19, 1911, 8, March 12, 1911, 10; National Review 106 (January 21, 1911):80 (February 4, 1911):174.

⁹⁹For a complete account of the struggle over the Parliament Bill see, George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England 1910-1914 (New York, 1935), 30-68 and Jenkins, Mr. Balfour's Poodle, 132-85.

¹⁰⁰Dangerfield, Strange Death, 65.

furious with those peers who had voted for the bill. He considered them traitors to the Unionist cause.

There can be no closing of ranks while there are traitors in the ranks, unexpelled and unrebuked. There is a deep moral breach in the Unionist Party. We shall work to heal that breach on sound conditions, but not on dishonest terms. Never has a party been disgraced as ours has been disgraced by the ignoble train of Unionist, lay and clerical, who voted with the Coalition to carry what they themselves had declared to be the most iniquitous and fatal measure ever placed upon the Statute Book.¹⁰¹

The path had now been cleared for the introduction of a Home Rule Bill. The Lords had lost the power to prevent permanently that bill from becoming law but more significantly the hold of the Unionist party over the House of Commons had been broken. The Liberals would be able to pass what legislation they chose without it being amended or rejected. Thus the influence of the official Opposition in the Commons was drastically reduced. This situation placed even greater demands upon the Unionists' journalistic supporters but even they were in a state of disorder.

Throughout the battle over the Parliament Bill, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey continued to argue that the Liberal government could not be trusted to deal adequately with the German menace. They argued in particular that

¹⁰¹Observer, August 13, 1911, 6.

Lloyd George and Churchill were absolutely innocent of any realistic conception of how to deal with the Germans. Unfortunately for the editors the very men they constantly attacked disproved that theory. On July 1, 1911, the German gunboat the Panther arrived at the Moroccan port of Agadir. The Germans claimed, quite correctly, that the French were violating the Algeciras Treaty, but in Britain the matter was seen in an entirely different light. Once again the three editors were able to point to what they claimed was a clear case of German hostility towards France. They also rather smugly pointed out that the instrument of aggression was a ship of the German navy.¹⁰² They set about, as was their custom, to accuse the Liberals of gross incompetence and cowardice. But on this occasion their campaign was stopped in mid-stream. On the evening of July 21, Lloyd George delivered a speech at the Mansion House in which he blunted the editors' attack. In his speech, the Chancellor gave an unmistakable warning to Germany that Britain had no intention of allowing Germany a free hand in her dealings with France.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Observer, July 2, 1911, 11, July 9, 1911, 8; Spectator, 107, July 8, 1911, 57, July 22, 1911, 129.

¹⁰³For an alternative interpretation of Lloyd George's intentions see, Richard A. Cosgrove, "A Note on Lloyd George's Speech at the Mansion House, 21 July, 1911", Historical Journal 12 (1969):698-701.

I conceive that nothing would justify a disturbance of international goodwill except questions of the gravest national moment. But if a situation were to be forced upon us, in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by her centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.¹⁰⁴

Though not calculated to do so, the Chancellor's speech figuratively pulled the teeth from his opponents' arguments. The language he had used was so similar to that of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey that any one of them could have written the speech. The editors could do nothing but applaud the sentiments expressed by the man they had been so vigorously attacking for four years. Garvin wrote that the Chancellor was ". . . growing every day".¹⁰⁵ Maxse praised him for his ". . . unimpeachable sentiments",¹⁰⁶ while Strachey applauded the abandonment of the Liberals' "ostrich policy".¹⁰⁷ What the editors did not say was that they had lost the services of one of the two

¹⁰⁴ Ensor, England, 434.

¹⁰⁵ Observer, July 23, 1911, 6.

¹⁰⁶ National Review 57 (August, 1911):165.

¹⁰⁷ Spectator, 107, July 29, 1911, 165.

most useful whipping-boys in the Liberal cabinet.

The other whipping-boy was lost to them a few months later. Winston Churchill had often been the target of various organs of the Unionist press. The fact that he earlier had abandoned the party and had become one of the "darlings of the Radicals" did nothing to soften Unionist attitudes.¹⁰⁸ By supporting radical social reform legislation and attacking McKenna's naval estimates, Churchill had made himself one of the primary targets of abuse for Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. On October 23, 1911, Churchill was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, an office the editors typically supported. The editors reacted with surprise and caution.¹⁰⁹ Their journals had consistently ignored the fact that Churchill believed that a strong British navy was one of the guarantees of European peace. They had further failed to note that Churchill's view of the nature of modern European war was similar to their own. The editors had chronicled only his opposition to what he believed to be excessive and unwarranted increases in naval expenditure.¹¹⁰ Their partisan polemics had depicted Churchill as an opponent of naval supremacy but upon his

¹⁰⁸Randolph S. Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, 2: 48-80.

¹⁰⁹Observer, October 29, 1911, 10.

¹¹⁰R. Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, 2:511-21.

appointment as First Lord they ceased their criticism and allowed him to show in what fashion he would conduct his new charge. Churchill's dedication to the principle of naval supremacy quickly became undeniable. The editors' Germanophobic arsenal had been effectively robbed of one more weapon.

The editors ended the year 1911 faced with one last major change. After having lost three general elections and with a large segment of his party in revolt, Balfour resigned on November 8.¹¹⁰ He was succeeded by Andrew Bonar Law, a man of limited ability but a sound Tariff Reformer.¹¹¹ Balfour's resignation had been hastened by The B.M.G. (Balfour Must Go) campaign waged by the National Review. Maxse was furious with Balfour for his failure to whole-heartedly embrace the cause of Tariff Reform. He believed that Balfour's indecision and faithlessness to the Chamberlain creed had cost his party the December election of 1910.¹¹² He was also prepared to blame every subsequent

¹¹⁰Peter Fraser, "The Unionist Debacle of 1911 and Balfour's Retirement", Journal of Modern History 35 (1963): 354-36.

¹¹¹Robert Blake, The Unknown Prime Minister (London, 1955).

¹¹²National Review 58 (September, 1911):16.

Unionist problem on Balfour.¹¹³ The leader of the opposition found no support in the Observer, though Garvin was not prepared to initiate an actual assault upon his leadership. Balfour's departure would mean a significant reduction in Garvin's influence but the editor felt that it was necessary to find a new leader. Indeed it was only Strachey who was still prepared to support Balfour, but one suspects this was done only out of the fear that the next Unionist leader might be Austen Chamberlain.¹¹⁴

At the close of 1911 the editors rallied around their new leader. All three men pledged Bonar Law their support for what they knew must be the next great struggle.¹¹⁵ The Liberals were honour-bound to their Irish Nationalist supporters to obtain Home Rule and the Unionists felt just

¹¹³Maxse was not alone in attributing the problems of the Unionists to a lack of leadership. Roy Jenkins in his book, Mr. Balfour's Poodle, 166, claims that even Balfour fully appreciated how much his conduct had contributed to creating the desperate situation in which the Unionists found themselves.

¹¹⁴Spectator, 107, October 21, 1911, 628.

¹¹⁵Observer, November 19, 1911, 10; Spectator, 107, November 18, 1911, 844; National Review 58 (December, 1911):518.

as honour-bound to try to prevent that from happening. The editors would have to gather up new tools if they wished to help forge a Unionist victory. The political situation at the end of 1911 was radically different from that of the preceding six years. The electorate appeared to have become immune to many of the tactics employed by the editors in their assault upon their political enemies. Even the well-worn ploy of exciting the British people's Germanophobia appeared to have worn thin. But there could be little surprise at this for Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had used this device constantly since 1908.¹¹⁶ It served them well though it was quite clearly an insufficient force to earn them all that they sought. It had allowed them to harass and embarrass the Liberal government and it had been a major journalistic element in the general election of January 1910. It had served to draw attention to the needs of the navy and the army as well as the need for a firm foreign policy. Thus, while not being able to discredit totally the Liberals, the employment of Germanophobia in the cause of the Unionist party had prevented the government from abandoning what the editors considered to be vital to the security of the nation.

¹¹⁶Blewett, The Peers, 125-28.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DECLINE OF GERMANOPHOBIA 1912-1914

By the beginning of 1912 the influence of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had experienced a marked decline. Both domestic and foreign developments began to follow a pattern which the editors were increasingly unable to influence. The fear of Germany was replaced by the more immediate fear of a British civil war. When the editors addressed this new issue they could not help but sound like Unionists rather than men who spoke in a non-partisan fashion for the good of the nation. The naval supremacy issue began to slip from their hands as Churchill made his energy and enthusiasm felt in the venerable halls of the Admiralty. The profitable relationship between the editors and the leadership of the Unionist party ended abruptly when Bonar Law, the man whom so few knew, took the helm of his party.¹ Most symbolic of the editors' problems, if not most significant, was the beginning of a rapprochement between

¹Blake, The Unknown Prime Minister, 80.

Britain and Germany. These events contributed to the eroding fortunes of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey and in combination they account for the decline of Germanophobia prior to the outbreak of the Great War.

In February 1912, Haldane went on his famous "mission" to Berlin in an attempt to alleviate the tension which had been created by the Anglo-German naval rivalry. This attempt at negotiation had originated with Albert Ballin, head of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, and his friend, the German-born London financier, Sir Ernest Cassell. Asquith believed that private discussions of the naval issue might be of value, but he hesitated to exaggerate the importance of the talks by sending Churchill; and the dispatch of the Foreign Secretary to Berlin was felt to be premature. The best candidate for this enterprise was clearly Haldane.² He was persona gratissima in Berlin for he spoke fluent German, admired German Idealist philosophy and had a greater appreciation and sympathy for Germany than any other member of Asquith's cabinet. Thus on February 8, Haldane, accompanied by Cassell, was in Berlin for private talks with Bethmann-Hollweg and the Kaiser.

² Koss, Haldane, 79-85.

The talks proved to be fruitless. Haldane's lack of specific knowledge about naval technology and the Kaiser's propensity to misinterpret British intentions crippled the discussions from the very beginning.³ It was impossible to gain a consensus as to what had been said by the participants at the talks.⁴ Haldane returned home to be told that neither the Admiralty nor the Foreign Office were satisfied that anything of concrete value had been accomplished at Berlin.⁵ Indeed the most tangible result of Haldane's efforts was a rekindling of Conservative fears that the Government still failed to understand the true nature of German intentions. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey moved to attack what they considered to be rank foolishness on the part of Asquith and his Secretary of State for War.

⁴For an account of Haldane's discussions in Berlin see Bernadotte Schmitt, "Lord Haldane's Mission to Berlin in 1912" in Louis Paetow, ed., The Crusades and Other Historical Essays (New York, 1928), 245-88, and Williamson, Politics of Grand Strategy, 249-63.

⁴For Haldane's evaluation of his mission see his memoirs, Before the War (London, 1920), 55-72. The German position can be found in Wilhelm II, The Kaiser's Memoirs (London, 1922), 146-60 and T. von Bethmann-Hollweg, Reflections on the World War (London, 1920), 46-57.

⁵Churchill has outlined his appraisal of the Haldane mission in The World Crisis 1911-1914 (New York, 1928), 1: 95-111. Grey's account of Haldane's effort can be found in his memoirs, Twenty-five Years (London, 1925), 1:240-248.

Garvin was the first to sound the call to battle and his evaluation of the situation was typical of the attitudes that the editors had represented since Asquith had come to power. Haldane, in Garvin's opinion, was without question one of the poorest choices possible for a mission which touched so closely upon the nation's well-being.

For our part, we frankly distrust Lord Haldane, and we distrust his whole influence on public life. We believe that he has never faced the truth about our military problem and has done more than all other men put together to prevent the country from facing it.⁶

Maxse attributed the Germans' willingness to talk to their never-ending duplicity. He warned that diplomatic discussions with Germany could only serve to weaken Britain's ties to France and Russia and that such weakened ties could only work to Germany's advantage.

Any careful student of the twisting and turning of German diplomacy could have foretold the probability of some such episode at the present moment as Lord Haldane's "mission" to Berlin, which was designed by its authors to make this country an object of ridicule and suspicion in other capitals, and to revive the legend of Perfide Albion, upon whom no one can rely.⁷

⁶Observer, February 11, 1912, 8.

⁷National Review 59 (March 1912):1.

Maxse further feared that Sir Edward Grey's position as Foreign Secretary was being undermined by the nefarious activities of the Radical element in the government. It seemed to him that Haldane and others of questionable intentions were trying to relieve Grey of his rightful duties at the Foreign Office. Such developments were of grave concern for Maxse. Grey was seen as the only sound member of the Liberal cabinet and certainly the only man who could be trusted to handle the Germans in a realistic fashion. Maxse believed that there was a movement afoot, inspired by the German ambassador and the German Foreign Office, to remove Grey and replace him with a far more pliable personality such as Haldane. Maxse accused the Radicals and the Germans of fomenting a G.M.G. (Grey Must Go) campaign.⁸ In order to combat this unwelcome development, Maxse initiated a G.M.S. (Grey Must Stay) campaign.⁹

. . . we cannot remain silent spectators of the attempted supersession of Sir Edward Grey as Foreign Minister by his intimate but treacherous friend, Lord Haldane, whose colossal vanity, love of publicity, and passion for intrigue are responsible for what we hope is but a momentary lapse in British foreign policy.¹⁰

⁸Maxse was not the only one concerned about the existence of a G.M.G. campaign. See Francis Bertie's letter to Arthur Nicolson in Gooch and Temperley, eds., British Documents, 6:687.

⁹National Review 59 (May, 1912):591.

¹⁰Ibid., 570.

Maxse felt that the situation was so grave that it merited the attention of Bonar Law. In a letter to the Unionist leader, Maxse solicited Law's aid in supporting Grey against those who would deprive him of his legitimate role. Maxse made it abundantly clear that he believed Haldane to be the corrupter who wished to usurp Grey's position in the cabinet. Haldane was, as Maxse claimed to Law, "simply poisonous".¹¹

Another development which occupied Maxse's attention was Churchill's decision to withdraw the bulk of the British fleet from its Mediterranean base on Malta.¹² This move appeared to many to be a retreat in the face of strong German naval competition. Maxse believed that the redistribution of the fleet represented the fruits of the folly of the Liberal government's naval programme. He bitterly attacked Churchill for failing to espouse adequately the cause of the navy and he predicted the ultimate eclipse of British naval supremacy.¹³ It is

¹¹Bonar Law Papers 26/3/32 Maxse to Law, May 20, 1912.

¹²For Churchill's own appraisal of the naval situation see his The World Crisis, 1:113-19.

¹³National Review 59 (August, 1912):945.

interesting to note what Maxse did not mention in either his private correspondence or in the National Review. By concentrating the British fleet in the North Sea and the French fleet in the Mediterranean, the two nations would appear to have strengthened their defensive ties. This was consistent with the policy of greater defensive collaboration between France and Britain which Maxse had been advocating for many years.¹⁴

The outbreak of the First Balkan War attracted only passing editorial attention. The editors published various articles and editorials concerning the war but these were generally of a very superficial nature. The main thrust of their reporting dealt with the deteriorating Ottoman Empire and the struggle for independence on the part of the various Balkan national groups. The editors clearly recognized that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was concerned with the outcome of the war but they completely failed to mention any German

¹⁴See Churchill's minutes to Asquith and Grey of August 23, 1912 in The World Crisis, 1:115. Appropriately enough it was the Radical press which recognized a major departure in British foreign policy. For examples of Radical opinion see, Manchester Guardian, September 12, 1912; Daily News, September 16, 1912; and Westminster Gazette, September 18, 1912.

complications. In the most extensive article written by any of the three editors, Strachey reported on the history, the development and the consequences of the Balkan war without making one reference to Germany.¹⁵ In the following year the editors were to demonstrate once again this peculiar and revealing lack of diplomatic acumen.

In the domestic arena, the Unionist party was in a state of great disarray. Sir Edward Carson had recommended that the Unionist party adopt a policy of exclusion for Ulster from the terms of the Home Rule Bill. Such a policy was not to the liking of the many Unionists who still believed that Home Rule could be defeated in its entirety.¹⁶ In a controversial speech given by Bonar Law at Ashton-Under-Lyne, the Unionist leader said that his party was committed to imposing food taxes only at the request of the colonies. This statement repudiated an earlier "Referendum Pledge" and split the tariff reformers within the party. Law's leadership came under attack from members of his own party. It was essential that the party not wage another leadership campaign at a time when the Liberals were on the verge of passing such disastrous legislation.¹⁷

¹⁵Spectator, 109, December 14, 1912, 544-50.

¹⁶A. T. O. Stewart, The Ulster Crisis (London, 1967).

¹⁷Blake, The Unknown Prime Minister, 112.

In this time of great turmoil for the Unionists it was only Maxse who turned to Germanophobia in the hope of unifying the party with the threat of the danger from without. Maxse was a devoted Unionist but he wrote surprisingly little about the problems of Ulster. He supported Garvin and seemed to feel that his friend was doing a most commendable job of employing the Ulster argument.¹⁸ It became irrefutably clear at this point that Maxse was a Tariff Reformer first and a Unionist second. He believed that if he continued his campaign for Protection, he could rally the Unionist party and eventually rout the Liberal foe. He maintained the alliance he had created many years before between his Protectionism and his Germanophobia. He tried, however deperately and superficially, to emphasize the advantages which Tariff Reform could bestow upon Britain by reference to the healthy protectionist German economy. By comparing the two economies, Maxse hoped to illustrate the wisdom underlying Tariff Reform.

While people are leaving our shores by tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands, Germany is able to find employment for a vastly greater population and emigration has been brought to a

¹⁸National Review 60 (February 1913):889.

standstill. Again, the savings of the mass of the German people as compared with British saving are equally eloquent and conclusive. There are stable and encouraging elements in the industrial condition of Germany; there is something very rotten in that of Great Britain.¹⁹

By later 1913 and early 1914 Garvin, Maxse and Strachey faced a host of mounting problems to which they did not make their traditional Germanophobic reply. In both domestic and foreign concerns their nation appeared to be heading along the path of disaster. The suffragists, although no real threat, irritated the editors and appeared symptomatic of Britain's rapid social decay.²⁰ The Trade Union movement was growing increasingly obstreperous. Trusted Trade Union officials seemed no longer able to control their militant membership.²¹ Overshadowing these concerns was the fear that the controversy over Home Rule would degenerate into a civil war.

International development also appeared to the editors to be deteriorating. The Liberal government continued in its dangerous assumption that German interests paralleled those of Britain. The First Lord of the Admiralty actually suggested the establishment of a "Naval holiday" with the

¹⁹Ibid., 907.

²⁰For a discussion of Conservative attitudes towards the suffragist movement see Brian Harrison, Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain (London, 1978),

²¹R. V. Sires, "Labour Unrest in England, 1910-1914",

very nation which was forcing Britain to spend such vast sums of money on naval defence.²² The appointment of Prince Lichnowsky as the German Ambassador to Britain in September 1912 seemed to stimulate the apparent rapprochement which the Radicals in the government appeared determined to establish. Finally, the explosive problems of the Portuguese colonies and the Bagdad Railway were moving towards a questionable solution.²³ These events could have provided the raw materials for the editors' Germanophobia but this was not the case.

Regardless of how desperately Garvin, Maxse and Strachey sought after themes with which they could rally their party, none of the editors returned to a concerted policy of Germanophobia. Prior to 1912, they had produced a Germanophobic response to nearly all matters of political or social importance. After that time, the journals of the editors carried ever-decreasing amounts of Germanophobia until by 1914 there was remarkably little reference to the threat from Germany. The Ulster crisis, with its threat

Journal of Economic History 15 (1955):246-66.

²²E. L. Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy (Oxford, 1935), 402-28.

²³Edward F. Willis, Prince Lichnowsky, Ambassador of Peace (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1942), 177-206 and Harry F. Young, Prince Lichnowsky and the Great War (Athens, Georgia, 1977), 77-78.

of civil war, came to dominate completely the energies of the three editors. The threat from within became an obsession while the threat from without, a possible antidote to the former, was allowed to fade through neglect. Why then, when the nation was so divided, did the editors not rekindle their once powerful editorial device?

There are four major reasons why Garvin, Maxse and Strachey abandoned the utilization of Germanophobia. After 1911, Germanophobia appeared to be a spent force. It had been in use almost constantly since 1908. It had been used to battle everything from naval reductions to socialist legislation. The Liberal government had felt the Germanophobic sting so often that it seemed indifferent to the pain. The electorate, it seemed, had been moved as far as it would go by the fear of Germany. A great Liberal majority had been reduced but the Liberals had not been turned out of office. There was not enough weight in the Germanophobic hammer to smash a government. Thus it was only reasonable that the editors would adopt other themes which might prove more fruitful.

The second reason for the abandonment of Germanophobia was that after 1911 the editors began to address a more specialized audience. Though the actual readership of their journals did not change, the intended audience of the journals' editorials did. Prior to 1912, the editors

had been addressing their entire readership. They had, among other things, campaigned for a larger navy, for more attention to matters of national prosperity and in support of the Unionist party in two general elections. From 1912 onwards, they addressed themselves ever more frequently to the Unionist party itself. They tried to coordinate the party, but more significantly they attempted to inspire their party with a number of political programmes designed to unify the Unionists' efforts at defeating the Liberal government. Germanophobia, while very acceptable for a general audience, proved too crude a device with which to inspire a political party or its leadership. The editors were obliged to be more specific if they wished to influence the course of political events after 1911.

The success of the Parliament Act in 1911 and the rise of the Home Rule issue to political prominence further invalidated Germanophobia as an editorial device. The primacy of domestic concerns in the political arena led to a corresponding diminution in the significance assigned to non-domestic matters. Put quite simply, if Britain were to rend herself either through legislative folly or actual civil war, challenges from foreign sources were really of little importance. It had once appeared that Germany represented the single greatest threat to British security and world hegemony. By 1912 that dubious distinction had

unquestionably been earned by the Liberals.

The last reason for the decline of Germanophobia in the journals of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey is not immediately obvious but it is by far the most significant. By 1912, the Germanophobes had, despite the superficial rapprochement, won their battle to have Germany recognized as the greatest foreign threat to the continued security of Britain. This victory was certainly not conspicuous for very few of the editors' contemporaries even realized that it had taken place.²⁴ The editors themselves never mentioned it in their journals, nor is there any word of it in their private correspondence. This victory is identified by a particular absence of evidence rather than by anything concrete upon which historians typically depend.

The two heroes of the Radicals prior to 1912 had been Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. These men were identified quite correctly as the two most capable men in Asquith's cabinet. For this very reason they had been the primary targets for the abuse and ridicule of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. The editors clearly identified these two cabinet ministers as the unofficial leaders of the Radical wing of the Liberal party. The contempt with which

²⁴ Morris, Radicalism Against War, 237-41.

the editors held the Radicals' comprehension of foreign affairs had been amply demonstrated. The editors' great dislike of Lloyd George and Churchill was, then, a case of damnation by association. As long as the two ministers mouthed the platitudes and dignified the position of the Radicals by even nominal compliance with their cause, they could expect little peace from the editors. All three editors believed that the Radicals, under the proper leadership, were a force with which to be reckoned. If Radical sentiments were to become the motivating factor behind British foreign and defence policies, Britain would surely be lost. By the end of 1911 this potential disaster was seen to have been diverted. Lloyd George's famous "Mansion House Speech" had expressed what was essentially a Conservative foreign policy.²⁵ From this point on it was clear that the Liberal government was not going to turn its back on British responsibilities towards the continent. The government appeared to have accepted the premise that force must be met by force and not by the power of good intentions and fine sentiments. The appoint-

²⁵C. P. Scott noted about the Chancellor after a conversation with him on July 22 that Lloyd George was ". . . not immune from the microbe of Germanophobia". C. P. Scott, quoted in Michael Fry, Lloyd George and Foreign Policy (Montreal, 1977), 1:140.

ment of Churchill to the post of First Lord of the Admiralty seemed to reinforce this new and more realistic departure in Liberal foreign policy. Had the editors known that part of Churchill's assignment at this new office was to coordinate the war plans of the navy and the army they would have been even more pleased. Churchill, in effect, was to work out the plans by which a British expeditionary force could be moved to the continent.²⁶

These four factors account to a large degree for the failure of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey to employ Germanophobia in their editorials after 1911. They certainly did not revise their opinions about the reality of the German menace. Periodically during the two years which preceded the outbreak of the Great War, the editors, and in particular Maxse, displayed flourishes of Germanophobia. Strachey never ended his relentless campaign for preparedness nor Garvin his concern for naval supremacy. The editors' Germanophobia fell into disuse because the nature of the political battle between the Liberals and the Conservatives had changed dramatically.

The conflict between Liberalism and Conservatism had, from a journalistic point of view, become one dimen-

²⁶Churchill, The World Crisis 1911-1914, 1:69.

sional by 1912. The question of Home Rule for Ireland completely dominated the political life of the nation. The editors addressed this issue as partisans, not in their former guise as patriots. The urgency of the Home Rule question forced the editors to emphasize their adherence to Unionism rather than to Conservatism as a whole. In essence, the editors' Unionism was, by force of circumstances, divorced from their Conservatism. It was only when the editors were writing as Conservatives about Conservative concerns that their Germanophobia was present. The more the editors were forced into one dimensional politics the more they abandoned earlier aspects of their editorial Germanophobia.

By June 1914 Germany had almost completely ceased to play a role in the journalism of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. The editors' attention was fully occupied with the threat of a British civil war. It was at this point that the reality of the editors' earlier journalistic warnings came back to haunt all of Britain. As will be seen, the editors were as unprepared for international developments as were the Liberals they had harassed since 1906.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

On the morning of Sunday, June 28, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew and heir to the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, was assassinated in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. The assassination initiated a chain of events which in six weeks time culminated in the eruption of the great European war.¹ The Sarajevo tragedy generated a general sense of shock and sorrow. Genuine sympathy was expressed in most quarters for the aging Emperor and for the children of the unfortunate Archduke. Foreign offices throughout Europe communicated to Vienna official messages of condolences and the Dual Monarchy entered into a period of mourning.²

It is ironic that the men who had so frequently warned their countrymen of the possibilities of an Anglo-German war failed to recognize the Sarajevo assassination

¹Vladimir Dedijer, The Road to Sarajevo (New York, 1966).

²Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914 (Oxford, 1952), 2:1-38.

as a potential beginning for a general European war. It may be that Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had, like so many others, been desensitized to the dangers inherent in the Balkans. The two Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 which had followed a long period of political instability tended to breed a certain sense of callousness, if not indifference, to the chronic turmoil caused by the disruptive nationalism of the Balkan states. Such callousness coupled with deep anxiety about the explosive Irish question created an atmosphere not conducive to reflection on matters which did not seem to bear immediately on the nation's well-being. Moreover, the old statesman, Joseph Chamberlain had died on July 2, and the British press, led by Garvin, were publishing tributes and assessments of a public career which had figured so prominently for the past forty years in the political life of the nation.

In examining the newspapers' responses to the events of June 28 and after, one is immediately struck by a certain limitation which was created by the publishing practices of the newspapers themselves. Because the Observer and the Spectator were weeklies and Maxse's journal was a monthly, they were forced, by their very nature, to review events of the past week or month rather than present a daily summary of the news as could be done by any of the daily newspapers. In normal circumstances this limitation was

often used to advantage. The considered opinion of a weekly was frequently valued over the day-to-day acrobatics of a daily. Yet with the accelerated pace of events produced by an approaching war, or by the war itself, the comments and opinions of the last week could appear as being very antiquated or on some occasions as just plain misinformed. The historian must take this limitation in his sources into account. Otherwise, men who had customarily seemed well informed would suddenly appear to have lost their ability to report the simple facts.

This limitation is immediately noticeable on the day of the Archduke's assassination. Strachey's issue had come out the day before and therefore it was a week before he could comment in print on this event. Garvin's paper appeared on the day of the assassination but it had gone to press the night before so that it too could make no comment. Maxse's paper was not due for another month. But on the evening of June 29, Garvin's daily Pall Mall Gazette became available and reflected in its attitude the general response of the majority of the British press. Under the title, "The Throne of Tragedy", the Gazette reported,

The tragic end of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Throne of Austria, and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, who fell to the pistol of an assassin in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, yesterday, has evoked the sympathy of the whole world.³

³Pall Mall Gazette, June 29, 1914, 1.

The sympathy of the Gazette was somewhat short-lived for the next day the Henley Royal Regatta dominated the headlines while the Archduke was relegated to the fourth page.⁴ This superficial treatment of the assassination was repeated on Saturday and Sunday of that week. The Spectator respectfully reported the Archduke's death and related the events leading up to the assassination. In his editorial Strachey wrote an article entitled, "The Political Effects of the Archduke's Murder", in which he argued that the events would have only Serbian and Austrian ramifications.⁵ The Observer conveyed its sorrow over the Sarajevo outrage and in a small article suggested that the Germans would feel that their alliance with Austria-Hungary would be weakened with the loss of the Archduke who had been a keen military reformer.⁶ After this initial reaction the papers were distracted by the Irish controversy. The assassination went unnoticed save for a report on the actual burial of the Archduke and his wife. There was nothing of a substantial political nature

⁴Ibid., June 30, 1914, 4.

⁵Spectator, 113, July 4, 1914, 5.

⁶Observer, July 5, 1914, 8.

by the three editors until July 21, twenty-three days after the original event.

On July 23 the Austrian government sent its ultimatum to Serbia. The terms of the ultimatum were known to be extremely punitive yet little sympathy was expressed for the Serbians' situation. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey remained convinced that the assassination must not go unpunished. Under the title, "European Peace and Danger", Garvin wrote

The peace of Europe, menaced above all by Serbian passion and conspiracy, may yet be saved at the last hour by the submission of Belgrade, or may be wrecked by Serbian contumacy. No wise man can approve wholly the unmitigated violence of the Hapsburg ultimatum and the tremendous hazards of its indirect challenge to Russia. Yet we hope that the public opinion of his country will be very slow to condemn altogether the harsh determination of Austro-Hungarian policy. It is extreme. It is dangerous. It sets the whole fabric of Europe in peril. It runs within a hair's-breadth of precipitating a world-war. . . . (Yet) it is quite doubtful in all the circumstances whether any much less bitter and peremptory method would have had any fair chance of securing a proper result.⁷

This is indeed harsh language for one who was to become Britain's ally in nine days time, but the editor's conservative sympathies had been outraged by the regicide. The general attitude, best summed up in the famous "To Hell with Servia" headline, permeated the majority of the press.⁸

⁷Ibid., July 26, 1914, 10.

⁸For a complete study of the British press reaction

No one was anxious to appear to be supporting the Serbian position. It was only as the European ramifications of the Balkan situation became quite clear that the press started moving towards a pro-Serbian policy.

By July 26 Garvin was still not convinced of the certainty of a general European war but he was beginning to accept the possibility of such a conflict. For this reason he called for the powers of the Triple Entente to stand together.

. . . though we cannot be surprised by the support which Germany and Italy, for different reasons, extend in this emergency to the action of their ally, it must not be forgotten for a moment in any capital that the Triple Entente, morally embarrassed by the particular question now at hazard, must stand together with the whole of its power if other and larger issues should gradually be raised. . . .⁹

Maxse was among the first to suspect that Britain might become involved in a war but he was not about to be stampeded into a premature war-scare. His article on the developing problems in Europe was not very optimistic.

to Sarajevo see, D. C. Watt, "The British Reactions to the Assassination at Sarajevo", European Studies Review 1 (1971):233-47.

⁹Observer, July 26, 1914, 10.

Indeed, he was the first to accuse Germany of responsibility for precipitating the crisis -- a point of view which became very popular after the outbreak of the war -- but he did not display the kind of passionate intensity he was to develop a month later.

The European situation is about as bad as it can be, and what makes it worse is that there is every reason to believe that it was "made in Germany," which has been trying to pick a quarrel with Russian and pin-prick France throughout this year -- "Civil War year in England."¹⁰

In the period between July 23 and August 1, one can see the beginnings of suspicion and even fear, but as yet there was none of the full-blooded Germanophobia which began to appear in the next few days. By August 1 the die was cast and the editors' attitudes had hardened. It clearly appeared that there would be a general European war and all three men had no doubt that Britain must take part. Their arguments in favour of British participation in the war are an encapsulation of their Germanophobia. Strachey's conception of Britain's duty in the hours of crisis appeared in the August 1 issue of the Spectator.

¹⁰National Review 63 (August, 1914):923.

Our duty is to stand by our friends, and we shall stand by them be the burden never so heavy. But though duty is a sufficient consideration, it is not immaterial to remember that even if we were in no way bound in conscience and honour to stand by France and Russia, we must stand by them in the last resort merely from motives of self-interest. . . . France and Russia might be beaten without our help, and Germany and her satellite Powers become the masters of Europe.¹¹

Garvin wrote on the very eve of Britain's entry into the war,

Our neutrality is impossible. It would be an act of desertion which would prevent any country from ever trusting us as an ally or a friend again. The Great War is fought for the mastery of Europe under conditions which, if we stand aside, would assure for Germany -- by direct and indirect means -- the eventual and perhaps the speedy mastery of the Low Countries and the narrow seas.¹²

There are no more succinct or finer examples of Conservative Germanophobia than these. The primary fear of the Germanophobes comes clearly to the surface. They feared a Europe which was dominated by Germany. For them the prevention of this nightmare was ample justification for war. The politics, the diplomacy, even the niceties of national feelings could be subordinated to this one overwhelming cause.

¹¹Spectator, 113, August 1, 1914, 156.

¹²Observer, August 4, 1914, 6.

The Germans greatly facilitated the British entry into the war by their violation of Belgian neutrality. This violation served to unify the Liberal cabinet and the British people. There really was not a long period of indecision which could allow two distinct camps of opinion to develop as was the case in Italy. The challenge was thrust upon Britain and the British responded according to an already established predilection.¹³ The Germanophobes had little work to do in the final days before the war. Indeed, all three were later shocked to discover the degree to which the cabinet had actually hesitated. The course of action which Britain must follow seemed so obvious to them that any deviation from that course was absolutely unthinkable. It seemed beyond question to them that the national well-being could only be served by full British intervention.

This attitude was not universally shared by all prominent British editors. Not surprisingly there was a considerable degree of opposition from the Liberal and Radical editors who had always opposed Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. They did not believe that Britain's self-interest would be served by entry into the war and they accused the Germanophobes of war-mongering. A. G. Gardiner of the Daily News

¹³See James Joll, "1914: The Unspoken Assumptions", in H. W. Koch, ed., The Origins of the First World War (London, 1972), 307-28.

attacked the whole notion of Britain's duty and necessity to enter the war on behalf of France and Russia. He claimed that there was "no obligation of principle", which would oblige Britain to become involved in a general European conflict.¹⁴ He accused the Germanophobes of manufacturing a situation that did not really exist.

For years, under the industrious propaganda of Lord Northcliffe, Mr. Strachey, Mr. Maxse, and the militarists, this country has been preached into an anti-German frame of mind that takes no account of facts. Where in the wide world do our interests clash with those of Germany? Nowhere.¹⁵

Prior to the actual British commitment to the war, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey had held differing opinions as to what could be done to stop its proliferation. All three men had been in agreement that Sir Edward Grey's primary role as British Foreign Secretary should be to act as a mediator during the early stages of the conflict.¹⁶ Yet they had disagreed as to which nation they thought could most effectively halt the hostilities. Garvin had believed that Austria could most reasonably limit the area of conflict

¹⁴Daily News, July 31, 1914, 4.

¹⁵Ibid., August 1, 1914, 6. See also Manchester Guardian, July 30, 1914, 8.

¹⁶For the exact statements of the editors' positions see, Observer, July 26, 1914, 6; Spectator, 113, August 1, 1914, 6; National Review 64 (September, 1914):3.

or indeed put an end to that conflict altogether. Strachey had been convinced that if Italy declared herself to be completely against Austrian aggression and threatened to join the Triple Entente, the Central Powers would be so overwhelmed by the numerical superiority of the enemy they would resist the temptations of war. Maxse, true to form, had held the position that if the war were to be stopped it must be done by the Germans.¹⁷

As soon as Britain became directly involved in the war there was a unanimity of opinion as to who was responsible for violating the peace of Europe. All three editors accused Germany of being the primary instigator of the war. Garvin lashed out at the Germans in his first war-time edition of the Observer.

There is no doubt about the causes of the war of wars. It was forced by the determination of the Potsdam war party to make it. They thought that the favourable hour was come and were misled by an infatuated underestimate (sic) of all their antagonists. Austria was a puppet in their hands. The assassination of Serajevo became a pretext for a long-laid plan.¹⁸

¹⁷Observer, August 4, 1914, 6; Spectator, 113, August 1, 1914, 153; National Review 64 (September, 1914):1.

¹⁸Observer, August 9, 1914, 4.

Maxse's condemnation of Germany was equally emphatic.

We feel convinced that the whole plot was concocted between Berlin and Vienna behind the back of Italy -- as her attitude proves -- as the only theory compatible with the known facts. Austria-Hungary would never have dared to challenge Russia to war without the approval and encouragement of Germany.¹⁹

Strachey's first war-time issue carried the same theme.

We believe Germany made the war, and made it because she feared that unless war came now she might have to give up her strongest national aspiration -- the aspiration to be a great world-Power, dominant in Europe with vast dependencies abroad, and able to command the sea, or at any rate to be possessed of naval strength greater than that of every other Power but Britain, with the certain prospect of equalling Britain in the future, and of developing eventually into the predominant naval State.²⁰

On August 3, the British government passed emergency legislation entitled the Defence of the Realm Act. One part of this Act created the War Propaganda Bureau which was known euphemistically as the Press Bureau.²¹ The purpose of this Press Bureau was primarily to censor overseas news, an activity which would have caused great resentment prior

¹⁹National Review 64 (September, 1914):9.

²⁰Spectator, 113, August 8, 1914, 189.

²¹Arthur Marwick, The Deluge (Harmondsworth, 1965),

to the war. But during the war most editors recognized the need for such a Bureau and some even enthusiastically supported it. Garvin was among this latter group.

This journal will hardly be accused of having lacked political courage or critical independence in time of peace, but from the moment that war became probable we thought it our duty . . . to make a clean sacrifice of all the ordinary luxuries of newspaper comment. Even before the censorship was established we sent up all items of naval or military news to be passed or cancelled by the Admiralty and the War Office. We subordinated every party issue to the sense of a common patriotism which might bind the vast majority of our people firmly together despite the small cliques of narrow men in whom habits of factious rancour and personal antipathy are ingrained.²²

The Spectator's week by week account of the war was less complete than that of the Observer's but it was every bit as patriotic. Strachey was quite prepared to work within the boundaries set by D.O.R.A. He pressed his countrymen to put forth their greatest efforts. Indeed, he used the pages of the Spectator for a semi-official recruitment drive. Each of General Kitchener's calls to arms was supported and enhanced. Kitchener, being well aware of Strachey's attitudes in these matters, took full advantage of the situation. He had his private secretary, H. J. Creedy, address the following letter to Strachey.

²²Observer, December 6, 1914, 10.

Lord Kitchener asks me to thank you very much for your letter of the 8th instant with regard to the National Reserve which he has asked the Adjutant General to look into on his behalf.

He desires me further to take this opportunity of enquiring whether you would be so good as to support the appeal which he has made for the creation of a second army of 100,000 men. You will, of course, have seen Lord Kitchener's appeal in the daily press, but he feels that his efforts would be greatly assisted if the influence of the "Spectator" were thrown into the scale. He would therefore be much obliged to you if you could find space to call attention to the importance of his new force being forthcoming as soon as possible.²³

In many ways Strachey was merely continuing his pre-war policy of encouraging men to join the National Reserve. This had been one of the major themes of the paper prior to the war and during the war Strachey replaced war news by appeals to join the colours. This he felt was more beneficial to the nation's war effort than merely reporting the events of the week. In this fashion the Spectator could play a constructive role in the British war effort.

Ironically one of the few editors in Britain who actively disliked the Press Bureau was Maxse. His journal did not engage in a blow-by-blow account of the war, nor did he for the most part deal with overseas news, but he was very sensitive to the loss of his editorial freedom.

²³Strachey Papers, S/9/5/1, H. J. Cready to Strachey, August 10, 1914.

One can only infer that the Press Bureau, as the dispenser of patronage in the shape of tit-bits of more or less reliable information, already occupies so strong a position that although its prestige up to date is nil, newspapers are intimidated. That is somewhat ominous because however much we may respect the expert naval and military members of this curious committee, many of whom have all the requisites for their delicate and difficult task, neither the political personnel nor the methods of the Press Bureau so far are calculated to inspire confidence. If its existence is a necessity it is a very regrettable necessity. . . .²⁴

Maxse differed in one other important point from Garvin and Strachey. Whereas the latter were prepared to work under the Liberal government for the sake of national unity in a time of crisis, Maxse could not find within himself an ounce of feeling for the problems of the government. He attacked not only the Liberal press but also Liberal politicians who had in the past aroused his scorn. The chief among these was Haldane, a man he despised for his pro-German attitude. Haldane became the "German Professor Supreme". Maxse set out to destroy the man and the group he felt were inimical to Britain's war effort. In this work he recruited many of his Conservative colleagues, one of whom was J. A. Sandars.

²⁴National Review 64 (October, 1914):215.

I am at work constructing a sort of Potsdam Diary, setting forth some of the principal gems produced in the last few years by the Potsdam Party in this country and elsewhere. Any contributions will be gratefully received especially gaffes by that fat fool Haldane.²⁵

While Garvin and Strachey were prepared to write articles encouraging people to have faith in their leaders, Maxse was prepared to make no such concessions merely because of a war. He maintained his acid appraisal of those who governed.

. . . the politicians whom we know only too well and have every reason to distrust, remain where they were with unlimited opportunities of mischief at a time of great strain and stress, of which they will doubtless take full advantage for their own purposes while public attention is diverted elsewhere. We would warn our readers not to be thrown off their guard. The Ethiopian does not change his skin nor the leopard his spots.²⁶

Germanophobia as a predominantly conservative phenomenon was completely dissipated after the beginning of the war. Britain had been awakened to the threat of Germany. The nation had realized that it must become more efficient and more developed if it was to survive in the modern world beside an aggressive Germany. Britain had refused the option of becoming an isolated power and had

²⁵ Sandars Papers, Eng. hist. 767 fols. 178, Maxse to Sandars, December 1, 1914. The book finally produced from these labours was, Germany on the Brain or the Obsessions of a Crank.

²⁶ National Review 64 (September, 1914):6.

committed herself to her allies on the continent. The Liberal government buried those issues which had threatened to divide the nation and presented to the world a united front. In short, Britain in the first few weeks of the war began to adopt many of the policies which had been advanced by the Conservative Germanophobes for the past nine years.

In a sense Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were freed from their self-imposed burdens as the conscience of "Conservative" Britain for their nation was now functioning as a virtually united entity and their fears of internal disruption were gone. The nation had been inspired by a sense of mission though the editors could have hoped for a less formidable task. The symbol of their concern had shed its passive role. Germany was now the active and unquestioned enemy and this change of roles forced the editors to re-examine their editorial attitudes towards their old antagonist.

By following the work of the editors a few months into the war one can witness a major change in their point of view. The editors changed from their traditional Germanophobia to a blind, unreasoning anti-German sentiment. The difference during this period is important because it further illustrates that Conservative Germanophobia was fundamentally different from pure anti-Germanism. The

war-time anti-Germanism of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey was little different from that of most other British editors, Conservative or Radical. It was unrelentingly biased against the Germans and in favour of the British. The high standards of journalism were replaced by an incensed hatred of the Germans. Germany was no longer the model by which Britain must gauge herself. The whole attitude of constructive criticism based on the German example was gone. Hate of the Germans replaced all other values. The defeat of Germany was the only good, the only justifiable aim. Truth, fairness and judgement were all sacrificed in the pursuit of victory.²⁷

The Observer and the Spectator presented week-by-week summaries of the war. If these journals are examined for the months of September and October little relationship will be found between their accounts of the war and later historical reconstructions.²⁸ Regardless of what happened on the battlefield, the readers of the newspapers were always presented with accounts of British victories and

²⁷ Arthur Marwick, The Deluge, 38.

²⁸ B. H. Liddell Hart, History of the First World War (London, 1970), 49-77.

German defeats. When the Germans stormed a position it was recounted that the Germans had been "slaughtered". When the British were routed it was recounted as a strategic withdrawal to a more advantageous position. By early September, Garvin had already perfected the rhetoric of the war. He wrote articles under such convoluted titles as "The Retreat to Conquer".²⁹ He described the German army in any of the following terms: halted, foiled, stopped, outflanked, beaten, countered, defeated, demoralized, at bay, desperate, shattered, and repulsed. The man who had been so concerned about printing only the truth as he saw it had willingly turned himself into a unofficial spokesman for the British war effort.

The primary force behind the editors' wartime Germanophobia was an unbridled hatred for everything German. The great German Empire which had inspired so much thought and controversy was now depicted in terms of a dark conspiracy against the freedom of the world.³⁰ The energies and talents of the German people which had once been pointed to as an example worthy of imitation were now called a nefarious and mindless lust for blood. The

²⁹Observer, September 6, 1914, 6.

³⁰Spectator, 113, October 10, 1914, 485.

technological wonders of Germany became part of its war-machine. The centralized and efficient German government became an extension of the will of German warlords. All redeeming values in Germany were gone as though they had never existed as is witnessed by Garvin's article as early as September entitled, "Mark of the Beast".

The cup of German culture is not yet full. With cruelty, lust, and ruin poured into it in full measure, with every refinement of savagery borrowed from the shame of humanity's past, the cry of "the blonde beast" is still for more rapine and horror, for continued destruction for destruction's sake.³¹

It is ironic that the men who had once been so aware of the greatness of Germany could now only see the dark side. They forgot almost immediately the better parts of Germany they had once praised and cast themselves in the roles of unheeded prophets of the German menace. They turned on all liberal and socialist "internationalists" with a vengeance which was unworthy of their journalistic abilities and reputations. Strachey was the mildest in his rebuke although he displayed a great deal of bitterness.

³¹Observer, September 21, 1914, 5.

Liberals, who never believed what we have been saying for years was bound to happen if their extreme policy were adopted, are at last convinced that Germany has been playing a cynical and unscrupulous part.³²

Garvin indulged in self-congratulation.

For fifteen years some of us have lived for one main purpose, and in indifference to misrepresentation we have striven to prepare the country for the ordeal that has come at last. If we asked for a few additional Dreadnoughts who would not wish that Britain possessed them now? If we secured six months military training for every able-bodied male of fighting age, who does not see that it would have been of infinite advantage for Britain and the world? We would much prefer the full national service, for which Lord Roberts has preached a crusade crowning all the sagacity and honour of his life. We value the physical and moral discipline of manhood training almost as much as the decisive security it would offer for national interests.³³

The National Review was no less harsh in its view of the past.

It has been obvious for many years to every Englishman who cared to exercise his faculties that Germany would inevitably plunge Europe into a gigantic war at whatever moment in her opinion suited German interests. A handful of scattered and disorganised individuals worked ceaselessly and strenuously year by year to arouse their countrymen to the German danger, and to persuade them to prepare adequately and betimes so that Great Britain might be ready to play her part

³²Spectator, 113, August 15, 1914, 226.

³³Observer, August 23, 1914, 4.

whenever the hour of Pan-Germanism sounded. Ignorance, apathy, self-complacency, perversity, cheap sentimentalism, and expensive treachery carried too many guns, with the result that the storm has burst to find us practically unprepared. . . .³⁴

This dramatic shift in the nature of the editors' Germanophobia is further displayed by their employment of the spy scare. Prior to the war no editorial on German spies had ever appeared in the journals of Garvin, Maxse or Strachey. Topics such as the spy scare were typically employed by editors who wished to increase the circulation of their newspapers. This matter did not concern the editors of the quality press whose influence was determined by the nature not the size of their readership. Yet with the outbreak of the war the quality papers quickly adopted themes with which they had little or no experience. Predictably enough, it was Maxse who led in this development though one must be aware of the pressure exerted upon him from many quarters. Even Lord Roberts, a man not given to hysteria, pushed Maxse to rout out potential spies.

I hope you will take up the matter of spies in this country in the National Review. It seems to me we are doing all we can to help the Germans

³⁴National Review 64 (September, 1914):1.

should they, by any possible chance, be able to land a force on these shores. I should like to see every German sent to Holland. What fools we are.³⁵

When in November Prince Louis of Battenberg was driven by public protest from his position as First Sea Lord because of his German ancestry, Maxse quipped,

Whether we regard the resignation of Prince Louis of Battenberg as a regrettable necessity or a national humiliation, he deserves unbounded gratitude for the strong hint he has given to less desirable aliens to make themselves scarce during the war.³⁶

Garvin was not quite as forthright on this matter as was Maxse. He employed the spy scare primarily in the pages of the Pall Mall Gazette, though the Observer was by no means exempt from such stories. Readers were warned to be aware of foreign waiters, tradesmen and travellers. Indeed, Garvin adopted an attitude which had most often been displayed by the sensationalistic Daily Mail.

Strachey's employment of the spy scare was considerably more restrained, though he did not hesitate to join his colleagues in this new type of journalism. He did not really believe that British security was seriously

³⁵Maxse Papers, 469/568, Roberts to Maxse, October 20, 1914.

³⁶National Review 64 (December, 1914):564.

threatened by the presence of aliens but he could not deny their potential to do at least a limited degree of harm. Thus Strachey adopted the style if not the spirit of the popular press and added his voice to the many who warned of the spy menace.³⁷

By the end of December, 1914, all three editors had completely abandoned their former style of Germanophobia. The elements of praise and envy which had been an integral part of their attitudes towards Germany were replaced by unmitigated hatred. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey were instrumental in perpetuating the myth of "the evil Hun". In effect the editors had become what their contemporary critics had accused them of being -- unabashed German-haters.

In reality, the editors' anti-Germanism was a product of the war. The fear of Germany which had always been present in their editorials was stripped of its former purpose and given a far less subtle intent. The three Conservative editors were, after August 1914, out of their depth. Their forte had always been domestic politics, but with the outbreak of the war such concerns were relegated to a relatively insignificant status. This situation was

³⁷Spectator, 113, October 10, 1914, 485.

to change with time. As the war degenerated into a stalemate, Britons began to question the efficiency of Asquith's war-time administration. The spectre of weak leadership once again moved the three editors to concerted action. Although Lloyd George had inspired a great deal of fear among the editors, they did realize that he possessed one essential element -- the ability to lead.³⁸

The revival of domestic issues signaled the reemergence of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey as powerful elements of the British press. The editors never had a great concern for, nor an appreciable ability in, the sphere of foreign affairs. Their prewar Germanophobia attested to this fact. The most significant foreign development of the Edwardian period, the emergence of Germany as a great nation, was rarely considered by these men in any context but domestic politics. They were and remained Conservative political journalists.

³⁸J. M. McEwen, "The Press and the Fall of Asquith", Historical Journal 21 (1979):863-83.

CONCLUSION

Like so many other traits of the British right, Germanophobia has been persistently misrepresented. Such misrepresentation has not been due to an excessive degree of subtlety or complexity in the nature of Germanophobia but to a failure on the part of modern historians to pay sufficient attention to matters which are not deemed to be in the "Progressive" tradition.¹ Germanophobia prior to the Great War was predominantly, though not exclusively, a feature of the Conservative segment of British society. The Conservatives saw in Germany the incarnation of the strength of will and fortune of circumstance equal to the task of eclipsing Britain's economic and military hegemony. Many Conservatives held the opinion that Britain must be first among nations or she would cease to be of any true consequence. This opinion was not rooted exclusively in simplistic jingoism or threatened imperialism, though these did have their place, but in the belief that Britain's greatness was the result of her unquestioned command of the seas, her empire and her predominant industrial status.

¹For a discussion of the extent of this problem in modern British historiography see Paul Addison's review of Brian Harrison, Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's

That the sword of Damocles hung over Britain few Conservatives doubted.² The question of the hour was from what quarter would come the hand which would break the thread. The Conservatives identified many sources, both domestic and foreign. Germany was the primary foreign candidate, hence the logic of Germanophobia. But the Conservatives were not so naive as to believe that only a mighty foreign rival could destroy their nation. Socialism and labour disruptions were leading domestic candidates for this dubious honour.³ Yet among many Conservatives the threat of weak national leadership was the primary cause for concern. A poor government, they feared, could destroy Britain more readily than any other single cause. The Liberal government, tinged as it was by socialistic sympathies and military ineptitude, was perceived as the greatest of all possible dangers.

Garvin, Maxse and Strachey understood that Britain's own government might be the ultimate cause of national

Suffrage in Britain in the Times Literary Supplement,
December 1, 1978, 1401.

²For the cultural aspects of this fear see Harpham, "Time Running Out", Clio 5 (1973):3-14.

³Standish Meacham, "The Sense of an Impending Clash: English Working-Class Unrest Before the First World War", American Historical Review 77 (1972):1343-64.

disaster. They were aware that the cumulative effect of subtle changes could be as destructive as any planned hostility. But how were they to alert Britain to a danger which could take years to manifest itself? Their answer, at least in part, was to fashion a critical editorial device from an easily comprehensible fear. The fact that the editors chose to employ Germanophobia in this partisan policy reflects no greater antipathy towards Germany than was common among many Britons. Indeed, the example set by Germany was often used for didactic purposes. A sense of grudging envy often made itself felt in the editorials which the editors' critics claimed to be provocative and patently anti-German.

There can be no question that the editors' papers were often provocative. They fully intended to draw as much attention to their points of view as possible. But the claim that the editors fanned the flames of national hatred misses the point of their efforts. It could politically profit the editors nothing to add their voices to those of the popular press who worked the German menace for every shilling it could yield. Garvin, Maxse and Strachey might have capitalized on many of the vogues occasioned by popular Germanophobia. For example, they could have exploited the fashionable craze for "invasion literature". Yet on no occasion did any of the editors do

more than comment favourably on invasion stories which appeared in other papers. Similarly, they could have joined in the many spy scares. Yet the closest any of them came to this was Maxse's partisan accusation that the entire Liberal government acted like German spies and lackeys. Theirs clearly was not the Germanophobia of the circulation-conscious dailies.

The domestic orientation of the editors' Germanophobia is perhaps best demonstrated by the transitions it underwent between 1899 and 1914. The great anxieties created by the Boer War engendered their initial fear of Germany. Unlike their popular press counterparts, Garvin, Maxse and Strachey did not react to German Anglophobia per se. The German press had been engaged in virulent Anglophobia during the entire 1890's without much exercising the three editors' sense of national danger. The German Naval Law of 1898 raised a few eye-brows, that of 1900 caused some apprehension, but then all subsequent German naval development spawned cries of impending doom. The impetus for this change came not from Germany, but from the editors' own sense of national vulnerability. The Boer War had occasioned a crisis of confidence in the strength of British arms and, more significantly, in the continuing fitness of the British race. The editors pressed their government to undertake

the necessary diplomatic initiatives which would guarantee that Britain could avoid being isolated in a German dominated Europe. Their success in this pursuit had, by later 1905, demonstrated the effectiveness of harnessing Germanophobia as a means of criticizing government policy.

With the establishment of the Liberal government early in 1906, the editors' Germanophobia underwent a major transformation. Their fear of Liberal ineptitude greatly exceeded that of German intentions. The Unionist government may have proven disappointing but a Liberal government would assuredly prove a disaster. During the first two years of the new administration the editors discovered that the Liberal government was particularly vulnerable to charges of diplomatic incompetence and military indifference. These charges could be made to seem more urgent when viewed in the light of the "German menace". The government and its press supporters could effectively defend themselves only by claiming that such charges stemmed not from legitimate concern for British security but from belligerent jingoism. Other than this defensive ploy there was little the government could do to satisfy their skillful critics. No concessions would ever be considered sufficient by the Unionist editors while the Radical element of the Liberal government condemned the smallest efforts to meet Unionist criticism

as a betrayal of Liberalism itself.

By 1908 the Germanophobia of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey became significantly broader. It became a projectile which they repeatedly hurled against the entire edifice of Liberalism. In effect, what the editors managed to do was to redirect the fear of Germany, as well as all those anxieties which occasioned that fear, towards the Liberal government. The editors claimed, at least in part, that if the government were doing its duty and discharging its responsibilities properly, there would be no need for Britain to fear Germany. Needless to say, in the editors' opinion it was politically impossible for the Liberal government to discharge such responsibilities properly. Periodically the Germans themselves would add substance to the editors' claims through a diplomatic or political initiative which seemed to threaten Britain. But such challenges were not essential to maintain the credibility of the editors' writings. The Germanophobia of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey stemmed primarily from their fear of the Liberals, not their fear of Germany.

The period between 1912 and the outbreak of the war witnessed a marked reduction in the editors' use of Germanophobia. Quite simply, Germanophobia had failed to live up to the editors' expectations. It was not a sufficient force to eject the Liberals from power. The electorate had been persuaded to trim the bulk from the Liberals' majority, but they could not be moved to send that party into the political wilderness. The general elections of January and December 1910 illustrated that Germanophobia, as used by the three editors, was limited in its effect. The fear of national danger and imminent destruction at the hands of a cunning opponent could not camouflage the other aspects of the Unionist party which many voters disliked. Large sections of the electorate, namely, those who supported the Irish Nationalists and the supporters of the Labour party, remained unmoved. The editors could not use Germanophobia to break the alliance which allowed the Liberals to retain power.

The outbreak of the Great War brought about a revolution in the nature of the editors' Germanophobia. It changed from being a partisan device into a powerful aspect of war-time patriotism.⁴ The editors turned their attention

⁴Arthur Ponsonby, Falsehood in War-Time (London, 1916).

away from trying to topple the government. They became subscribers to the myth of "the evil Hun". All things German were now attacked as being inherently bad and the efforts of the Liberal government were declared worthy of support. The patriotism of the editors transcended their deeply felt partisan sentiments.

The fact that Germanophobia could be used in a variety of ways and for diverse, even antagonistic, purposes has caused a great deal of confusion. Historians have typically employed the term Germanophobia without bothering to distinguish the exact type of Germanophobia of which they speak. This unfortunate lack of precision has led to several historical errors. Chief among these errors is the view that prewar Germanophobia in Britain was identical to its wartime manifestation. The fear of Germany has been equated to the hatred of Germany. It is due to this misconception that diplomatic historians have gone astray, and, in consequence, weakened their own discussions about the domestic origins of the Great War.

Such confusion stems from too closely paralleling the British and German situations. In particular, British journalistic Germanophobia has been depicted as synonymous with German journalistic Anglophobia. Fischer claimed that

the Anglophobe press did much to prepare the German people for an inevitable war with the British enemy.⁵ Historians of the British domestic situation have assumed that the British press was doing the same thing. Yet the vast difference between Anglophobia and Germanophobia was pointed out as early as 1919 by Eduard Bernstein. The German Social Democrat noted that

. . . only in quite isolated instances does one encounter examples of real Germanophobia. . . . In England and in the British Colonies a very great contempt for the Germans was frequently exhibited (before 1914) but very little trace of Germanophobia was to be found. In Germany, on the other hand, certain circles have systematically laboured to this end, and have cultivated a genuine hate of England in the people.⁶

Bernstein's observation is supported by this case study of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey. These editors did not at any time prior to August 1914 call for a confrontation with Germany. Indeed, rather than urging any Anglo-German antagonism in the two years before the war, these editors almost completely ignored the existence of Germany. Their

⁵Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War (New York, 1967), 25-38.

⁶Eduard Bernstein quoted in Roger Fletcher, "An English Advocate in Germany. Eduard Bernstein's Analysis of Anglo-German Relations 1900-1914", Canadian Journal of History, 13 (1978):209-35.

surprising tardiness in recognizing the dangers of June and July 1914 was not the reaction one would expect from men accused of being inordinately suspicious of any German action.

The editors and historians of the Radical press have also done their part to hide the true intentions of many prominent Conservative journals. One of the methods employed by Radical editors to defend themselves and their party from opposition press criticism was to defuse such criticism by declaring it to be based on bigotry and jingoism. This claim was not accurate but it served as fairly effective defence. Radical editors, and by extension the Liberal party, could be made to appear as the instruments of peace and international understanding. This characterization remains prominent in the histories of Radical papers and their editors. The accusations against the Conservative press which bolster this Radical viewpoint have remained largely unexamined. Students of the Radical press are subsequently given an impression of the Conservative press which is not historically accurate.

This study of Garvin, Maxse and Strachey is not sufficiently broad to redress completely the impressions created by modern historiography. What this case study does is to suggest that if three of the most prominent Conservative editors do not fit the accepted characteriza-

tion of the Conservative press, then perhaps it is time for a reassessment of the validity of our historical perception of this important element of Edwardian political life.

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