HISTORIOGRAPHY AND BRITISH APPEASEMENT IN 1936

Judith S. Libby
Butler University

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Name of candidate: 

Judith K. Libby

Oral examination:
Date  
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Committee:

[Signatures]

Chairman

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HISTORIOGRAPHY AND BRITISH APPEASEMENT IN 1936

By

Judith Sheila Libby

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INTRODUCTION

Opinions do not generate in a vacuum; they are the product of thoughts which have sifted down from many sources. One important contributor to this influx of ideas has been the historian. But even while the importance of his role is acknowledged, his effects are not always readily calculable, and it is sometimes difficult to discern whether a better understanding of past events has had any significance in shaping men's responses to contemporary issues. It is the thesis of this paper that there have been certain situations when historical research had an important bearing on the choices statesmen made and the policies they pursued. This will be illustrated by focusing on a group of historians known as revisionists and analyzing the impact of their work on one particular event, Britain's reaction to the remilitarization of the Rhineland.

Called revisionists because they reached conclusions at variance with previously accepted versions of the First World War, these men helped to alter the entire scheme of values and beliefs concerning Anglo-German relations during the inter-war period. Their new explanations for the causes of the war pervaded the intellectual climate.
of the twenties and thirties and became an integral part of the body of ideas that nurtured the British philosophy of appeasement. Furthermore, the evidence they uncovered did much to predispose officials and public opinion in favor of pro-German alterations to the Treaty of Versailles.
CHAPTER I

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

When the First World War divided Europe into two antagonistic camps, it aroused passions which made attempts to analyze the origins of such a dreadful catastrophe almost impossible. One has only to glance at some of the eighty-seven issues of the Oxford Pamphlets, published in 1914 and 1915, to learn the accepted British position on all aspects of the war. Another source for revealing each country's official version of its entry into the war was found in what were termed "color books" published at the outset of the fighting, containing carefully selected documents from the foreign offices. Not too surprisingly, the British Blue Book and the French Yellow Book arrived at similar conclusions: the Germans were guilty. Even historical writing to emerge during the war and immediately after sustained this standard interpretation, and one of the most influential was produced by J. W. Headlam (later Headlam-Morley), historical advisor to the British Foreign Office. In his book, Headlam recounted the immediate events

leading to hostilities and no significant challenges to this version appeared until the opening of the foreign office archives.

After the return to peace, memoirs of political and military leaders involved in the war or the years leading up to it began to emerge, lending added credence to many of Headlam's positions. The publication of works by well-known figures, such as Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and former Foreign Minister and the President of the French Republic Raymond Poincaré, continued to maintain Germany's guilt, while discounting the importance of most of the new documentary evidence to appear since 1918.²

But in spite of the array of information criticizing Germany, the fighting was hardly over, indeed, the Treaty itself barely concluded, when many of these interpretations began to undergo severe scrutiny and eventual attack by some of the most respected historians in England and abroad. There were a number of reasons for this rapid change, and the historical writing that occurred as a result was referred to as revisionist.

One of the stimulations to further research was the vast propaganda effort of the Germans, carried out with

efficiency and effectiveness in the years immediately after the Peace Conference. Largely in response to Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty, or what came to be known as the "war guilt clause," the German Foreign Office set up a special section—the Kriegsschuldreferat—to do research on the origins of the war in order to dispute this charge. Alfred von Wegerer, an ex-army officer, was given money to launch the periodical Kriegsschuldfrage (War-Guilt Question), and it soon became an influential journal, publishing many of the early revisionists along with any information or documents favorable to the German case.

What exactly was this German propaganda effort directed against? The six volume study of the History of the Peace Conference, edited by Harold Temperley, presents a detailed account of the armistice and Treaty of Versailles, emphasizing those portions which gave rise to so much distress and bitterness in Germany.4 There was no issue that engendered more controversy, however, than that of reparations, and it soon came to overshadow all other considerations.


In order to insure that once the Peace Conference had ended, legal means would exist for enforcing German payment for the cost of the war as well as for the damages to civilian life and property, the Allies carefully worded Articles 231 and 232 in the reparations section of the Treaty to cover both a moral and a legal obligation. As Temperley analyzed them, the first of these two clauses (Article 231) "...asserts the responsibility of Germany and her Allies for causing all the loss and damage suffered by her enemies as a result of the War. This responsibility is a moral and not a financial responsibility." On the other hand, it was Article 232 which stipulated "...the extent to which any debtor can be made financially responsible is limited by his ability to pay...."

It should be noted that at no time did the Entente Powers intend for Articles 231 and 232 to be a statement

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5 Article 231 as quoted in Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference, II., p. 45 reads:
The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

6 Ibid., p. 75.

7 Ibid.
of "war guilt." Only later, when the Germans attempted to build a propaganda case to discredit the Versailles Treaty, did the articles take on such a connotation. As the historian Hajo Holborn has shown in his discussion of these two articles, when they were written there was not the slightest reason to assume that the word "aggression" meant anything more than legal liability. To the contrary:

We have good evidence that the Big Four, when putting Articles 231-2 into final shape, did not mention war guilt at all. Rather, they were almost exclusively concerned with the practical application of the Lansing note... Only the German's feverish conviction that the treaty was bound to contain a statement on Germany's sole war guilt made them seize upon Article 231.8 Germany's sense of injustice, whether valid or fabricated regarding this clause, was further inflamed by the Allies' refusal to negotiate any of the Treaty's provisions. Instead, their delegation to the Conference was given an opportunity to make observations on the document and then present them to the Allied and Associated Powers. In return, they received the Allies' reply which not only verified the severity of the Treaty's terms, but reaffirmed Germany's belief that Article 231 was a declaration of guilt with the statement that:

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Germany being responsible for the war and for the "savage and inhuman manner in which it was conducted" had committed "the greatest crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples that any nation, calling itself civilized has ever consciously committed."9

Although active resistance to the Treaty was impractical after the defeated nation had been disarmed, two other alternatives could be pursued: one would be to adhere to passive resistance whenever possible; the other would be to refute what had popularly come to be termed the moral basis of the Treaty. By proving that their country had not been solely responsible for initiating the war, Germany could undermine a critical reason for imposing many of its most detested provisions. In the attainment of this second aim, the Reich engaged in a tremendous propaganda effort which had a significant impact on the historical writing of the post-war era. Immediately after the war, in an effort to clear their nation of the imputation of guilt, they opened up files, records, foreign office documents, and memoranda to historians. According to an article by Charles Beard analyzing current historiography about the war, the availability of these sources altered the traditional rule that normally the generation who fought a war knew little about it because diplomatic

9Temperley, The History of the Peace Conference, II., p. 11.
archives usually are not opened for fifty to one hundred years. General access to German, Austrian, and also Russian documents, made available after the Communist Revolution in order to discredit the Czarist regime, offered historians unprecedented opportunity for critical study of the years leading up to the war. The German propaganda effort also stimulated historians into reexamining the entire German "case," for its veracity. While in the process of this research, some men uncovered evidence which impelled them either to modify or contradict earlier assumptions about the responsibility for the war, and they became known as revisionists.

But this term, when applied to an entire group, can be misleading; consequently, as used in this thesis, revisionist will include any historian who varied from the accepted or official position as espoused so lucidly in Headlam's book The Twelve Days, or in the government documents collected in the "color books." Within this broad spectrum, there are various differences, ranging from those who offered only minor discrepancies, to those who challenged all prior assumptions. It is important to note, however, that no matter how slight the difference, any admission of liability by the Entente or lessening of

guilt on the part of Germany was a victory for the German propaganda effort because it threw doubt upon the validity of the Treaty and undermined its moral base.

Three historians who suggested only moderate revision, George Peabody Gooch, Bernadotte Everly Schmitt, and Pierre Renouvin, tended to agree that although the Central Powers were blameworthy, they were not alone in creating war; moreover, Austria was as much at fault as Germany or perhaps even more so. Gooch, author of numerous books on European and British history, as well as co-editor with Harold Temperley, of the British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, occupied an influential position among British historians. In 1923, Gooch and A. W. Ward edited Volume III of The Cambridge History of Foreign Policy, 1866-1919, at which time they began to admit some division of accountability between Austria and Germany. Four years later Gooch published an important work, Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy, reviewing a large body of material relating to the origins of the war. He interspersed throughout this book the thesis that no one nation was inherently evil; rather all acted as might be expected under the circumstances. And after studying each country

objectively, he showed that no one participant was guilty of wanting or producing war. If anything, all had been shortsighted in following such inept policies.\footnote{12}

An American historian, Bernadotte Everly Schmitt, was also engaged in studying the reasons for the war. Although his two volume work, The Coming of the War, 1914, did not appear until 1930, he was among the earliest historians to begin scrutinizing the issue of German "war guilt."\footnote{13} While admitting that Germany's legal accountability stemmed from the act of declaring war, Schmitt also introduced the questions of political and moral liability as considerations. But he disagreed with certain revisionists like Harry Elmer Barnes who construed the new documents being brought to public attention as sufficient evidence for clearing Germany completely of any hand in initiating the war.\footnote{14} Throughout the 1920's, Schmitt continued to devote his energy to the task of presenting his own thesis in various periodicals or


reviewing works by other historians. And in these articles, Schmitt restated the idea that once Europe had separated into armed camps due to the alliance system, war became unavoidable in 1914:

...because then, for the first time, the lines were sharply drawn between the two rival groups, and neither could yield on the Serbian issue without seeing the balance pass definitely to the other side.

In France, as well as England and America, historians were also reviewing official interpretations about the war; and Pierre Renouvin was one of those who succeeded admirably in his goal of making an objective examination of the entire problem. In his book, Renouvin concentrated mainly on the crisis occurring between June 28 and August 4, 1914; but even more than had Gooch or Schmitt, he emphasized German responsibility. Renouvin also stressed the need for making an objective analysis, carefully defining, in one essay, the role of the historian. It was "...not to fix responsibilities but rather to furnish explanations..."


and to make clear the circumstances which guided the development of international policies."\(^{18}\)

Moderate revisionists Sidney Bradshaw Fay, Alfred Fabre-Luce, and Mary Edith Durham all tried to distribute the blame more evenly among the major powers than had their conservative counterparts Gooch, Schmitt, and Renouvin. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and Alcide Ebray shifted the emphasis away from blaming any one nation or group of nations; instead, they condemned the system of alliances for producing a situation of international anarchy—the real culprit.

Perhaps the most well-known among the moderate revisionists, and certainly one of the earliest to start questioning the "war guilt" verdict, was Sidney Bradshaw Fay. In the July and October 1920 issues of the American Historical Review, he began to examine earlier premises relating to the German case, refuting many of the most widely accepted of them.\(^ {19}\) Fay's ideas received much

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notice and attracted interest throughout the decade as he continued publishing additional information further substantiating his earlier views. Then in 1928, Fay's two volume work on The Origins of the War appeared, uniting all of these arguments and others into an extended analysis of both the long range and immediate causes. Within each volume, Fay explicitly stressed the didactic nature of his work and called for a revision of the Versailles verdict which he said was historically unsound:

One must abandon the dictum of the Versailles Treaty that Germany and her allies were solely responsible. It was a dictum exacted by victors from vanquished, under the influence of the blindness, ignorance, hatred and propagandist misconceptions to which war has given rise.

In the first volume, emphasizing the long range issues leading to conflict, Fay implicated all of the major powers to some degree. He classified these issues under the system of secret alliances, militarism, nationalism, economic imperialism, and the press. Each contributed to a poisoning of the atmosphere between nations and a heightening of tensions


which could only conclude in a war. In addition, Fay recognized one special situation—conflict in the Balkans—as another long range cause, because it was "...most nearly incapable of a peaceful solution." The second volume of the work examined immediate events, and here Fay appeared far more critical of individual nations, apportioning to Austria the largest share of the blame, and characterizing Germany as a victim of her alliance with the Dual Monarchy whom she needed as her one dependable ally. Fay did suggest that Germany had erred first by cutting off ties with Russia in 1890 and later by giving Austria a blank check on the eve of war.

Mary Edith Durham, having carefully studied the tense Balkan situation, agreed with Fay's conclusions regarding Serbia's role in the crisis. She first published her findings, justifying the Austrian ultimatum, in 1923. She considered the note an appropriate response to the Archduke's assassination in the face of Serbian complicity in the entire plot, coupled with their refusal to allow Austrian officials to participate in the search for the criminals.

22 Ibid., Vol. I., p. 546.
23 Ibid., Vol. II., pp. 553-554.
Five years later Miss Durham finished *The Serajevo Crime*, detailing the activity of the Greater Serbian movement all the way back to 1782.  

Another supporter of divided responsibility, the Frenchman Alfred Fabre-Luce, made no secret of the motives for writing his book. Troubled over France's failure to realize the fruits of victory, he argued that peace could only be termed successful for his country if it prevented a new war. But this could not happen until the truth about the origins of the last war were told.

Rather than seek to censure any one power or group as other revisionists had tried to do, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson preferred to view war as a product of the international system of anarchy. Insisting that "...the anarchy of armed States defeats the good intentions of the most admirable men," Dickinson portrayed international relations in the period before 1914 as a circle of interconnected facts. Hopefully, he wrote in the preface to his book, once people recognized the inherent dangers in the balance of power system as it existed prior to the war,

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they would work to alter this structure. Thus, like so many of the revisionists, Dickinson intended his work to serve as an historical lesson and a guide to world peace.

Alcide Ebray's book proposed a thesis similar to Dickinson's. There was no "guilty party," first, because responsibility was divided, and second, because the war was unavoidable since everyone did what it was only natural he should do. Ebray was particularly harsh on France, condemning her for being "...less energetic in urging Russia to take up a conciliatory attitude than Germany was in her similar advice to Austria." Also, like Dickinson, Ebray hoped his book would establish the truth in order to promote reconciliation between the powers and thereby introduce a truly stable Europe. Ebray explicitly attacked the Treaty because it did not conform to historical evidence as he perceived it, and he called for its revision as the first step in making peace a reality.

Almost immediately after the armistice was signed, the German government began work on presenting their version of the causes for the war. It was the Versailles

30 Ibid., p. 19.
31 Ibid., pp. xi-xiii.
Treaty, however, that gave a focus and direction to this effort, as well as attracting historians from other countries to delve into the entire problem. A number of those who claimed to have discovered evidence exonerating Germany from any share in bringing about the war have been termed radical revisionists. One reason for this is the subjectivity which characterized many of their books and articles; they made no effort to hide the purpose of their work—revision of the Treaty. Beginning with the a priori assumption that the Versailles Settlement was unfair to Germany, they sought to prove that it was based on faulty evidence which could only lead to inaccurate conclusions; therefore, the Treaty must be changed before a lasting European peace could be secured. They also tended to take the most extreme view in reapportioning the blame for the war, maintaining German innocence, and portraying her as a victim of the Entente's maneuverings to impose war upon the unwitting Central Powers.

Early in the 1920's, numerous articles written by Germans such as Hans Delbruck, Karl Kautsky, Count Max Montgelas, and Alfred von Wegener began appearing in European and American periodicals. Along with the presentation of new evidence obtained from the recently opened foreign office documents, whenever possible these men
rejected the "case" against Germany.\textsuperscript{32}  

Additional support for this rehabilitation program carried on by German writers came from the radical revisionists led by Harry Elmer Barnes who wrote prodigiously, promoting German innocence and disputing all other views.\textsuperscript{33} Barnes also published two controversial and one-sided attacks on the Treaty in which he rated material according to the degree that it sustained his own position.\textsuperscript{34} He and his supporters ultimately became emeshed in academic arguments, particularly with Bernadotte Schmitt whom they referred to as a "salvager," and frequently they devoted as much attention to discrediting other historians as to


\textsuperscript{33}Harry Elmer Barnes, "Salvaging German War Guilt," The New Republic, LXIV (October 22, 1930), pp. 270-273.

\textsuperscript{34}Harry Elmer Barnes, The Genesis of the World War: An Introduction to the Problem of War Guilt, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1926); In Quest of Truth and Justice, (N.P.: Published by the National Historical Society, 1928).

In the long run, however, for the prospects of enforcing the Treaty, the differences between Barnes and other historians proved less significant than their similarities. Regardless of the amount of revision the events leading to the war had been subjected to, the fact that they were open to any revision at all jeopardized attempts at rebuilding a peace based on the Treaty of Versailles. Once German propaganda had successfully blurred the legal and moral distinctions underpinning the reparations sections of the Settlement it was not difficult for people to accept the notion that Article 231 implied German guilt. And the consequence of this tactic was seriously to impair the authority of the Peace Treaty during the inter-war years.

Before leaving these historians, it must be emphasized that in the majority of instances they did not intend to produce this outcome when they began their research. Nevertheless, the evidence that they uncovered, when it contradicted earlier theories, could also be used to weaken the foundations upon which the Treaty had unintentionally come to rest.
CHAPTER II

REVISIONIST HISTORY BECOMES A POLITICAL FORCE

As historians continued to research the materials that had become available since the war, many of them uncovered additional discrepancies. Their findings soon attracted academic notice which rapidly expanded beyond these circles to include a widespread audience. This chapter will examine the depth to which the revisionists' ideas permeated Britain's intellectual class and filtered throughout the rest of society by the end of the twenties. It will also illustrate how those who sought to weaken the Treaty were able to seize upon the historians' conclusions for this purpose.

The Versailles Settlement had hardly been ratified before it began to be modified: first by the Allies' abandonment of their demands for the surrender of the former Emperor and other Germans accused of war crimes, and next on their attitudes towards reparations and disarmament. Written in circumstances unfavorable to impartial deliberation, the completed Treaty was a series of compromises.

Nevertheless, until other alternatives could be found, it represented the legal foundations of international law for the signatories. Germany recognized this and knew the only means for restoring her position was to discredit the detested document.

In pursuing that goal, the Weimar Republic did not find itself alone. Economists, politicians, diplomats, and historians from all countries had an interest in changing certain provisions of the Treaty. One of the first serious challenges to this document, occurring even before the final drafts were signed, came from John Maynard Keynes in Economic Consequences of the Peace. By giving a literal interpretation to the reparations sections, he demonstrated that, if carried out, the results would be disastrous. What, he pondered, could have been the motives of the politicians who framed such unrealistic provisions? Three years later, in another book, Keynes explicitly attacked this group, suggesting that all along they had known the Treaty would be unworkable but had proceeded anyway in any attempt to satisfy public opinion calling for vengeance.²

But the tangle of reparations did more than open the way for criticism of the politicians and the results they

produced at Versailles. Equally important, Keynes' work began to generate feelings of guilt and sympathy for the German Republic.3 There were also a number of other considerations to reinforce these attitudes. First, neither in the economic nor the political sphere had there been any deep-seated tradition of hostility toward Germany. To the contrary, from the Middle-Ages until the end of the nineteenth century, France had been England's chief rival on the continent. Generally, Germany had been the ally. Moreover, British business interests were anxious to see a return of the defeated nation to prosperous conditions. Finally, the mass of Englishmen did not understand French fears of a revived Reich.4 It is not too much to say that by the mid-1920's, at least in the British popular press, France rather than Germany had become the villain of Europe, accused of exploiting the Allied victory for her own ends.5

Within this climate of doubt about Allied treatment of former enemies and mounting sympathy for the anomalous


German position, revisionist historians began to publish their findings. Many of their conclusions appeared regularly in the form of articles, book reviews, and letters to the editor of various periodicals, and began to attract attention to their work. Moreover, disillusionment with the war and the Peace Treaty had developed an audience receptive to new explanations of the events precipitating the catastrophe. But acceptance of these historians did not depend only upon the mood of the times. It took the academic communities' close scrutiny of the evidence to give their work authority and credence.

In 1924, the editors of Current History organized a symposium and called it "Assessing the Blame for the World War." They submitted an article by Harry Elmer Barnes to professors of history at well-known universities, all of whom they considered qualified experts. The results indicated that the majority of those questioned supported

at least some revisions even if they did not entirely accept all of Barnes' ideas. Charles Seymour, from Yale University, agreed completely with two of Barnes' chief conclusions: neither Germany nor any other single state was solely guilty; the disaster had resulted from the existence in Europe of two armed camps, each suspicious of the other. But Seymour did not accept Barnes' assignment of a relative order of blame to each state. Much like Dickinson and other moderates, Seymour said if any indictments were to be made, they should be against the system which permitted the military in each state to impede pacifistic efforts of the civil leaders. And in this instance, notwithstanding Barnes, German leaders had a large share of responsibility for this system. 7

In contrast to Seymour's reservations, G. H. Blakeslee of Clark University called Barnes' analysis brilliant. He suggested that Barnes as well as Fay, Beard, Schmitt, and Gooch all were in essential agreement over the following ideas: no government or responsible statesman worked to bring about a war, and the fundamental causes were rival alliances, competition for territory, economic concessions and prestige, mounting materialism, increased armaments, international suspicions, and fear.

7Charles A. Beard et al., "Assessing the Blame," Current History, XX (June, 1924), pp. 452-453.
Finally, all acknowledged that the immediate breakdown of peace was Austria's insistence upon waging war with Serbia when it was recognized this step could precipitate a general European conflict.  

Neither William E. Lingelbach of the University of Pennsylvania, Quincy Wright of the University of Chicago, nor Carl Becker of Cornell University could accept all of Barnes' thesis; nevertheless, they too extended liability to all of the major European powers. But Becker found it silly and useless either to designate guilt among nations in any precise order, or among the governments. As Lingelbach indicated, however, the significance of Barnes' work was that from the present date, many conventional views of the origins of the war would be subject to revision.  

Discussing not only Barnes' position but the degree to which revisionist theories about the war were generally approved by 1924, Raymond Leslie Buell, of Harvard University suggested that the opinions expressed by Barnes as well as by Fay, Schmitt, and Gooch are "fully accepted by qualified historians." In fact, of the nine historians queried,

8Ibid., Blakeslee, pp. 458-459.
9Ibid., Becker, pp. 455-456.
10Ibid., Lingelbach, p. 454.
11Ibid., Buell, pp. 453-454.
only A. E. Morse of Princeton University totally disagreed with Barnes and saw no revision necessary. He blamed Germany entirely, seeing her as a continual threat to European peace prior to World War I. 12

Throughout the twenties and early thirties other historians added their support to many of the same proposals advocated by the revisionists. For example, after evaluating Barnes' thesis, Charles Beard claimed it had forever demolished the "Sunday-School theory" that three pure innocent countries—England, France, and Russia—were suddenly assaulted by German and Austrian villains. On the other hand, he did reject any attempt by Barnes to whitewash the Kaiser and his advisors; instead, Beard saw them as men who gave Austria a free hand with full knowledge that such action might ignite a general conflict. Yet, he considered the German leaders no more or less to blame than other statesmen like Poincaré, Grey, or Sazonov. 13

By the end of the decade, a considerable segment of the academic community had accepted some revision. When criticism was made, it usually came from the radicals led by Barnes who did not feel fellow historians had gone far enough in shifting the blame from Germany to the Allies.

12 Ibid., Morse, p. 455.
Moreover, men who had written standard accounts of German actions began to alter their opinions. One of the most influential, Harold Temperley, gave favorable reviews to works by Fay, Schmitt, and Renouvin. And in the same year, R. B. Mowat wrote an article blaming both the Central Powers and the Entente for failing to reach a rapprochement throughout the pre-war period.

But perhaps the best sign of just how respectable the revisionist positions had become was illustrated by a conference held at Chatham House in November, 1936, on the topic of "History Text Books as a Factor in International Relations." In an address to the gathering, Alec Waugh examined the presentation of the "Great War" in English history books, and he found:

The pendulum has swung a great deal in the last few years, and the present tendency—a healthy wish to let bygones be bygones—is to regard the War as the general culmination of a certain series of conditions; and to maintain that to attempt to fix the guilt on any one nation is as futile as to blame the particular stone in an avalanche which happens to break one's leg.

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With the revisionists' evidence now incorporated into the history text, little doubt remains that academic acceptance of these views had been achieved.

But these interpretations could only gain a widespread audience and support from the intellectual community if they were brought to public attention and discussed. The journals and periodicals which frequently published articles analyzing the causes of the war provided the medium for extending these ideas beyond the historians' sphere.

As early as 1920, an editorial in The Nation openly called the Treaty vindictive and unenforceable. A year later, another article suggested:

If Germany did not alone dig the pit into which she and the rest of the world fell, then the Treaty of Versailles is a lie, its scheme of annexations and the confiscations breaks down....

The following year, in The Living Age, a forceful editorial labeled the whole concept of German guilt a myth. It claimed that the main burden for the war fell on Austrian and Russian official cliques, although Germany was not entirely innocent.
It also used arguments similar to some of the revisionists’ to propose that if the whole body of the Treaty rested on this myth of German guilt, then, "...the foundation is as rotten as the superstructure." The editorial concluded by calling for an authoritative study of the entire issue to be carried out not by lawyers but by historians to "open archives, hear evidence, and form conclusions." Words such as these could only enhance the newly discovered historical evidence being published.

An article by Emile Cammaerts for the Edinburgh Review evaluated how far destruction of the "myth" had progressed by comparing the popular view of the origins of the war held in 1914 with those held in April, 1925. For Great Britain, the major issue—overshadowing all others—had been the defense of Belgian neutrality; and it symbolized the conflict between might versus international compacts. But Cammaerts believed that by 1925 the invasion of Belgium was no longer thought of as the principal reason for war but merely a subsidiary issue. Today, he concluded, most writers blamed the revival of nationalism in the Balkans, the break-up of the Dual Monarchy, the rivalry of interests and armaments between the two groups of powers struggling for hegemony in Europe as the real

20 Ibid., p. 221.
21 Ibid., p. 222.
reasons for the war. Cammaerts finished his article with a thrust at the Peace Settlement, tying the question of blame to its credibility, and suggesting that if the main moral principle underlying the Treaty was challenged or changed, there would be a great effect on the diplomatic structure of Europe. There is little doubt that the controversy surrounding Article 231 had become linked to the revisionists' conclusions whether originally intended by the historians or not. Enough of them had explicitly appealed for a reassessment of the entire question of "war guilt" to have provided justification for relating the two issues. Therefore, when The New Statesman ran an article measuring the public's desire to re-examine this clause, it was also partially a measure of the revisionists' impact upon their times. The article concluded that by 1925:

There is also, apparently, a not inconsiderable body of opinion in this country which desires the question to be reopened with a view to relieving Germany of the moral burden of that 'sole' guilt which she formally admitted in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles.

Other articles followed a similar pattern: they

23 Ibid., p. 39.
presented favorable reviews of revisionists ideas and assailed the moral premises upon which they saw the Treaty of Versailles resting. One such article, typifying this process, appeared in The Commonweal. It called for revision of the Treaty, indicating that a demand for this action was growing in England and America. The findings of Sidney B. Fay, Harry Elmer Barnes, and John S. Ewart were then cited to support the claim that:

So long as the Treaty of Versailles contains a humiliating and erroneous accusation which up to the present time has provided a real hindrance to the establishment of peace throughout the world, so long will confusion and dissatisfaction prevail.


The article concluded with the suggestion that deletion of Article 231 would remove the obstacles preventing Germany, Austria, and Hungary from standing on the "same civilized Christian plane with other nations of Europe."\(^{27}\)

The settlement reached at Versailles continued to lose prestige throughout the decade. Articles such as the one appearing in *The Saturday Review of Literature* judged the entire thing "shameful and disastrous," and called Article 231 the clause that "surpassed all others in shame," and "a lie of such grossness."\(^{28}\) Meanwhile, Germany was referred to as "a gallant and vanquished enemy."\(^{29}\) Another journal reiterated this theme, insisting: "It is growing clear that it is not merely the details, but the whole foundation of the Versailles settlement which must be challenged...."\(^{30}\) The purpose of calling the entire Treaty into question, the editorial asserted, lay in its starting assumption found in Article 231 which had provided the Allies with the means for "...coercing Germany into accepting 'the responsibility for causing all the loss and damage, which the Allies had suffered as a consequence of the war....'"\(^{31}\)

\(^{27}\)Ibid.


\(^{29}\)Ibid.


\(^{31}\)Ibid.
But the significance of the revisionists would not end here. As an article in the January 1929 issue of Review of Reviews predicted, "...what these men do so quietly will in time shake to the foundations the political alignment of Europe, founded as it is on the Peace Treaties of 1919." This statement proved to be prophetic in the coming decade.

As Britain's preoccupation with the problems of Anglo-German relations increased, politicians and statesmen could not ignore the public's growing sympathy for German challenges to the Treaty—legal or otherwise—when preparing a viable foreign policy. And it was in this realm that the works of the revisionist historians produced their greatest impact.

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CHAPTER III

BRITISH POLITICS TO THE RHINELAND CRISIS

When Hitler marched troops into the Rhineland in 1936, the British public viewed with tolerant acceptance this clear breach of the Versailles Treaty. There were many reasons to account for such a mild reaction. But one of the most important was the impact of the revisionist historians on the intellectual climate of the times. Their findings helped to shape a series of views--dislike of the Treaty, guilt over the mistreatment of Germany, sympathy for her goals, and mistrust of France--upon which a pro-German attitude came to be predicated. In this chapter the effects of such sentiments on the direction of British foreign policy during the crucial years prior to remilitarization will be analyzed.

Many observers have noted this development of sympathy

for Britain's former enemy. One historian wrote that these feelings sprang from illusions harbored during the inter-war period that "Germany had not 'really' started the war of 1914; Germany had been 'crushed' by the Versailles Treaty, which was in all respects vengeful and unjust."\(^2\)

Harold MacMillan, a young backbencher at the time, agreed that Britain did have a guilt complex, "...a feeling that Germany had a rough time."\(^3\) Elaborating on this idea, he wrote:

...there was a still more powerful force operating on the British conscience. We were uneasy about Germany and her treatment since the end of the war...The Treaty of Versailles was no sooner framed then it came under powerful attack.\(^4\)

Moreover, MacMillan explicitly referred to the revisionist history being published as one cause for the confused opinion over Germany which, he claimed, helped to produce the weak and indeterminant policy followed in the 1930's.\(^5\)

One concrete method for ameliorating this sense of wrongdoing, suggested by countless writers, was to revise or remove the Treaty entirely. Underlying this view was


\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 348-349.

\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 348-350.
the belief that "...the elimination of justified causes of dissatisfaction and resentment would be a means of adjusting the balance of power." There was also evidence that the British Government faced considerable public pressure to make these principles of 'justice' the basis of practical policy considerations. Echoing this call for Treaty revision throughout the thirties, British journals also joined in decrying the Versailles Settlement as a great obstacle to peace.

It was only a small step from these general, amorphous feelings of sympathy for Germany to the philosophy of appeasement which originated during the 1920's and became British policy in the 1930's. Prior to Hitler's coming to power four reasons existed for appeasement. First was a belief in a "special Anglo-German affinity...whose origins went back to the days when Angles and Saxons set off in the wattle boats...a unity of blood...and close cultural association."

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7 Ibid., pp. 216-217.
9 Gilbert, Roots of Appeasement, pp. 142-143.
Second was general recognition of a

...shared Anglo-German responsibility in the outbreak of war—a belief fostered by British historians and encouraged by German propaganda, casting doubt on the morality of Britain's actions in 1914, and leading to the question: 'Could Britain, by a different foreign policy have averted an Anglo-German clash?'

Third, appeasement seemed justified by the alleged severity of Versailles, a major cause of German bitterness. And finally, it sprang from a desire to find an alternative to a pro-French policy, out of fear France would use Britain to keep Germany weak. The growth of pacifism in reaction to the horrors of the First War and the economic policies of the British Government which was anxious to restore normal trade relations with the profitable German market also contributed to the acceptance of this policy. But in order to succeed as a philosophy, appeasement needed to buttress the pragmatic considerations of political necessity with the prestige of scholarly research provided by the historian. And the revisionists were welcome in the attainment of "an Anglo-German rapprochement, even an Anglo-German alliance."

All through the inter-war years this policy exerted

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., pp. 165-166.
considerable attraction, appealing to a battle-scarred generation "...who hoped negotiation and accommodation would replace war as a means of settling disputes."\(^{13}\) It also attracted radicals and pacifists who denied Germany had been solely responsible for the First War and argued she had received inequitable treatment at the peace conference.\(^{14}\) But after 1933, appeasement moved from this limited base to embrace adherents from all political parties and in all social classes. It became an "...attitude of mind common to many politicians, diplomats, civil servants, historians, journalists, industrialists, businessmen, shopkeepers, students, workers and housewives."\(^{15}\)

Nevertheless, at no time did a complete consensus over foreign policy exist. According to Neville Thompson who has done a study of the opposition to appeasement, when dissent occurred, it was sporadic and came from individual critics and small cliques; no cohesive group formed until after Eden resigned in 1938.\(^{16}\) Thompson gives a number of reasons for this failure: first, it was difficult to devise effective alternatives to government positions;


\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 28.

\(^{15}\)Gilbert, Roots of Appeasement, p. 147.

\(^{16}\)Thompson, The Anti-Appeasers, p. 2.
second, the individual views of anti-appeasers about what should be done were often too different for them to agree. Finally, "to criticize an Administration that could present its policies in such comforting terms and which commanded an overwhelming majority of loyal adherents was no easy task." 17

The three leading Conservative backbenchers who did object to the direction of British policy in the early thirties—Winston Churchill, Sir Austen Chamberlain, and Leopold Amery—were too few in number and had no official position in the National Government to implement their views. 18 Another bastion of anti-German sentiment, the Foreign Office, also tried to change the direction of Anglo-German relations. But none of the many warnings issued by its Permanent Undersecretary, Lord Vansittart, or Sir Horace Rumbold, Britain's Ambassador to Germany until mid-1933, altered significantly the determination of the Cabinet to appease. 19

17 Ibid., pp. 26, 42, 45.
18 Ibid., pp. 23-25.
Ignoring these protests, the men who came to power in the election of 1931—a triumph for the Conservative Party—proved willing to tolerate revisions of the Treaty.20 In the election of 1935, which retained the National Government in power under Stanley Baldwin's leadership, the process of accepting German abrogations of Treaty provisions continued.21 It is in the context of these developments that the Rhineland crisis must be understood: not as an isolated incident but as part of a pattern of events aimed at destroying the status quo set up at Versailles. For example, allowing Hitler to rearm, and then giving this action a certain amount of legitimacy with the announcement of an Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June, 1935, only encouraged him to challenge other provisions. In addition, the Nazi dictator took heart from British and French failures to bring Mussolini to account, the League of Nations'


growing impotence, Italy's preoccupation with Africa, and Anglo-French disarray.22

The collapse of the Hoare-Laval Plan and the entire Abyssinian issue had severely weakened Britain's position in a number of ways. At home Baldwin's reputation slumped, the episode nearly costing the Prime Minister his political life; and according to Churchill, "It shook Parliament and the nation to its base."23 Abroad, Germany deduced from Hoare's disgrace that Britain was unwilling to go to war to support her proclaimed rights and responsibilities, causing the Nazis to feel contempt for the British. Meanwhile, the French felt isolated and betrayed.24

With the climate thus favorable for another dramatic move, Hitler began to search for a new pretext to dismantle Versailles further. And France's determination to ratify the Franco-Soviet Pact, negotiated the previous year, gave him the excuse he needed. On February 28, in Paris, the Chamber of Deputies voted in favor of the Treaty; the next day, in Berlin, the French Ambassador received instructions to approach the German Government about the basis for

24 Connell, The 'Office', pp. 218-221.
general negotiations for a Franco-German understanding. Hitler asked for a few days to think about the French suggestion. Then, on Saturday morning, March 7, 1936, Herr von Nuerath, the German Foreign Minister, summoned the British, French, Belgian, and Italian ambassadors to the Wilhelmstrasse and offered proposals for a twenty-five year pact, demilitarization on both sides of the Rhine frontier, limiting of air forces, and non-aggression pacts to be negotiated with Germany's Eastern and Western neighbors. On the same day, two hours after these offers, Hitler announced to the Reichstag Germany's intention to reoccupy the Rhineland. As Hitler was speaking, 35,000 soldiers crossed the boundary and entered all the main German towns where they were received everywhere with rejoicing.

Britain and France had many reasons for moving directly and forcefully against Germany. First, strategic considerations impelled the Western Democracies to retain the demilitarized zone in order to come to the aid of France's Eastern allies in case of an attack. Legally, both the Versailles and Locarno Treaties entitled them to repel Germany from this zone.25 Furthermore, should Hitler succeed in making good the coup, sanctity of all treaties

25 Wolfers, Britain and France Between two Wars, pp. 42, 45, 50.
would be jeopardized and the League weakened even more. The Democracies would be discredited: their prestige already damaged after the failure to apply sanctions in Ethiopia. And French morale would be lowered by British reluctance to support her in what she considered a legitimate enterprise. Finally, by allowing Hitler to win so easily, a pattern for future Nazi gain would be established, and the dictator earn a much needed success to enable him to carry out other illegal acts.

In spite of the reasons for moving decisively against Hitler, Eden and the National Government temporized. Explanations for Britain's failure to support France at this crucial time have been many and varied. Treaty violations were nothing new, and modifications of Versailles had occurred frequently in an atmosphere of "tacit acquiescence." Foreign Office documents indicate that Britain had long been expecting remilitarization and preferred to view this concession as a bargaining chip to gain diplomatic advantages and not as the last opportunity to overthrow the Nazi regime.


Moreover, the deplorable situation of British armaments during the early thirties cannot be ignored. But it was the mood of the public more than anything else that was cited by those in power as the motive behind Government reluctance to use force. Many officials shared a genuine belief that British sentiment favored Germany in this instance, and they hesitated to implement any policy which might risk a war.

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CHAPTER IV

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO HITLER'S COUP

Although the Rhineland crisis lasted several weeks, there was little controversy over what direction the Government should take. Few people considered war desirable at this time; and the largest segment of public opinion favored Germany once more established in her own territory.¹ The real issue turned on how to restore a feeling of security to the continent and eliminate danger of British involvement in a potential conflict between France and Germany. No doubt many political, diplomatic, and military considerations entered into the decision to appease Hitler; yet, the mood of the British people was the reason given by most officials for pursuing this course. The evidence indicates that many members of the Government shared the public's sympathy with German attempts to revise an unpopular Treaty, agreeing that it lacked the moral authority to insure enforcement of its provisions.

¹In a poll conducted by the Daily Express, 55% favored the German position while only 24% favored the French, and 21% were not interested. See Samuel H. Cuff, The Face of War: 1931-1942, (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1942), p. 26.
As Prime Minister and elder statesman of the Conservative Party, Stanley Baldwin exerted influence on the formulation of foreign policy. In the twenties, Baldwin had been a Francophile and "...certainly not in sympathy with the facile denigration of France common among the pro-German faction in Britain." Nevertheless, Baldwin was extremely reluctant to join France in any strong measures against Germany in the Rhineland. As he indicated to M. Flandin when voicing the Cabinet's hesitation over supporting France, his decision came from a conviction:

'...if there is even one chance in a hundred that war would follow your police operation, I have not the right to commit England...England is not in a state to go to war.'

According to Baldwin, the public favored Germany's right to enter and occupy the Rhineland; therefore, he could not risk any action that might jeopardize the peace. Only with reserve did the Prime Minister support Eden in initiating staff talks with France in the face of a public "...half convinced that secret conversations were the cause of the First War...."
Within Baldwin's Cabinet, little enthusiasm existed for aiding France. The majority thought it "...wholly unreasonable to use force to resist a German occupation of the Rhineland...Germany had a case for doing as she wished." While discussing the events of March 7, they expressed only slight displeasure with Hitler's goals, reserving criticism for the methods he had used. In a speech on foreign policy, Viscount Halifax actually commended Hitler's desire to put troops into the Rhineland. He did not find it difficult "...to understand the German claim to establish full sovereignty over German soil." The Lord Chancellor only admonished Hitler for weakening British sympathy over German aims by such a flagrant, brutal display of force. In Halifax's judgement, Germany could probably have achieved the same objective by reason. In a similar vein, Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain approved of gratifying German desires for expansion, and he proposed to save the peace by offering a colony to Germany.

With more vigor than the Cabinet had exhibited, members

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5Ibid., p. 914.
7Ibid., pp. 35-39.
of Parliament debated this issue both inside and outside the House of Commons. While complete agreement never occurred, a considerable portion of the members did appear willing to accept German entrance into the Rhineland. One MP's letter to The Times called for substitution of the German peace proposals in place of the Treaty of Versailles which had been erected on "the sands of resentment, fear, and revenge." 9 This became the frequently repeated theme in the weeks after March 7. Lord Allen of Hurtwood, an active pacifist since World War I, a firm supporter of the League and collective security, and an advocate of justice to Germany by revision of the Treaty, also wrote to The Times about the "splendid opportunity" offered by the crisis. He feared the chance might be missed to solve simultaneously the inseparable problems of equality, security, and treaty revision, and urged Britain not to repeat "the tragic mistakes of the past." 10 Another MP Sir Arnold Wilson, speaking before The 1912 Club of London, proposed taking Hitler at his word and making every effort to get France and Belgium to accept his new offer because "sooner or later an outlet must be found for Germany." 11 Three days

9 The Times (London), March 17, 1936, p. 12. Letter to the Editor from T. C. R. Moore, MP.
10 The Times (London), March 11, 1936, p. 17.
11 Ibid.
later, Wilson urged an end to harping over Hitler's violation of the Locarno Treaty, remarking that in the past twenty years treaty after treaty had been broken when no longer acceptable to public opinion.  

More often, however, people preferred to discount the Peace Settlement rather than Locarno when rationalizing Hitler's action. If Versailles could be proven invalid, then remilitarization would no longer be construed a violation of its provisions. This may explain why Lord Londonderry, an advocate of appeasement, attacked the Treaty so strongly a few days after the crisis began:

The Treaty of Versailles can properly be said to have shown itself to be a document of singular ineptitude. It disregarded the majority of those principles which would guide victors in imposing conditions on the vanquished, and the sooner that treaty is buried and the Covenant of the League of Nations freed from its baneful influence the better for the peace of Europe.... The occupation of the demilitarized zone is a logical sequence to recent events.  

One phrase extremely popular at this time, "they are only going into their own back yards," reflected the lens through which most people chose to view the Rhineland issue. Few cared to remember that Hitler had broken international law. And Lord Lothian's slogan provided a means for absolving

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13 The Times (London), March 12, 1936, p. 15.
German action of its offensiveness by placing it in a harmless sounding context.

Although members of the Government actively discussed this issue in public speeches and the Press, they had no opportunity for debate within the House of Commons until March 26. Two days after the event, Eden informed Commons about the latest German coup and impending Government action, but he requested no debate for a fortnight. Instead, he responded briefly during "question and answer period" to developments in negotiations. Observing reaction to Eden's news, Harold Nicolson recorded in his diary that the general mood of the House was one of fear: "Anything to keep out of war."\(^{15}\) Because of this predisposition, MP's of all parties were content to leave matters to the Government. Even Churchill, a harsh critic of appeasement, did not speak out immediately because Baldwin was considering him for Minister of Defense—a post which eventually went to Sir Thomas Inskip.\(^{16}\)

At last, on March 20, the Foreign Secretary made a lengthy speech covering diplomatic actions taken since March 7, and stressed willingness to accept remilitarization
as a fait accompli in order to rebuild the shattered peace and lost confidence. He recounted a series of diplomatic manoeuvres made under the aegis of the Locarno Powers and Council of the League, aimed at resolving the crisis satisfactorily. Two days after Eden's speech, Nicolson once more described the 'pro-German' attitude in the House which he adduced to mean "afraid of war."

Then, on March 16, nineteen days after the event, debate commenced. But by this time, nothing that might have been said in the Commons would have made a great deal of difference. Eden began discussion, summarizing the entire British position regarding the Rhineland and her obligations under Locarno: Versailles was mentioned only once. He then reviewed all diplomacy since March 7, once more indicating the matter he considered a fait accompli so rebuilding of lost confidence could proceed. The speech concluded with a list of the country's goals:

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18Ibid., pp. 847-848.
19Nicolson, Diaries, p. 254, and "Has Britain a Policy?" Foreign Affairs, XLV (July, 1936), pp. 549-562.
22Ibid.
recognition of British obligations to Locarno, prevention of war, creation of conditions for negotiation, strengthening of collective security, and encouragement of Germany's return to the League so that "in a happier atmosphere" larger matters of economics and armaments can be discussed since they are "indispensable to the appeasement of Europe." 23 Eden later estimated that the reaction to his proposals was even better than expected: "the House was understanding and the majority of Members was fervent in support." 24

Then, debate over these matters ensued. Hugh Dalton, speaking for Labour, took little notice of Germany's provocative action; instead, he condemned British policy for proposing an international peace keeping force, staff consultations with France and Belgium, and negotiating with the Locarno Powers separately from the League. 25 Dalton insisted on the German's right to equality--political and economic--and urged that country to return to the League. 26 No other course was feasible because, in Dalton's estimation,

23 Ibid., p. 1450.
24 Eden, Facing the Dictators, p. 407.
26 Ibid., p. 1459.
...public opinion in this country, would not support and certainly the Labour party would not support, the taking of military sanctions against Germany at this time, in order to put German troops out of the Rhineland.27

Moreover, he asserted, public opinion drew a clear distinction between actions taken by Mussolini, labeling them aggression, and actions taken by Herr Hitler. This was because in the latter instance they had occurred within the frontiers of the German Reich.28 Clement Attlee, leader of the Labour Party and traditionally hostile to treaty revision, disagreed with Dalton, objecting to making any retribution to Germany for suffering from the "evils of Versailles."29

The controversy persisted with those desiring to appease the Nazis alluding to the unfair Peace Settlement to justify this view. Even Lloyd-George, who had helped to negotiate the Treaty, had come to shift his position in favor of revision. He explained that "...you cannot treat this as if it were Holy Writ," which only weakened the document further.30 Next, Sir Archibald Sinclair joined in the discussion, reasoning that since Germany had already broken the "shackles of Versailles," we ought to have

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27 Ibid., pp. 1457-1458.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., pp. 1535-1536.
30 Ibid., p. 1477.
struck them off before now. He then urged that the opportunity for real peace should not be allowed to pass by ignoring Hitler's proposals. 31

While some members opposed Government policy, they did not materially influence its direction. And even those against appeasement agreed with Churchill's observation that a general consensus in favor of Eden and the Government existed within the House. 32 As an alternative, Churchill proposed pursuing collective security, and if that failed, making an alliance with France. 33 Harold Nicolson strongly supported strengthening ties with France, and during a speech before Commons, he traced the paradox of British policy. In the years after the war, when Germany had been weak, any benefits given to her had been criticized. But now that Germany had become strong, "there is a great wave of pro-German feeling at this moment sweeping the country." 34 When it was his turn to speak, another opponent of the present policy, Robert Boothby, suggested sympathy was due "very largely to a reaction on the part of our people against a foreign policy in which they have never believed, and which was carried out in a manner which they thought

31 Ibid., pp. 1467-1468.
32 Ibid., pp. 1528-1535.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 1473.
was grossly unfair to Germany...”

Boothby seemed to infer that people's guilt over past mistakes had clouded their judgement about the Nazi regime, thereby inducing an inadequate response to Hitler's breach of the Treaty.

Opposition to the policies outlined by Eden could also be found within the Foreign Office. Churchill's friend Ralph Wigram clearly saw the inherent dangers of appeasement. And after Hitler's coup, he predicted: "War is now inevitable, and I think it will be the most terrible war there has been..." Meanwhile, at the annual dinner of the Cambridge University Conservative Association, a few days after Hitler's dramatic move, another outspoken critic Austen Chamberlain sharply called the dictator to account for violating Locarno and Versailles. Emphatically he denied the German view that the Treaties ought not to be respected; Chamberlain insisted Britain must uphold the law. But the time was not yet ripe for these critics; their ranks were thin, and their arguments calling for adherence to treaties and resumption of a traditional foreign policy aimed at restoring the balance of power found no receptive audience in 1936.

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37 The Times (London), March 12, 1936, p. 8.
CHAPTER V

PRESS REACTION

The British press, led by The Times, played a crucial role in helping to drown out the warnings issued by critics of appeasement. It supported the Government and adhered to a position that remilitarization was inevitable sooner or later. Therefore, while not condoning Hitler's action, newspapers urged Britain to be ready to seize the opportunity of wrestling good from evil.\(^1\) One reason for promoting this opinion was that "both financially and intellectually it was unwise or impossible for the British Press to adopt a strongly critical line...the readers did not want to read it and the intellectuals did not want to write it."\(^2\)

In fact, many English journalists and editors, impressed by the historians' views on this matter, felt that the harsh terms of the Versailles Treaty entitled the Nazis to the benefit of the doubt. "It even made some commentators willing to excuse 'these things' as being 'inevitable' consequences of the Allied policies of revenge at what


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 2.
should have been the peace table...”\textsuperscript{3}

Undoubtedly \textit{The Times} was the most important British paper in the thirties.\textsuperscript{4} In foreign affairs it acted as the spokesman for the National Government, molded public opinion, and served as a barometer for officials to judge the mood of the country. Thus its influence rebounded in many directions, and the paper's editorial position toward Germany and militarization is worth a close study.

Geoffrey Dawson, editor from 1923-1941, had complete authority for foreign affairs. A supporter of appeasement, he kept close ties to the Foreign Office and periodically went there to talk with Eden over many topics relating to national security. In the days following Hitler's coup, Dawson met the Foreign Secretary a number of times and also Lord Halifax who was closely involved in negotiations over the Rhineland, and thereby conversant with official policy.\textsuperscript{5}

Robert M. Barrinton-Ward, Dawson's assistant editor, was another advocate of appeasement and believer in the perniciousness of the Treaty of Versailles.\textsuperscript{6} Together


\textsuperscript{4}Gannon, \textit{The British Press and Germany}, p. 56.


\textsuperscript{6}Gannon, \textit{The British Press and Germany}, p. 56.
these two men were mainly responsible for the editorials that appeared in the days succeeding Hitler's entry.

One of the best known of these editorials, cited often to represent British reluctance over antagonizing Germany appeared two days after the event. Titled "A Chance to Rebuild," the editorial took a sympathetic view of the coup. First it called for a careful examination of the peace proposals Hitler had made; then it made a distinction between Versailles and Locarno. In The Times! estimation, the original Peace Settlements contained "penal and discriminatory clauses" and needed to be done away with because they continued to preserve "...the mood of war-bitterness and war-exhaustion in which they were drafted, maintained an unstable equilibrium and threatened the durability of the Settlement as a whole." Only Locarno should be retained and its provisions honored.

But there were people who refused to disregard the Treaty of Versailles in this matter. As Arnold Wolfers has shown, it clearly stated in Articles 42, 43, and 44 the right of France and Britain to prevent Germany from constructing fortifications, maintaining armed forces, or holding military manoeuvres of any kind in an area "...on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west

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7 The Times (London), March 9, 1936, p. 15.
of a line drawn fifty kilometers to the east of the Rhine."\(^8\) Although Locarno guaranteed these frontiers too, it also made a separation between flagrant and non-flagrant breaches of Articles 42 and 43, and only in the first case did France have the right of immediate and independent action with a British promise of assistance. In a non-flagrant case, the matter would be referred to the League. Thus, much to France's distress, she found out during this crisis that if Britain did not wish to take a hard line against Hitler, the Government could portray his action as non-flagrant.\(^9\) This argument was an important motive for directing new attacks against the Treaty of Versailles, which by 1936, had lost so much of its authority.

_The Times_ concluded with a justification of Hitler's move, explaining that he was only marching into German territory, and carried pictures of cheering and enthusiastic crowds welcoming the troops as evidence.\(^10\) It finished with a plea to use this opportunity to strengthen the peace of Europe, claiming that the old structure, "...one-sided and unbalanced, is nearly in ruins. It is the moment not to despair, but to rebuild."\(^11\) Ending Versailles and restoring

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\(^8\) Wolfers, _Britain and France Between Two Wars_, p. 42.
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 45.
\(^10\) _The Times_ (London), March 9, 1936), p. 18.
\(^11\) Ibid., p. 15.
Germany to a position of equality became the cornerstone of the paper's editorial policy vis-a-vis Anglo-German relations during this tense period.

With The Times leading the way, most of Britain's newspapers expressed their belief in the sincerity of Hitler's offer of a non-aggression pact. The Daily Herald contended that due to the unfair, inequitable treatment meted out to Germany, the British people would not fight to prevent "German troops from garrisoning German towns." The same article also urged the League Council, when it met, to devote itself "...not to recrimination and useless snarling, but to the constructive task of making, with this as the opportunity, a new, more equitable, and, therefore, more lasting settlement." Implicit in this charge was the view that prior ones had been less than fair to Germany. Lord Rothmore's Daily Mail had from the outset an admiration for the internal accomplishments of the Nazi regime, both spiritual and material. Therefore, it was no surprise to find an editorial stance highly sympathetic to Hitler's move.

13Daily Herald as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.
14Ibid.
15Gannon, The British Press and Germany, p. 32.
The paper called on Britain to face the situation "without agitation. It has caused no crisis, and in reality has made no substantial change in conditions."¹⁶ Denying emphatically the possibility of British involvement in the crisis, Lord Beaverbrook's Daily Express, the world's largest single daily, wrote: "Will Britain be involved in war? The answer is NO!"¹⁷ Another Beaverbrook paper, the Evening Standard, took an even firmer pro-German stand, portraying the situation in these dramatic terms:

Britain has awakened from a nightmare. She finds herself blessedly free of a Pact, which, lightly undertaken, was a constant menace to her hope of peace and prosperity...Let us start fresh.¹⁸

Germany was not perceived as a threat at this time.

Even those papers not usually considered favorable to the Nazis were surprisingly mild on the issue of remilitarization. One of these, the Morning Post, carried the extreme right wing Tory line toward international affairs, seeing Bolshevism and Nazism equally repugnant.¹⁹ Nevertheless, in this case it appealed for British statesmen to consider the German proposals "with cool heads, since

¹⁶Daily Mail as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.
¹⁷Daily Express as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.
¹⁸Evening Standard as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.
there is no alternative to discussion but to thrust the German troops from the Rhineland by war which is not possible even if it were a reasonable proposition."\(^{20}\)

Another newspaper, the Liberal News Chronicle had a reputation for annoying the Nazis.\(^{21}\) And yet, it estimated that because of the strongly pro-German tide, plus Hitler's offer of terms to rebuild good international relations, not a single Englishman would regard the occupation "...as constituting sufficient ground for supporting French punitive measures against Germany."\(^{22}\)

Only the Daily Telegraph, with a large middle class circulation, suggested wariness when examining the memorandum containing Hitler's counterproposals of good faith.\(^{23}\)

Both Sunday papers, The Observer, older and more influential despite its small circulation, and the Sunday Times, maintained a sympathetic line on almost all German matters. The Observer had great contempt for Versailles and the whole system of international affairs it represented, considering an agreement between England and Germany possible

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\(^{20}\) Morning Post as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.

\(^{21}\) Gannon, The British Press and Germany, pp. 38-42.

\(^{22}\) News Chronicle as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.

\(^{23}\) Daily Telegraph as quoted in The Times (London), March 10, 1936, p. 18.
and desirable. Likewise, the Sunday Times was also convinced of the advisability of an Anglo-German rapprochement, and the paper's owner, Lord Kemsly, did not hesitate to use his influence via his newspaper to smooth the way.

In the provinces, the Manchester Guardian, a paper with a comparatively small circulation "deserved and enjoyed an international reputation as the liberal counterpart of The Times." Classified a liberal paper, not because it spoke for that party, but rather due to "the kind of people and intellectuals it attracted both as staff and as readers," the Guardian illustrated how a paper can become the prisoner of its own ideology. It stood committed to certain things: the iniquity of Versailles, the villainy of France, abhorrence of war, and enthusiasm for the Weimar Republic. Given these sentiments, the newspaper faced a tremendous dilemma after Hitler acceded to power and began demanding changes based on his claim of unjust treatment from the peace conference. The intellectual difficulties the newspaper encountered in reconciling its preconceived views about the Treaty with these claims by

25 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
26 Ibid., p. viii.
27 Ibid., pp. 74-79.
28 Ibid.
a dictator it detested indicated the negative impact which the revisionist historians could produce on discussions of foreign affairs in the 1930's. The paradox facing the Guardian grew out of these pre-existing attitudes about certain issues which came to control the paper's treatment of Germany:

...the Manchester Guardian could not deny the justice even of a dictator's 'just' demands. The Manchester Guardian was in the complicated position of knowing what the Nazi regime and its ideas must lead to, but being unable to oppose various demands based upon what it deemed genuine grievances in which Britain had complied at Versailles....

The result was that although the Guardian had a clear conception from 1933 onwards of Nazi Germany:

It could not draw the logical conclusions of this insight and was forced, each time it was confronted with the continual German heinousness it had always predicted, suddenly to urge tolerance and moderation either because war was unthinkable, or because no one's conscience was wholly clear....

A quick glance at other papers outside of London revealed a large body of pro-German feeling throughout Britain. The Yorkshire Post, Birmingham Post, Liverpool Post, Nottingham Guardian, Sheffield Telegraph and North Mail, all downgraded the significance of Hitler's move, and the Sheffield Telegraph characterized the situation as no act of aggression; Germany has "...merely relieved herself

29Gannon, The British Press and Germany, p. 78.

30Ibid., pp. 87-88.
of a humiliation by re-occupying her own territory." At the same time, these papers expressed hopes that Hitler's proposals receive a cool examination, so that out of bad some good may come. Only a very few papers such as the Glasgow Herald and Western Morning News seemed willing to take a less conciliatory position, refusing to be bribed by the peace proposals and denouncing the unilateral abandonment of Versailles and Locarno.

Other segments of the British Press, consisting of the weekly, monthly, and quarterly, also acted as an important forum for public opinion, and in the ensuing months much was published on the Nazis' latest move. New Statesman and Nation, a liberal journal of political and social criticism, within a week after the coup, ran two articles. In the first, it estimated that British sentiment, even though deploring Hitler's violent methods, accepted his moral right to the Rhineland. Starting with this premise, the journal then presented an editorial in the same issue, using as an example of popular feeling a bus conductor's
pronouncement that remilitarisation "...is no more than to move his family into his own back yard."35 To explain this concept, the editors concluded:

We all have bad consciences about Germany's treatment since the war. England has talked of Germany's right to equality in Europe ever since she joined with France to deprive her of it.36

The following week another editorial appeared, reiterating the same belief that a guilty conscience had produced the confusion of British opinion on this matter. It did warn, however, that people were too willing to accept the idea that once injustices of Versailles had been removed, Europe would know peace.37

The Spectator, a journal offering an independent political and cultural approach, found little to be disturbed about, and considered it foolish to think German inequality could be maintained permanently, "...nor is anyone disposed to moralise overmuch about Germany's repeated breaking of the Treaty of Versailles...."38 Only the details of restoring Germany to her former footing remained to be worked

36Ibid.
out. Thus, this situation presented an excellent opportunity to begin negotiations, based on Hitler's suggestions of a Western Pact. 39 The next week, the Spectator once more commented that demilitarization was a thing of the past; it should be accepted as a fait accompli, and war was out of the question in this situation. 40

Other articles that appeared were repetitious, continuing to assert that remilitarization was "...no more than an emphatic and final repudiation of 'war guilt.'" 41 Clearly this judgement rested upon the understanding that the Peace Conference had committed a real injustice, thereby creating a reasonably strong case for restoring German equality. The evidence published by the revisionist historians, when it was used to sustain this position, helped to stimulate a strong sense of guilt in Britain. These feelings, in turn, created the desire to make amends for the harsh peace that they had helped to impose.

The link between the revisionist historians and the events of March 7, 1936 did not go unnoticed. The liberal and literary weekly Christian Century, one of the most influential Protestant publications, while searching for

39 Ibid., p. 456.
40 "Germany and France," Spectator, CLVI (March 27, 1936), p. 564.
a means of reconciling its antipathy for Hitler with its equally strong dislike of war, recognized that:

The whole Versailles program...rested upon the ascription of the entire responsibility for the war to Germany....Now if there is one thing that has been more definitely proved than another about the World War it is that Germany was not solely responsible for it. The presupposition underlying the terms of the Treaty was false, Germany knows it, and everybody else knows it.42

Once Versailles had been discredited, Christian Century did not think other governments would be averse to Germany overthrowing its restrictions.43 Therefore, in spite of the weekly's belief that the Nazi regime was far more dangerous than any other, it did not consider it possible "...to maintain defenses whose moral foundations have so completely crumbled."44 The only alternative remaining was to support revision, the same untenable position of the Manchester Guardian. The issue of remilitarization had been resolved for the moment; yet, it did not accurately represent either the Guardian or the Christian Century's opinion of Nazi Germany. But revisionist history, by having provided evidence which Germany could adopt to justify her desires for revoking provisions of the Treaty, had been instrumental in producing favorable press reaction to the disposition of the Rhineland.

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

TEMPER OF THE TIMES

Britain's decision to avoid conflict while proceeding with negotiations had been supported, almost without exception, by the press and members of the National Government. In addition, widespread acceptance of this policy also existed within all segments of the intellectual community, encompassing members of the aristocracy and clergy as well as historians, journalists, academicians, and informed citizen groups. During this crisis, these various strands of Britain's establishment achieved a consensus due in part to the climate of opinion which the revisionist historians had helped to prepare.

When the Cabinet looked at the mood of the country in the days immediately following Germany's march into the Rhineland, it noted a variety of feelings. There seemed to be cautious optimism that Hitler would now be satisfied with troops once more on the West bank of the Rhine. German peace proposals and a willingness to rejoin the League of Nations further substantiated this mood of hope. Yet there was dismay over the Fuhrer's techniques, along with anxiety that France might try to precipitate an incident which could
draw Britain into unwanted hostilities. In the long run, hopes of rebuilding the disturbed peace won out over fears of a conflict, but the awkward dilemma of how to explain Hitler's actions within the framework of existing international law still had to be resolved. One method which became highly successful was to shift the blame away from Germany and place it on the Treaty of Versailles, now almost universally condemned as unfair and responsible for German revision. This reason provided a convenient context for rationalizing the gap Hitler's coup had rent in the status quo, and "for many people Hitler's action simply removed one of the major humiliations imposed by the bankrupt Versailles Treaty."  

The policy Britain adopted indicated that the members of government were well aware of the public's views regarding the Rhineland. Baldwin, in his conversation with M. Flandin, had alluded to the country's reluctance to support France in any military venture. And Von Hoesch, the German Ambassador, after a close study of the general temperament


\[ \text{Jones, A Diary With Letters, p. 185; Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin: A Biography, pp. 919-920.} \]
concluded that:

...the so called 'man in the street' generally takes the view that he does not care a damn if the Germans occupy their own territory with military forces, which is a thing all other states do anyway. He has not the slightest intention of getting himself involved and possibly even allowing himself to be drawn into these questions, and he is thoroughly angry with the French. . . .

Anthony Eden, the Cabinet official charged with implementing foreign policy, accepted Baldwin's appraisal of the situation and described his own impressions of the public derived from a taxi ride to the Foreign Office on March 9. After arriving at his destination, Eden queried the driver about news of remilitarization, to which the cab driver responded, "I suppose Jerry can do what he likes in his own back garden, can't he?" Impressed, Eden considered the reply representative of the majority in Britain at the time, "...when once convinced that no German attack on France or Belgium was immediately intended." Eden wavered little from his opinion, crediting the favorable reception given to the temporizing action taken by the Locarno signatories to the public's belief that Germany, in this instance, had a reasonable case.

Throughout the crisis, Viscount Halifax worked closely

3Middlemas and Barnes, Baldwin: A Biography, p. 922.
4Eden, Facing the Dictators, p. 389.
5Ibid.
6Ibid., pp. 396, 425.
with Eden and the Foreign Office, and as an older, more distinguished and experienced statesman, accompanied the Secretary in his conversations with the other Locarno powers. Halifax's reluctance to see Britain assume any specific military commitment directed against Germany would, Baldwin reasoned, restrain Eden from the temptation to take stronger action. The Lord Privy Seal's determination to keep out of a conflict was strengthened by his friends Lord Londonderry, Lord Lothian, and Geoffrey Dawson, who insisted on "...the inherent if rough justice of Germany's position." It was easy for Halifax to accept Lothian's interpretation of the German action as "walking into her own garden" along with his view that the British people, hypnotized by German propaganda about the inequity of Versailles, and obsessed by feelings of unreasoning guilt were only too willing to shrug their shoulder at this gross violation of the Treaty.

Another important member of the Cabinet, Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Baldwin's eventual successor, shared this appraisal of the country's mood. In the March 12, entry of his diary, Chamberlain recorded a talk with Flandin,

8 Ibid., p. 394.
"...emphasizing that public opinion here would not support us in sanctions of any kind."\textsuperscript{10}

Even politicians who disagreed with the direction of policy recognized, along with Churchill, that opinion supported Germany at this time.\textsuperscript{11} One of these men, Duff Cooper, Secretary of War in Baldwin's Cabinet since 1935, noted with some irony that less than a decade after the war those who had been most outspoken during the fighting, "...the keenest of spy-hunters and the most determined in their oaths never to speak to a German again were precisely the people who forgot the real crime of Germany most quickly."\textsuperscript{12} But Cooper had moved in the opposite direction, and after hearing Hitler during a visit to Germany in 1933, he began to speak out publicly against the Nazi regime. Addressing a small meeting of the Junior Imperial League, Cooper told them that "Germany was preparing for war on a scale and with enthusiasm unmatched in history."\textsuperscript{13} Immediately the press reacted with hostility to the warning, and both Rothermere and Beaverbrook denounced Cooper in scathing


\textsuperscript{11}Churchill, The Gathering Storm, p. 196-197.


\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., pp. 181-182.
language, calling him a war-monger and his speech irresponsible, jeopardizing the peace.\textsuperscript{14} The foresight of Cooper, Churchill, and a few others who comprehended the true nature of the Nazi regime could not alter the large body of pro-German feeling that had grown up since the war.

Harold MacMillan, observing the situation from the Tory backbench in the 1930's recognized the influence these attitudes posed for diplomatic relations with Germany. When Hitler entered the Rhineland, MacMillan commented often about the uncertainty and confusion of the British who had accepted Lord Lothain's phrase "into their own back-gardens" as the correct interpretation of events. Opinions like these reduced the issue to a "minor, almost trivial event" and blinded people to the true, critical nature of Hitler's move which "...started the avalanche destined to engulf, in its devasting path, the whole world."\textsuperscript{15}

Hitler's entry into the Rhineland provoked much concern and discussion, not only among politicians, but within all segments of the intellectual community. One portion of the British establishment, the clergy, pressured the Government into continuing to appease Germany. The Canon of Liverpool became a leading figure in this movement, trying to show that his anti-French and pro-German views were

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 182.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{MacMillan, Winds of Change}, p. 427.
shared by a great number of his fellow countrymen, "...and in a democracy such as ours, the Government was bound, in forming policy, to take public opinion into account." But at the same time the Canon actively worked to create the kind of opinion he wanted officials to listen to, preaching the wickedness of resorting to any pressure against Germany:

'To continue an enforcement of the spirit of inequality upon Germany [thundered the Canon] is a proposal unworthy of our creed and of our country. To renew an occupation of their homeland is a proposal monstrous and unjustifiable.'

Another church figure, the Bishop of London, also spoke in behalf of Germany, exhorting Britain not to refuse the "olive-branch" offered by Hitler. To give weight to this plea, he recalled the errors made in the aftermath of the First War; revenge had been a mistake because

The ordinary German people were kindly and sensitive to kind treatment. We should have taken Germany by the hand at the end of the War, when she had thrown over the Kaiser and the military caste.

Many historians joined the clergy in calling for lenient treatment in the present crisis. In a letter to The Times, G. W. Headlam welcomed Hitler's move as a

16 The Canon of Liverpool as quoted in Cooper, Old Men Forget, p. 427.
17 Ibid., p. 197.
18 The Times (London), March 12, 1936, p. 7.
chance to rebuild peace and happiness in Europe. The historian maintained that no one ever made himself or anyone else happier by persisting in bearing a grudge, and Headlam indicated the modifications he had made in earlier works to exemplify this principle:

In any dispute it is very improbable that one party is entirely to blame; try to realize any fault, folly or mistake of your own, admit it to yourself and others...

Therefore, he concluded, remilitarization must be thought of as a real opportunity for statesmanship to make an alliance between Britain, France, and Germany.

The American historian Allan Nevins asked if the incident was really such a calamity, and claimed that British and even French opinion considered Germany's garrisoning the Rhineland inevitable. In this article, Nevins did deplore the methods used, but then argued that "no treaty ever endures long unless its signers believe it to be equitable..." But such had not been the case regarding Versailles, he asserted. Nevins hoped that Hitler's various offers would give Europe the opportunity to build anew. Even R. W. Seton-Watson, a supporter of Serbian innocence against the claims of Sidney B. Fay and Edith Durham, wrote to congratulate the Government and

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19 The Times (London), March 9, 1936, p. 15.

Foreign Secretary "...on having kept their heads, combined firmness with conciliation, rejected the idea of sanctions against Germany...and so maintained a certain mediatory position."21 Another influential historian, Arnold Toynbee, openly exhibited his sympathy for Germany. On March 8, during a walk with Tom Jones, Toynbee discussed his recent trip to Germany where he became convinced of the sincerity behind Hitler's desire for peace in Europe and close friendship with England.22 In the Survey of International Affairs that Toynbee produced each year for The Royal Institute of International Affairs, he mentioned the importance pro-German attitudes had for influencing Government policies. According to Toynbee, the British were willing to tolerate appeasement of the Rhineland because of sympathy "...with German grievances against the peace settlement and with the German struggle to regain equality of status...."23 It is true, he agreed, Nazi excesses during the last few years had shaken this sympathy, but they had not destroyed "...the feeling that Germany had not had a fair deal...and in the existing circumstances there were many Englishmen who could find some excuse for

22 Jones, A Diary with Letters, p. 181.
Germany's action on the 7th March. Edward Hallet Carr, a British diplomatic historian and Bernadotte Everly Schmitt, the American revisionist, when analyzing the thirties at the end of the decade, agreed that a large body of opinion did exist which considered the Versailles Treaty unjust and thought it only fair that Germany should be given a chance to rectify these grievances.

Journalists, another influential segment of the British establishment, joined in attacking the Treaty and called upon their country to redress its unfairness. Two articles appearing in the English Review illustrate this recurrent theme:

...widespread pro-German sentiment based on an appreciation of the unfairness of the Versailles Treaty and admiration for the remarkable efforts by which Germany has achieved her own regeneration.

Another even more explicit account in The Nineteenth Century attacked Articles 42, 43, and 44 of the Treaty as inequitable and labeled demilitarization an indefensible proposition. Hitler emerged as the hero; only he had made the first real attempt since 1919 to restore normal conditions to Europe.

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24 Ibid.
Moreover, now that Germany has won back her "...independence, self-respect, and honour as a Sovereign State, men of good will ought not to trouble over much about 'ways and means.'" 28

Letters people wrote to the press served as another form for indicating how widespread feelings against the Treaty had become. One, carried by The Spectator, asked the Allies to completely discard the "ill-fated Treaty of Versailles" because public opinion in England was so divided. The common people had an uneasy conscience toward Germany and no united front to stop Hitler could be rallied. Therefore, the public must be shown that Germany had been fairly treated first; then, if she strayed beyond the acceptable bounds of a new settlement, the Government could find support in moving against her. 29 Other letters


sustained the impression that most people refused to see any harm in German violations of an already discredited Treaty; consequently, Britain should not promise too much support to France.\textsuperscript{30} In fact, letters to the editor of \textit{The Times} ran so overwhelmingly in favor of Germany, it caused Barrington-Ward to complain to Ambassador Joseph Kennedy about the newspaper's difficulty in finding enough letters stating anti-German views in order to balance the correspondence.\textsuperscript{31}

There were other, informal, but no less important expressions of sympathy for Germany emanating from aristocratic circles. One of these occurred at a famous and much quoted weekend at Blickling, Lord Lothian's home. On March 7, 1936, he hosted a number of people, some of whom were part of the "Cliveden Set." According to Tom Jones, secretary and close personal associate to Lloyd-George and then to Baldwin, those who composed Cliveden had considerable social and political impact.\textsuperscript{32} Others have disputed the group's influence, asserting that regardless of the social status of those who dined with the Astors, they were responsible for very little; the disposition to appease was already widespread, and it did not need these affairs

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{The Times} (London), March 9, 1936, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{32} Jones, \textit{Diary With Letters}, pp. xxxiv-xi.
to reinforce it.33

These disputes aside, there is one thing revealed by those who attended the week-end at Lord Lothian's: the depth to which pro-German sympathy had permeated the British upper classes. The guests at Blickling included: Mr. and Mrs. Norman Davis, former United States Ambassador in London; Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Massey, Canadian High Commissioner in London, and subsequently Governor-General of Canada; Lord and Lady Astor; Sir Thomas and Lady Inskip, subsequently Lord Caldecote, and first Minister of Defense in Baldwin's Cabinet; Sir Walter and Lady Layton, Chairman of the News Chronicle-Star; Arnold Toynbee, historian and Director of the Studies at Chatham House, 1925-1955; and Tom Jones.34 The guests, after listening to the news of Hitler's entry into the Rhineland on the wireless, followed Jones' suggestion to resolve themselves into a "Shadow Cabinet." They then drew up a set of eight conclusions which they phoned into the Prime Minister. Generally the tone of these recommendations was conciliatory, and the first proposed welcoming Hitler's declaration wholeheartedly.35 The next two, reflecting current opinion,
asked that the breach of Part V of the Treaty be treated as "...relatively de minimus: and not to be taken tragically in view of the peace proposals which accompany it. Versailles is now a corpse and should be buried."36 The recommendations also stated that entrance to the zone should be treated as an assertion, or demonstration of recovered status of equality, and not as an act of aggression.37 Jones hoped these suggestions would help the Prime Minister make up his mind about what course to take before he entered the Cabinet meeting and faced contradictory advice. Baldwin's secretary believed in the correctness of this council, convinced "...the English would not dream of going to war because German troops had marched into their own territories--whatever Treaties had been declared."38 Assessing the impact of the 'Shadow Cabinet's' role in determining what policy would be implemented, one author called it "unofficial but highly influential."39 Moreover, since Jones was Deputy Secretary of the real Cabinet at this time, "...he added the considerable weight of his own authority and his own influence on the Prime Minister."40 A. L. Rowse has made

36Jones, A Diary With Letters, p. 179.
37Ibid., p. 181.
38Ibid.
40Ibid.
a description of the closeness of this relationship between the two men:

••• to Baldwin T. J. incarnated the Wisdom of the ages! Baldwin ceased to listen to Vansittart whose warnings were so uncomfortable and preferred T. J. whose siren voice contributed the more soothing passages to his speeches.41

Whether, in fact, the group at Blickling determined British policy in this crisis is debatable. But there is no question that by apprising the Prime Minister of the conclusions reached over the week-end, they helped confirm his opinion of the country's mood, further convincing Baldwin that little toleration for aiding France existed on this issue.

Although the events at Lord Lothian's attracted much notoriety, there were other instances when members of the establishment spoke out in favor of appeasement. For example, the Executive Committee of the "Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction" passed a resolution at the March 11 meeting at Abbey House which regreted the German action, welcomed Eden's declaration that the Government would examine Hitler's peace proposals, repudiated the idea of sanctions against Germany, called on the Government to open discussions with Hitler and other powers through the League in order to obtain German re-entry, and asked for negotiation of a general European Pact of non-aggression.42 Chairing this

41 Rowse, Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline, pp. 35-37.

42 The Times (London), March 12, 1936, p. 8.
meeting was David Lloyd-George, and among the members in attendance were Lady Snowden; Miss Eleanor Rathbone, MP; Drs. F. W. Norwood and S. M. Berry; and Sir Edgar Jones: a cross section of British society.

It is hard to tell how many people who fell under the spell of appeasement had been convinced by reading the findings of the revisionist historians. One can say with more certainty that the list of those who took a lenient attitude toward Germany in 1936 was long, and it included members from all ranks of British life. By the end of the thirties, after appeasement had lost a great deal of its appeal and prestige, the mood would be far different. But in 1936, the country would not stand for anything that might lead to war: "On all sides one hears sympathy for Germany." At this time, there was no doubt that a large reservoir of compassion for the plight of Germany existed. And it was official estimates of the depth of public opinion over the question of remilitarization which helped to determine the form British policy took in coping with Hitler's challenge in the Rhineland.

CONCLUSION

Delving into the motives underlying appeasement, Margaret George, author of a monograph on foreign policy, offers two explanations for its creation: the horror of war which had produced an overwhelming desire for pacifism, and a mounting sympathy for Germany "...directly attributable to the half-shamed awareness that the 'guilt verdict' of the Versailles Treaty, and the post-war punishment of Germany had been less than fair...to a German people who assuredly could not be stigmatized with criminal responsibility for the Great War."\(^1\) But even though she recognized the link between pro-German sentiment and appeasement, the author failed to uncover where or how this feeling originated. Since only a few years earlier Germany had been considered Britain's antagonist in a World War, there needs to be a satisfactory account for this reversal of attitudes. Thus, while this paper has focused on the influence of the revisionist historians during the inter-war period in Britain, the relationship between their findings and the development

of appeasement cannot be ignored. It was their demonstration that provided a necessary moral and ethical framework in which a new foreign policy could be constructed.

Once Germany was no longer the enemy, British interests demanded that conditions on the continent return to normal as soon as possible. This implied a Germany established on an equal footing with the rest of the nations of Europe. Appeasement became the means through which Britain could satisfy German demands while simultaneously fulfilling her own goals.

There is no doubt that the revisionist historians had a profound effect upon their times. In fact, this paper has proven it was their very success which made maintenance of the Versailles Settlement so difficult. Termination of the Treaty seemed the only solution. And whether this occurred by negotiation or flagrant breaches of its provisions did not seem to matter enough for people to go to war to defend what by 1936 had become indefensible.
I. Government Printed Sources:

Great Britain. Foreign Office. British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, Vol. VI, "Anglo-German Tensions, Armaments and Negotiations, 1907-1912." Published in 1930 and edited by George Peabody Gooch and Harold Temperley, these documents attempt to give the most complete and objective account of the origins of the war from the British side.

Great Britain. Foreign Office. Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, 2nd. ser., Vol. XII. This series of documents, recently published in 1972 and edited by W. N. Medlicott, Douglas Dakin, and M. E. Lambert, covers selected events during the interwar period. Not yet complete, they are still in the process of being compiled and have no useful information directly concerning the year 1936 or remilitarization of the Rhineland. But they do offer insight into the foreign office's view of Germany.


No study of this period and of the Government's reaction during the crisis could be complete without access to the Parliamentary debates. Although only one actual debate took place over this issue, it gave a clear view of the position of many prominent members of Government and the arguments most frequently used either in support or against official policy.

II. Books and Pamphlets:


This book treats the period from 1929-1940 as both an addition and a corrective to Sir Winston Churchill's The Gathering Storm and Lord Templewood's Nine Troubled Years. Amery tells the story of these
years from his own personal angle and sees the real
end of the era occurring with the fall of the
Chamberlain Government. Only slightly helpful on
the crisis of remilitarization.

Asquith, Herbert Henry, Earl of Oxford and Asquith. The
Genesis of the War. New York: George H. Doran Co.,
1923.

Asquith was Prime Minister of Great Britain
from 1908-1916, during the crucial years leading up
to the war. In this account, he covers European
diplomacy from 1888, giving particular emphasis to
Anglo-German relations and the immediate origins of
the war. Asquith presents the Allied version of
German war-guilt and discounts any new documentary
evidence.

of The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon. Boston:

This volume covers the period when Eden was a
minister at the Foreign Office from the Autumn of 1931
until he resigned as Foreign Secretary in February,
1938. The chief sources Eden relied on have been
telegrams and dispatches recording missions and conver­
sations, along with the minutes written on Foreign
Office papers to the Prime Minister when he was Foreign
Secretary. Eden has also included dispatches and
letters to ambassadors.

His account of the events leading up to remili­
tarization and his response to it are detailed and
invaluable in understanding British foreign policy
toward Germany. Eden also gives some insight into
what motivated his decisions.

Barnes, Harry Elmer. The Genesis of the World War: An Intro­
duction to the Problem of War Guilt. New York: Alfred
A. Knopf Inc., 1926.

In writing this revision of the origins of the
war, Barnes is explicitly relating the information to
the present world situation in an attempt to gain
revision of the Treaty. Thus, his discussion of the
long range and immediate causes is marred by his desire
to completely exonerate Germany. In doing so he
emphasizes the new documents available since the war,
and while they go a long way in shedding a new light
on the controversy, Barnes omits too many other facts
to be convincing.
In Quest of Truth and Justice. National Historical Society, 1928. A follow-up to his earlier work, the book reads more like a pamphlet. Very polemical in style, and designed to be less scholarly than Barnes' earlier book, it was devoted to refuting his critics and popularizing the revisionists' ideas. A good discussion of some of the other revisionist historians, although subjective in nature.

Bergmann, Carl. The History of Reparations. London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1927. A thorough study of the entire reparations issue up through 1925, Bergmann goes back to its inception at the Peace Conference. This work tends to accept the German propaganda claim that reparations in its form and intent was based on Germany as a criminal.

Birkenhead, Fredrick Edwin Smith, The Earl of. Halifax: The Life of Lord Halifax. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965. One of the most recent works on Halifax, making use of newly available papers, particularly the Hickleton Papers and Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1918-1944, (Series D). Also included in this account were past works on Halifax plus his own autobiographical information. A useful work and good discussion of Halifax and the development of his ideas on foreign policy.


Carr, Edward Hallett. The Twenty Year's Crisis, 1919-1939. Harper Torch Books. New York: Harper and Row, (1939), 1964. In this work, Carr, a diplomatic historian, analyzes international relations during the crucial inter-war period. His emphasis in attempting to explain the shortness of the peace was placed on the illusions and reality of power in conducting foreign policy. A good survey of the European scene, and the failures to maintain the peace.

As part of a series on the Second World War, Churchill covers the inter-war period. A good account of the events during this time, particularly from the point of view of someone in the opposition to many government policies. He used material such as memoranda, directives, personal telegrams and minutes made while in and out of government, supplemented with speeches given while in the House of Commons. Some conclusions, however, seem to be based on historical hindsight, but how much is uncertain.


The author, an associate professor of history at the University of Missouri, writes little more than a diatribe against Bernadotte Schmitt's book, criticizing every single thing about it from his translations, use of documents, logic, grammar, style and conclusions. A venomous attack on Schmitt and other "salavagers." The author is a supporter of Harry Elmer Barnes.


A well-narrated and clear account of foreign policy, and also of the British Government's response to remilitarization. There is some information on the workings of the Foreign Office, but since no FO documents are cited, there is nothing much new added to what is already known by others who have written about this period.


In this autobiography, Cooper covers his childhood, education and political career. He makes a fairly objective attempt at recapturing his past life and has many useful observations of life among upper class gentry in pre and post war England. Some helpful insights about Anglo-German relations from one who did not always agree with the direction of policy.


An excellent study of the foreign service of each
major country in Europe and the diplomats who represented them in the important capitals. Of interest for this paper was Chapter XV in volume II on Horace Rumbold, Britain’s Ambassador to Germany when the Nazi regime came to power.


The author makes a narration of facts but does not make any attempt to analyze them. The book does include a series of helpful maps by James McNaughton and Robert Bright.


Dalton takes most of his material from his diaries. His emphasis is not general history but rather what he knew about the events occurring in his own time. The book tended to act chiefly as a vindication of his own policy.


This British historian presents one important revisionist thesis, that the war was caused not by any one nation or group of nations but by certain pre-conditions existing between states: when these conditions are present, then war must follow. The purpose of the book is also explicitly stated by the author, to prevent another war, and he uses the First World War as an example.

A very persuasive analysis, mainly on the long range causes which effectively places responsibility upon all of the nations of Europe.


The emphasis of this book is the Balkans and Serbian history. The purpose of the monograph is to demonstrate Serbian guilt and Austrian innocence. Although Miss Durham uses many facts previously unavailable to build her case, she sometimes loses objectivity and does not present both sides. The book did further the revisionist cause however, and supported Fay's work on the same topic.


Another revisionist work by a French historian,
Ebray sees almost all the nations guilty and war practically inevitable, given the circumstances in 1914. The author spends much time in linking revisionist findings to the Treaty in an attempt to discredit it or to have certain provisions rewritten in the light of new historical evidence. His obvious didactic purpose for writing the book makes the reader suspect the author's objectivity in presenting his evidence.

Fabre-Luce, Alfred. The Limitations of Victory. Translated by Constance Vesey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926. Another French historian writes a clearly revisionist work, seeing a general European responsibility for the war, although he does blame Germany in large measure because she had introduced the cult of militarism and the 'might makes right' philosophy into European political circles. The monograph is divided into three parts: the long range causes, immediate causes, and the aftermath. Here the author takes the opportunity to attack the peace because it ensued from a poor Treaty.

Fay, Sidney Bradshaw. The Origins of the World War. 2 vols. 2nd. ed. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1928. Fay, a professor of history at Harvard University, wrote one of the most influential of the revisionist works. Volume I covers the long range causes which he classifies into five categories. Here Fay is very good in discussing the implications of these causes for the origins of the war. Fay also develops the Balkan situation, concentrating on the period from 1870-1914. In Volume II Fay discusses the immediate causes of the war from the assassination of the Arch-Duke until war is declared. Here Fay tends to become didactic and to lose a degree of objectivity in assigning blame to others.

Feiling, Keith. The Life of Neville Chamberlain. London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1946. Feiling is the official biographer of Chamberlain, and had access to all of his papers. He also consulted contemporaries who knew him, as well as using large quantities of letters to two sisters which revealed many of Chamberlain's thoughts on issues. Feiling was unable to make use of the material in the British archives which had not yet been opened when the book was published.

position on the critical issue of Germany, this work proved very helpful in describing the role of the press in regard to British public opinion.


The author proposes to discuss the motivation for appeasement, not merely to describe it. She limits her analysis to the Conservative Party. The monograph was not particularly helpful, merely repeating what others have already written about the topic.


The author, a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, has written a number of books on Modern Europe, Britain, and the inter-war years. In this excellent monograph, Gilbert traces the growth of appeasement from 1919 through Munich as a factor operating in shaping public opinion and official policy. He also examines influences creating the policy of appeasement, and he gives a good short section on the revisionist historians. This book was very useful and had an excellent bibliography for future study in the area.


This work, by the well-known British historian, is largely an extended bibliographic essay which analyzes the major works of the period preceding the World War, and their effects on the interpretations of the origins of the war. He looks at the most current materials as well, ranging from archival sources, biographies, manuscripts, and documents available from Germany, Austria, Russia, and the Near East, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, and
the United States. An invaluable aid to a complete study of the evidence with an objective evaluation.


This monograph proposes a critical study of the British newspaper opinion and focuses on events happening in Germany at the time. The work is fairly limited to only a few of the papers, The Times (London) the Observer, the Manchester Guardian, the Daily Telegraph, and the Economist. Only moderately helpful in the preparation of this thesis.


A thoroughly entertaining, widely ranging discussion of British social, artistic, intellectual, and political life during the inter-war years. Generally narrative rather than analytical account of the times, the authors have covered a vast quantity of material.


The book covers mainly the Foreign Office from 1937 on and is not very helpful on either the Rhineland crisis or on his philosophy of foreign policy.

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A collection of speeches, beginning about 1934 and ending in 1940, compiled by a friend of Halifax's, with the intention of showing the full scope of his views on foreign policy.


The author, formerly a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, has written an account of the negotiations preceding the outbreak of war based upon the official publications available at the time. There is a definite bias in favor of the Entente, and the author does not waiver from the premise of German guilt. This work is accepted as the standard version of how the war began until the revisionist historians started to publish their findings.

An excellent history of modern Germany through its period of nationalism and imperialism. Very helpful in giving the German point of view regarding the Peace Settlement for this paper.


A highly favorable and popular biography of Halifax, it was not meant to be an apologia. Instead the author tried to break down "the barrier of anonymity" that stood between Halifax and a critical estimate of the man. To do this Johnson combined personal life with political background. This work offered some aid in understanding Halifax's views of appeasement and Germany.


When he joined the War Cabinet Secretariat in December, 1916, Jones began keeping a diary. This published version constitutes approximately one sixth of the original. An invaluable record of the times and the men who helped shape them since Jones had access and advisory relationships with four Prime Ministers: Lloyd-George, Bonar Law, Baldwin, and McDonald.


This work is a sequel to Keynes' famous book *The Economic Consequences of the Treaty.* Here, the author carries his economic observations one step further and relates them to the need for Treaty revision. A very persuasive discussion of the need to alter certain provisions of the Treaty.


Although MacMillan was never a member of any administration until the 1940 Cabinet formed by Churchill, as a backbencher during the inter-war years he watched the development of events. He knew many of the leading figures and took some part in most of the great controversies; thus, his work is important to an understanding of the formulation of
policy. MacMillan pays particular notice to the impact of revisionist historians on Anglo-German relations, discussing this at some length.


This is a survey of the fundamental policies of Britain since Versailles. A small but concise book, it deals with basic policies and methods for implementing them. Medlicott provides a valuable discussion and a good bibliography at the end.


This study grew out of the Creighton Lecture in History, 1968, and the author is Emeritus Professor of International History at the University of London. He offers a very brief discussion of British attempts to come to terms with Germany, and the reasons for failure. The main emphasis of the book rests with the role of the foreign office.


In this lengthy work, there is an attempt to rehabilitate Baldwin. The authors use many private papers, Baldwin's own private papers, memoirs of his contemporaries, plus the whole range of Cabinet papers and departmental archives from 1922-1937. Much useful information on the formulation and execution of policy is provided for this paper.


The author is also co-editor of the German documents pertaining to the outbreak of war known as the Kautsky Documents. In this work he attempts not only to remove any guilt from the Central Powers but to indict the Entente Powers for major responsibility in bringing about war both as to long range and immediate causes. The book is heavily didactic, the purpose being to get the Treaty revised. This is not a very objective study of the available material.
Mowat provides an analysis of the inter-war years covering domestic, social, economic, political and diplomatic history. A useful survey of the period. He dismissed simple stereotypes of Tories and lapsed Labourites who led Britain into World War II, making a less sinister interpretation of England's leaders during this time. Basically this can be considered a textbook.

In form, this work resembles a social history, and it is full of comments on life and society in the thirties, ranging from politics, cinema, economics and literature. Of some aid in understanding the tone and temper of the period.

An absorbing and valuable record of the thoughts and mood of the people in power. Nicolson knew many of the members of the ruling class in Britain. As part of the establishment himself and a careful observer of his times, he has left a fascinating account of the inter-war years. Very good on public and official reaction to Hitler's coup.

A series of pamphlets, published at the outbreak of war, they covered all aspects of the origins of the conflict and the initial fighting. They appear to be mainly propagandistic in nature and offer the British case.

Poincare traces Anglo-French relations from 1870, and discusses French policy with Russia, as well as the "last efforts for peace," but the book frequently fails to rise above the level of a validation of his policies. Poincare also discounts any attempts at revision of the standard view of German war-guilt.

The French historian presents an excellent summary of the steps leading up to war and examines both outward actions of each nation and motivation as well. A balanced, reasoned, and moderate account. Although a revisionist, Renouvin concludes ultimate responsibility rested with the Central Powers.

This American edition was revised to incorporate British documents published in late 1926.


As a young man during this time, Rowse and a few other members of All Souls became incensed as they watched the establishment follow the course of appeasement. Most of these supporters of appeasement and of the National Government were linked together through All Souls, and could exert tremendous influence on policy in this way. A one-sided but interesting argument.


Although a revisionist historian, Schmitt does not agree with Barnes' interpretation. Schmitt does not see England as guilty for the origins of the war nor Grey a villain. In his concentration on the immediate causes, he portrays England as a victim of circumstances.

Schmitt makes an attempt to summarize European affairs during the inter-war period, particularly since the rise of Hitler. He pictures the democracies as unwilling or unable to stop the continued successes of Hitler and searches for the reasons for the weak, vacillating policies that were followed.


This work is a survey of English life between the wars with an emphasis on domestic and social history. A broad, general account only slightly helpful in determining the mood of the times.

In this second of the six volumes on the Peace Conference, published under the auspices of the Institute of International Affairs, a thorough examination of all aspects of the Treaty with Germany is made. This includes the armistice, the preliminary sessions, the conference itself, the Treaty, interpretations of the articles by the Allies and by the Germans, and the German reaction to the Treaty. A complete, clear, and invaluable discussion of the entire issue.


This publication contains the full results of the election and polling with biographies of members and unsuccessful candidates plus a complete analysis and statistical tallies of the election. Somewhat useful in examining the composition of the National Government.


An excellent analysis of the growth of an anti-appeasement grouping during the thirties, the author shows the discrepancy between the reality and what people came to believe with historical hindsight. He used memoirs, letters, and speeches to check into claims of a consistent stand against appeasement. He concluded that there was no real group until 1938, and only small dissent prior to that. The bibliography was excellent as well.


Published yearly by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, this account written by Toynbee is a good reference to a chronological discussion of the entire Rhineland issue.


Always extremely anti-German, Vansittart uses this opportunity to validate his position. There is
little information on the workings of the Foreign Office that was of use for this topic.


A thorough discussion of the entire period, and a good standard account of the years prior to the war.


The author, devoted to the cause of refuting the war-guilt thesis and thus destroying the basis upon which he believed the Treaty of Versailles to be based, hoped to encourage peaceful revision of the Treaty in order to forestall German revenge. His thesis is that Germany was not guilty of precipitating the war and all the evidence indicting her was merely circumstantial, based upon incomplete or distorted documents. Although he did present evidence showing the involvement of Serbia, Austria, Russia, and France, von Wegerer was less convincing when trying to exonerate Germany.


The monograph covers the Labour Party's foreign policy from the 1930's to the 1950's and tries to prove there is a continuity in the policy. Somewhat helpful to an understanding of the Party's views toward Germany.


An excellent analysis of the inter-war years, the author examines how Britain and France coped with post-Versailles Europe, each holding a different strategy for preserving the peace. Very helpful for this paper, especially in the discussion of the legal aspects of the Versailles Treaty.


Not a particularly helpful work for this paper.
It was largely a composition of Dawson's own diary notes which tended to recount whom he met with and when rather than elaborating on what was said.

III. Newspapers and Periodicals

Alexander, H Bruce G. "Germany's Demand for Equality." The Spectator, CLIV (June 21, 1935), pp. 1058-1059. This article argues for recognition of German equality and removal of the "war-guilt" clause.

Barnes, Harry Elmer. "Assessing the Blame for the World War: A Revised Judgement Based on all the Available Documents." Current History, XX (May, 1924), pp. 171-195. Barnes presents his thesis that Germany is not guilty and assigns responsibility in the following order: Austria, Russia, France, Germany, and England.


Barnes reviews "Salvaging German War Guilt." The New Republic, LXIV (October 22, 1930), pp. 270-273. Barnes reviews The Coming of the War, 1914 by Bernadotte Schmitt, criticizing it as the last great effort of the "salvagers" to select and interpret facts in order to preserve pre-war theories. Barnes also reviews The Refutation of the Versailles War Guilt Thesis by Alfred von Wegerer, praising it as a careful and lucid book which thoroughly destroys both Schmitt and the Versailles thesis.

Beard, Charles A. "Heroes and Villains of the World War." Current History, XXIV (August, 1926), pp. 730-735. Beard evaluates the ideas of Harry Elmer Barnes, agreeing with the need to revise the Versailles war-guilt clause. But he rejects attempts to white-wash German leaders.
Becker, Carl; Blakeslee, G. H.; Buell, Raymond Leslie; Lingelbach, William E.; Morse, A. E.; Schmitt, Bernadotte E.; Seymour, Charles; Wright, Quincy. "Assessing the Blame." Current History, XX (June, 1924), pp. 452-462.

The editors of Current History submitted an article by Harry Elmer Barnes to professors of history at the chief American universities, all of whom were recognized as experts. The majority of those who commented had accepted, by 1924, at least part of the revisionist argument, indicating how far these ideas had progressed toward acceptance.


The author presents a highly favorable review of Harry Elmer Barnes' work, and calls his book trustworthy and readable. He believes it will produce a reversal of judgement which in time will change the Treaty.


Binkley suggests three ways to view the origins of the war, "guilt," "responsibility," and "cause." He then produces a document from the Special Journal of the Council of Ministers, 11 July 1914, from Russia, to prove that her intentions were pacific and honorable.

"Revision of World War History." The Historical Outlook, XIX (March, 1928), pp. 109-112.

Binkley claims that because of its involvement with the Treaty, the issue of war origins cannot be extricated from politics.


The article discusses the division of the British Cabinet and the Tory Party over the conduct of foreign affairs: one school is headed by Churchill and Austin Chamberlain and sees Germany as the future enemy; and the other school, represented by Geoffrey Dawson and Lord Lothian, regrets the follies of the Versailles Peace.


This editorial attempts to explain the
confusion of British people over German remilitarization by attributing it to their feelings of guilt over mistreatment of Germany at Versailles.


Even while finding merit with the traditional interpretation of the origins of the war, Cammaerts recognizes the political and diplomatic impact of the issue because of its connection to the Treaty. He claims the settlement of this question is vital for the peace of Europe, and attempts to refute the revisionists' findings.


In an article highly favorable to rapprochement between England and Germany the author sees this as the best means of securing European peace. He also calls for appeasing Germany by revision of the Treaty.

Coolidge, Archibald Cary. "Dissatisfied Germany." Foreign Affairs, IV (October, 1925), pp. 35-46.

An analysis of the effectiveness and scope of the German propaganda effort since the signing of the Treaty. Also the article tries to show the lack of wisdom of basing the Treaty on the premise of German responsibility for the war.


Dalton presents a discussion of what Britain’s foreign policy ought to be according to Labour.


A tremendously pro-German article which calls for complete revision in favor of Germany and welcomes remilitarization as a step in that process. Also extremely hostile remarks are made against France.
Delbruck, Hans. "Did the Kaiser Want the War?" The Contemporary Review, CXIX (March, 1921), pp. 322-345.

The writer tries to prove that even though Germany legally declared war, it was the Russians who really caused war by mobilizing her whole army and fleet on July 30, and he supports the revisionist position.


The author, an eminent French publicist and exponent of the revisionist theory tries to prove the French responsibility for the war.


This article by the British revisionist reviews the German propaganda effort presented in a cleverly worded pamphlet. Dickinson suggests that the charges brought against Germany by the Allies were false; yet, upon them the peace of Europe has been based and it is a lie.


The author presents her views about Serbian guilt in bringing about the war.

"Fresh Light on Serbia and the War." Contemporary Review, CXXIV (September, 1928), pp. 304-311.

In addition to crediting Serbia with the blame for the whole affair, Durham also attacks Grey for his failure to recognize Austrian justification for the ultimatum.


A highly favorable review of Pay's Origins of the World War, calling it well-researched, scholarly, thoroughly documented, and courageous.


This article illustrates growing anti-French sentiment and rising pro-German feelings.

In three separate issues, Fay develops his ideas on the origins of the war which later appeared in his two volume work on this topic. In the first article, Fay discusses the situation in 1914 and German and Austrian methods of dealing with it, emphasizing that the Kaiser and Bethmann were not villains, merely simpletons.

In the second article, he maintains that Germany made a real, if belated effort to induce Austria to accept a peaceful solution. Germany did have to accept responsibility for giving Austria a free hand on July 5.

The third article discusses Russia and the other major powers, seeing Russian mobilization as the direct cause of Germany's own.


Recapitulation of his analysis of Serbian guilt, later discussed in his book, is the theme of this article. Fay credits the Serbian Government with knowledge of the assassination.

"Who Started the War?" The New Republic, XLV (January 6, 1926), pp. 185-186.

In this very favorable review of an article by Ex-Chancellor Marx, Fay agrees with his illustrations of the Triple Entente's errors in helping to bring about war.

"Serajevo Fifteen Years After." The Living Age, CCXLVI (July, 1929), pp. 374-379.

In discussing the events leading up to the assassination, Fay concluded that Serbia must share responsibility because there is evidence based on explicit statements of the late M. Jovanovich that M. Pashich, Serbian Prime Minister was aware of the plot for several days.


Fay blames the newspaper campaign against Germany as a cause of war due to the quantity of anti-German feeling and suspicion that was produced which helped create and sustain tensions while
also poisoning the atmosphere.

"Forward," New Statesman and Nation, VIII (September 29, 1934), pp. 415-419. This article discusses Labour's foreign policy in contrast to that of the Conservative Party.

Frantz, Gunther. "Did Russian Mobilization Force War in 1914?" Current History, XXV (March, 1929), pp. 852-858. The author, a recognized authority on the issue of the Russian role in bringing about the war, supports the idea of mobilization by that country left Germany no alternative but to declare war.

"Germany and France," The Spectator, CLVI (March 27, 1936), pp. 564-565. In this editorial, the reoccupation of German territory by German troops is seen as no reason for war. There is already acceptance of remilitarization as a fait accompli.

"Germany Invades the Rhineland." The Christian Century, LIII (March 18, 1936), p. 422. Although hostile to Hitler, this journal's editorial is forced to accede to remilitarization because it sees the issue as tied to a Treaty which is unjust and no longer a viable force in international relations.

Glasgow, George. "Foreign Affairs," The Contemporary Review, CXLIX (May, 1936), pp. 613-624. In this article the author accepts Hitler's argument that the Versailles Treaty is unjust. He is only offended by German violations of the Locarno Pact.


Greenwood, H. Powys. "Germany's Claims," The Spectator, CLVI (March 20, 1936), pp. 516-517. This is a letter to the editor asking that the Treaty of Versailles be disregarded in reference to the Rhineland crisis.
Britain would not support France in challenging Germany because of the peace proposals Hitler offered and because this move constituted a "final repudiation of 'war-guilt."

This author suggests that unless it can be proven indisputably that Germany alone dug "the pit into which she and the rest of the world fell," then the Treaty of Versailles is based on a lie.

This editorial indicates that there is a growing movement for revision of certain provisions of the Treaty.

The author calls for a thorough revision of the Versailles Treaty in the wake of German remilitarization. Also the article claims that a widespread pro-German feeling is the product of recognition that the Treaty was unfair.

The author supports the Locarno Pact but does not mind that Germany has violated the Versailles Treaty provisions.

An article that calls for revision of the Treaty of Versailles, it points out the growing popular demand for this both in England and America.

This editorial suggests that British public opinion will accept remilitarization; it is only the method used by Hitler that is offensive.

Attacking the Treaty of Versailles in this article, the author criticizes the basis upon which
it had been made. He says it is unfair to blame the German people for the errors of a government which they have already repudiated. Kautsky is quite harsh on Article 231.

Montgelas makes a favorable review of Pierre Renouvin's book, calling it the "sanest and most up-to-date volume to come out of France."

In his analysis of the period prior to the war, Mowat blames both sides for a failure to arrive at a rapprochement which would have insured the peace of Europe. He points out errors made by Britain in a failure to be receptive on two occasions to German overtures for an Anglo-German alliance, thereby sustaining revisionists' premises that Germany alone did not bring about the war.

This historian asks if remilitarization is really such a catastrophe and suggests that it is only Hitler's methods which opinion cannot accept. Moreover, no treaty can endure unless its signers believe it to be equitable.

A highly favorable review of Harry Elmer Barnes' book The Genesis of the World War is made by the author who supports the view that Poincare and Sazonov are the two chief villains of the war. He calls Barnes' thesis both powerful and well-documented.

Nicolson indicates that in 1936 a strong wave of pro-German feeling existed in England.

An article in which the Treaty's unfairness is attacked.

In an article analyzing the Nazi revolution, the author claims that one issue of Nazi propaganda the "war-guilt lie," has found agreement among most Englishmen. Furthermore, it was a serious mistake on the part of those who wrote the Treaty.


This editorial views remilitarization as quite justified and part of a five step program in Germany's return to independence.


The French historian gives a mixed review of Fay's two volume work on The Origins of the War, finding that his research into the immediate cause of the war—the assassination—is excellent, but that his conclusions are not always valid. On the other hand, he criticizes Fay's work on a number of counts: it has not yet obtained the absolute objectiveness to which it aspires; and it is too critical of France and Poincare.


A summary of Sidney B. Fay's Origins of the War is made, recognizing the significance of the Revisionist historian's work on international relations.


In a paper read at the December, 1923 meeting of the American Historical Society, Schmitt presented his views of the origins of the war. He stressed the arms race and militarism as definite underlying motives and pointed to both England and France's responsibilities for the war. But in the last analysis, Schmitt maintained that Germany must assume a major share for the war.


While reviewing the article by Georges Demartial in the same issue (see entry on Demartial) Schmitt
suggests that although Germany is legally responsible for the war, on the moral and political level new documents can give other interpretations, among these being the European system of alliances and militarism. Schmitt concludes that responsibility was divided.


In this article Schmitt reviews seven books covering the origins of the war, ranging from standard interpretations by Grey and Poincare to those of revisionists such as Dickinson, Durham, and Barnes.

"Where Does the Guilt Lie?" The Saturday Review of Literature, III (November 20, 1926), pp. 311-312.

In a review of Poincare's memoirs, Schmitt supports the idea of divided responsibility for the war; France, Russia, and Germany are all guilty to some degree.


Schmitt gives a highly favorable review of Fay's two volume work, seeing it as a well-written, thorough, and masterly analysis. Schmitt does differ from Fay in assigning to Germany a larger share of the responsibility for the outbreak of war.


A review of Fay's book in which Schmitt indicates the ways he differs from Fay over apportioning the blame to Germany.


Congratulations are made by the author to the British Government and the Foreign Secretary for having kept their heads in the crisis. He dismisses Versailles as having been signed under duress; therefore, a certain plausible case could be made for violations of its provisions.
In his review of three books on the war, Seymour suggests that what have become known as the
Kautsky documents show Germany was not a villain, and although willing to support Austria, was not
anxious for a general war.

This is a generally favorable review of books
by revisionists such as Fay, Schmitt, Renouvin, and
others. Temperley sees Renouvin as the most impartial,
but suggests that Fay and Schmitt are lenient with
the Central Powers.

"The Archbishop and the Treaty." New Statesman
This article contains a discussion of Article
231, how it came to be misinterpreted by the Germans
at the Peace Conference, and the effects on international
relations and reparations.

"The Blunder and the Way Out." The Nation, XXVI (February
An early editorial in a major journal called
for a revision of the Treaty because it was vindictive
and could not be enforced.

"The German Challenge." The Spectator, CILVI (March 13, 1936),
pp. 456-457.
In this editorial the remilitarization of
the Rhineland is seen as a small thing, and Versailles
is discounted as a dead issue.

The New Statesman, XXVI (October 17, 1925), p. 100.
An editorial in this periodical refers to the
Treaty of Versailles as morally a "scrap of paper"
because it does not have the support of even a
majority of its signatories.

"The Responsibility for the War." The New Statesman, XXV
(October 31, 1925), pp. 684-685.
Although this journal admits that Germany is
not solely responsible for the war, nevertheless she
is mainly at fault. The article does indicate that
by 1925 there was a large body of opinion ready to
accept the revisionist theories.
The Times (London), March 7, 1936-March 31, 1936.
No study of this period could be made without information found in this most influential of British papers. Not only did its editorials reflect the Government's position on many issues, its editorials set a pace and tone for molding public opinion.

There is little doubt, according to this article, that while the British public deplored Hitler's methods it accepted his right to be in the Rhineland.

This article sees the mild official and public response to remilitarization as part of a definite pro-German bias.

Sponsored by Gilbert Murray, these two appeals were made in behalf of reconsidering Article 231 and Articles 227 to 230 of the Versailles Treaty. These documents were first signed by over one hundred Frenchmen and then many well-known Englishmen, among them a number of revisionist historians.

"War-Guilt Myths." The Living Age, CCCXV (October 28, 1922), pp. 218-222.
In an editorial discussing an article appearing the previous month in The Nation and the Athenæum the whole issue of revisionist interpretations is discussed and the connection between the historians' findings and the "whole foundation of the Versailles settlement" is made.

In an address first presented at the March 26, 1936 meeting at Chatham House, the author developed the idea that history books have made some impact on international relations by shaping public opinion on certain issues. He cited the revisionist historians' findings about the First War to exemplify this premise.
The author concludes that from the evidence available to those at Versailles charged with establishing responsibility for the war no fair conclusions could be drawn because the documents were faulty, abridged, and full of omissions.

Another attempt by von Wegerer to popularize the German propaganda effort aimed at discrediting the Treaty.

Woolf sees the Labour Party's policies, stated by Arthur Henderson, as inadequate to deal with the Fascist powers who do not share its desire either for the League or peace.

IV. Unpublished Materials:

Although the author discusses events both prior to and succeeding the crisis in the Rhineland with an examination of British and French roles and their relationship with each other, for the purpose of the paper it was of little help. The impact of the revisionists was never considered, and the study was not very analytical.