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Abstract: PhD thesis, University of Durham 2010

The Development of Modern Propaganda in Britain, 1854-1902

Paul Meller

There has been a general historiographical concentration on the twentieth century in terms of modern propaganda, much due to the impact of the First World War. However, it is the premise of this thesis that while the First World War was a propagandistic watershed, the sixty years preceding it were of equal importance in terms of the formation of modern propaganda in Britain.

The aim of this thesis then is to address this gap by considering the nature, meaning and operation of propaganda in this period. In order to accomplish this, this thesis creates a set of criteria for identifying and distinguishing 'modern' propaganda, before demonstrating that what is generally conceived as modern, and characteristic of the twentieth century, in fact existed or was developing in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

This is achieved firstly by conducting a survey of the etymology and theory of propaganda in this period in order to demonstrate how contemporaries understood that phenomenon; secondly, by analysing the Crimean War as the progenitor of the development of a modern form of propaganda; thirdly, by considering how the vast political, social, economic and technological changes that took place in the period 1854-1902 created an environment in which modern propaganda not only could emerge, but had to; and fourthly, by examining the Boer War as the zenith of this process and an example of a modern propagandistic environment.

It will be argued that modern propaganda not only developed and existed in this period, but its study can open up a dialogue between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in terms of propaganda and thereby contribute to debates that still occupy historians of propaganda today, particularly the place of propaganda in democracy. If historians are to understand the propagandistic upheavals of the twentieth century, they must first look to where such propaganda came from, why it developed and what form these developments took in a world untainted by the memory of a World War.

**The Development of Modern Propaganda in
Britain, 1854-1902**

Paul Jonathan Meller

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.
University of Durham, Department of History

2010

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Declaration

I declare that no portion of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

Paul Meller

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Dedication

For my parents, for always giving me the opportunity to do more, and without whose love, patience and support I would never have got this far.

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Finally, I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council for making this PhD possible through their funding.

List of Abbreviations

BL	British Library Manuscript Collections, London
BLMC	Bodleian Library Manuscript Collections, Oxford
BUSC	Birmingham University Special Collections, Birmingham
CCROA	Cumbria County Record Office Archive, Kendal
DUL	Durham University Library, Durham
DUSC	Durham University Special Collections, Durham
NA	National Archives, London
NIA	News International Archive, London
NMM	National Media Museum, Bradford
PP	Parliamentary Papers
RIA	Reuters International Archive, London
RMA	Royal Mail Archive, London
SUSC	Southampton University Special Collections, Southampton

Introduction

The manufacture of public opinion remained long in its infancy but it has made extraordinary strides of late years... Since public opinion has become the motive power by which ministries are sustained and overthrown; since legislation answers to it as the electric bell answers to the pressure of a button; it is important to mark how this dominant force may be created, influenced, or directed.¹

Blanchard Jerrold, 1883.

Although debates raged in nineteenth century Britain as to the beneficial or malignant nature of public opinion, by the time Blanchard Jerrold wrote his article it had long been recognised as the 'motive power' in British politics. However, as the electorate burgeoned, the question that detained many theorists was how, and whether, such mass opinion should be controlled. With this came the unsettling idea that groups and individuals, inside and outside Parliament, may wish to, and be able to, manipulate that opinion for their own benefit, and it was this issue that Jerrold tackled directly in his article. Jerrold was, however, far from an aberration, and phrases like the 'manufacture of public opinion' in fact appear frequently in the works of theorists, journalists and other authors in late nineteenth century Britain. The infamous critic of the Boer War², J.A. Hobson, wrote of 'the modern manufacture of public opinion',³ whilst Graham Wallas feared 'the manipulation of the popular impulse' and the existence of 'manufactured opinion'.⁴ Apart from marking an important new strand of debate in theoretical circles, these arguments were also the more obvious manifestations of a growing recognition of and reaction to the adoption of modern forms of propaganda in Britain.

The fact that such a debate was taking place and that propaganda was becoming a phenomenon, and indeed a word, which was generally understood, should not come as a surprise to historians. Terence Qualter has argued that 'modern mass propaganda came into existence as a major political force because of the emergence in the nineteenth century industrial state of a peculiar combination of circumstances', involving vast social, political and technological developments, all of which provided the ideal environment in which a modern form of propaganda became not only possible but necessary.⁵ The raft of education acts between 1870 and 1902 meant that, by the outbreak of the Boer War, an entire generation of Britons had grown up under a system of compulsory education. This newly literate public was then satiated by the concurrent rise of a cheap mass press, which had itself been facilitated by the erosion of the 'taxes on knowledge'. During this period, this

¹ Blanchard Jerrold, 'On the Manufacture of Public Opinion', *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* (January-June, 1883), p.1081. Blanchard Jerrold was a journalist and playwright (1826-1884) and the son of Douglas Jerrold (1803-57), also a journalist and early contributor to *Punch*.

² Throughout this essay this will be the designated term for the war fought between Britain, the Transvaal and Orange Free State 1899-1902 as, although latterly called the Anglo-Boer war or Second South African War, the Boer War was the contemporary terminology.

³ J.A. Hobson, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London, 1901), p. 130.

⁴ Graham Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 1908), pp. 66, 85.

⁵ Terence H. Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare* (New York, 1962), p. 32.

new medium was joined by the illustrated journals, photography, music halls, modernised forms of art and caricature, advertising and commercial ephemera and eventually the cinema, providing a far wider range of tools for the propagandist. Technological developments were found in the expansion of railroads, steamships, cabled and, by 1896, wireless telegraphy, all of which increased the mobility of both people and information around the world. Finally, three reform acts led to an increase in the electorate to nearly two thirds of the adult male population, including for the first time coal miners and agricultural labourers. The combination of these developments produced a situation in which propaganda had become a key method by which politicians could gain popular backing.

Despite this, for the three centuries between the inauguration of the *congregatio sacra de propaganda fide* by Pope Gregory XV in June 1622 and the commencement of the First World War, ‘propaganda’ has often been seen as a word and deed that was neither modern in form nor political in tenor. The origin of modern propaganda in Britain is seen by the majority of historians as emerging out of the First World War, and for good reason. The years 1914 – 1918 became the focus for the first theoretical studies of propaganda, with the likes of Bertrand Russell, Harold Lasswell and Edward Bernays tackling the subject in the 1920s.⁶ It was also novel in terms of the scale of warfare; in the necessity of a ‘total war’ involving the domestic population; as the first war in which the technological advances made by the military and the media were put to the test; and, most obviously, as the first war in which a government led, systematic propaganda campaign was carried out under the aegis of centralised propaganda departments. However, it is the premise of this thesis that while the First World War was a propagandistic watershed, the sixty years preceding it were of equal importance in terms of the formation of modern propaganda in Britain. To fully comprehend the importance of the First World War, and indeed subsequent propagandistic development in Britain, it is necessary to pay more attention to their precedents.

One immediate question such a premise prompts is how ‘modern propaganda’ should be defined. The answer, however, should not solely encourage a comparison between the operation of propaganda in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain. Although, as will be seen, there are numerous similarities to be found, it is also necessary to understand propaganda in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in its own right. Indeed, it has often been the anachronistic imposition of twentieth century characteristics on previous periods that has prevented their consideration as propagandistically modern. A new, more inclusive definition is therefore required both to allow for significant developments in propaganda in late nineteenth century Britain, and to aid a more complete understanding of how that propaganda operated. This will primarily be achieved by a survey of the etymology and idea of propaganda in the period 1854-1902. In keeping with the belief that modern propaganda was created by the circumstances of the First World War, 1914 has traditionally been seen as the point at which propaganda shed its seventeenth century semantic

⁶ Bertrand Russell, ‘Free Thought and Official Propaganda’ (1922 Conway Memorial Lecture), in Bertrand Russell (ed.), *Let the People Think* (London, 1941); Harold Lasswell, ‘The Theory of Political Propaganda’, *American Political Science Review*, 21 (1927); Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York, 1928).

origins. Perhaps for this reason an etymological survey of 'propaganda' in nineteenth century Britain has not previously been conducted. However, through such a study it is possible to establish how contemporary theorists, journalists, politicians, and other authors understood the process of propaganda in their own time, as opposed to imposing our own views on that era with the associated dangers of misinterpretation and retrospection. Again, this serves not only to highlight the similarities between later conceptions of the term 'propaganda' but also to reveal a distinctive and complex usage, reflecting the particular context in which it was being employed. Understanding such multifarious contemporary conceptions of propaganda will allow access to that period and to a fuller appreciation of the propaganda itself.

It is to this particular context that the thesis will then turn, emphasising the rapid development of propaganda in line with its mutating etymology and theorisation. The thesis will focus on two key case studies, the Crimean War and Boer War, as well as drawing attention to other propagandistic developments in the intervening years. The Crimean War occurred at a pivotal moment in the nineteenth century, and the conditions in which it was fought were unprecedented. In conjunction with the turbulent circumstances of the war itself, such conditions necessitated the rapid assimilation of propaganda into the political process. Therefore this chapter will aim to highlight the important characteristics of this context, how these characteristics directly affected the development of propaganda, and how propaganda itself was utilised during the war. Similarly, the Boer War was fought at a pivotal moment in British history, at the height of popular imperialism, in the midst of a burgeoning mass democracy and at a time of rapid technological progress. The immediate context of the war will be analysed, but the principal aim of this chapter will be to create an impression of the unprecedented propagandistic environment in which it was fought, what impact this environment had on the war and those fighting it, and how such propaganda acted as a precedent for conflict in the twentieth century. The important questions of how contextual and propagandistic developments ran concurrently in the intervening years between these conflicts, whether the Crimean War acted as a catalyst for such developments, and how the Boer War became the zenith of this process will be dealt with in a further chapter. Although, therefore this thesis will discuss nineteenth century popular politics and imperialism, it is not aimed as a study of British political culture or Empire, but as a study of their place within the development of propaganda, and of propaganda itself.

There is also a heavy emphasis on propaganda in times of conflict, which, it could be argued, are generally aberrations diverging from the normal, peacetime operation of propaganda. Therefore what is the benefit of such a specific concentration, and why choose these conflicts in particular? While it is the aim of this thesis to give a sense of the development of propaganda over this period, the Crimean War and Boer War were the largest and arguably most significant and influential conflicts of this period, framing the later nineteenth century and providing cornerstones for the evolution of propaganda as a phenomenon. They therefore offer an ideal view of how the process of modern propaganda was set in motion, why and how it developed, and the culmination of these processes. Of course, modern propaganda was developing and being utilised domestically and for

military purposes in between these conflicts, as evidenced by campaigns surrounding the Bulgarian atrocities, during the numerous ‘little wars’ of the Victorian period, or indeed as part of the campaigns of political parties rapidly embracing a recognisably modern structure.⁷ However, the Crimean and Boer Wars tended to intensify the very instincts and emotions on which propaganda thrived, offering arguably more opportunity for the propagandist and potentially richer material for the historian. Moreover, wars also offer the opportunity to explore the clash between the media and military, a relationship that was to prove crucial in both the Crimean and Boer Wars and provide an important legacy for the First World War and twentieth century more generally. As this thesis will demonstrate, developments in technology and education along with innovations within the media forced war and foreign policy out of the hands of the few and into the public domain, and nowhere was this more obvious than at the time of the Crimean and Boer Wars. As this thesis will reveal, by the time of the Boer War, governments had to ensure that public opinion was cultivated rather than ignored, and, by playing on popular emotions, create a just cause around which they could rally. This thesis will therefore argue that a more modern form of propaganda developed in the period 1854-1902 as a result of the increased necessity of such activities and interest in the use of propaganda by a growing number of propagandists. It will also be argued that this development was the result of a combination of contextual circumstances catalysed and augmented by key periods of turbulence such as the Crimean and Boer Wars.

Such a thesis is based on a complex and multi-layered historiography, and it is necessary to give a brief summary of its more general background, before drawing attention to several key areas of debate with which this thesis must engage. The technological, social, and political upheavals of the mid to late nineteenth century that were so vital to the development of propaganda were first analysed by contemporary authors attempting to understand the progress of their nation at the *fin de siècle*.⁸ Historians have since highlighted the impact of these changes but rarely in terms of the development of propaganda. The social and economic transformation emphasised by T.H.S. Escott is emphasised by historians such as William Fraser, who illustrated the impact of demographic and technological developments on the rise of trade, modern advertising, the entertainment industry, and the creation of a mass market.⁹ Perhaps more significant is the work of Daniel Headrick, who concentrated in several key books on the history of technology and international relations, attempting to understand the dominance and influence of European imperial powers in terms of the means of their expansion rather than the motives.¹⁰ Headrick has persuasively argued that the dawn of the ‘information age’ was long before the twentieth century, finding its roots in the expansion of print, steam, and telegraphy beginning in the eighteenth century. It is then perhaps

⁷ Byron Farwell, *Queen Victoria's Little Wars* (London, 1973).

⁸ For example, T.H.S. Escott, *Social Transformations of the Victorian Age: A Survey of Court and Country* (London, 1897).

⁹ W.H. Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914* (London, 1981), p. 239.

¹⁰ Daniel R. Headrick, *The Invisible Weapon: Telecommunications and International Politics, 1851-1945* (Oxford, 1991); Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940* (Oxford, 1988); Daniel R. Headrick, ‘The Tools of Imperialism: Technology and the Expansion of European Colonial Empires in the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Modern History*, 51, No.2 (1979).

surprising that such works rarely engage with the specific idea of propaganda, Headrick only drawing brief attention to it along with the associated concepts of censorship and communications intelligence during the First and Second World Wars, but makes no reference as to how the vast technological changes to which he alludes before 1914 affected the development of propaganda.¹¹

Similarly, the vast historiography that accompanies the Crimean War has rarely linked the upheavals associated with that conflict with the development of modern propaganda. This is especially surprising given the work that has been done on the novel media environment in which the war was fought.¹² A great deal of attention has been given to the first war correspondent, William Howard Russell, whose despatches brought down a government,¹³ and the first war photographer, Roger Fenton, who was arguably sent out to the Crimea in reaction to Russell's reports.¹⁴ Laurence Senelick and J.S. Bratton have analysed the theatrical entertainments that tended to react to Russell's reports, and subsequently translated into the growing jingoism of the music hall.¹⁵ Matthew Lalumia has argued that there was a fundamental shift in the way wars were presented in art as a result of the Crimean War, and that this shift can tell us a great deal about the impact of the war on impressions of the common soldiery and how art could affect opinion.¹⁶ Such ideas are given further weight by a number of works on the early history of *Punch* and the extension of the popular military spectacle, both of which impacted on public opinion during the war.¹⁷ There is, therefore, a large historiography on the Crimean War and even on the media aspects of that war, but there is an obvious gap in linking the developments in media and society during the war, as well as the political upheavals it caused, to the development of propaganda.

There is a similarly large historiography relating to the Boer War, and in recent years there has also been a gradual recognition of that war as a pivotal period in terms of military, media relations, censorship, and the mass press as the ideas of (for example) Jacqueline Beaumont, John Gooch, Kenneth Morgan, and Stephen Badsey have demonstrated.¹⁸ This body of work has revealed that,

¹¹ Daniel R. Headrick, *When Information Came of Age: Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 2000).

¹² For instance, Andrew Lambert and Stephen Badsey, *The Crimean War* (Stroud, 1994).

¹³ Nicolas Bentley (ed.), *Russell's Despatches from the Crimea: 1854-1856* (London, 1966); Alan Hankinson, *Man of Wars: William Howard Russell of 'The Times'* (London, 1982), Elizabeth Grey, *The Noise of Drums and Trumpets: W.H. Russell Reports from the Crimea* (London, 1971).

¹⁴ Gordon Baldwin, Malcolm Daniel & Sarah Greenough, *All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852-1860* (London, 2004); John Hannavy, *The Camera goes to War: Photographs from the Crimean War, 1854-56* (Edinburgh, 1974).

¹⁵ Laurence Senelick, 'Politics as Entertainment: Victorian Music-Hall Songs', *Victorian Studies*, 19, No.2 (1975); J.S. Bratton, 'Theatre of War: The Crimea on the London Stage, 1854-5', in Brady, David, Louis James & Bernard Sharratt (eds.), *Performance and politics in popular drama: aspects of popular entertainment in theatre, film, and television, 1800-1976* (Cambridge, 1980).

¹⁶ Matthew Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Michigan, 1984).

¹⁷ Arthur A. Adrian, *Mark Lemon: first editor of 'Punch'* (London, 1966); Richard D. Altick *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841-1851* (Ohio, 1997); Mary Dorothy George, *English political caricature: a study of opinion and propaganda*, Volume 1 (Oxford, 1959); Ulrich Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War* (Amsterdam, 2001); Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Harvard, 1996).

¹⁸ E.g. Jacqueline Beaumont, 'The British Press and Censorship during the South African War 1899-1902', *South African Historical Journal*, 41 (1999); Jacqueline Beaumont, 'The British Press During the South African War: The Sieges of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith', in Mark Connelly & David Welch (eds.), *War and the media: reportage and propaganda, 1900-2003* (London, 2005); John Gooch (ed.), *The Boer*

as the world's first modern media war, the Boer War should be given more serious scholarly attention in the fields of reportage, censorship and propaganda. However, as Badsey himself points out, there is still much to be done as, 'In the history of war reporting, the Boer War has fallen between two stools, as either a footnote to the nineteenth-century colonial campaigns, or as irrelevant to the issues of twentieth-century war, being dismissed in quite literally less than a sentence by the standard histories of the subject.'¹⁹ Although limiting his comments to a defence of the place of Boer War reportage in history, his sentiments could be easily applied more generally to propaganda in this period. There is also a growing historiography concentrating on the use of film in the Boer War, and it is becoming increasingly clear that, although a very new medium in 1899, film was rapidly assimilated as a prominent form of entertainment and propagandistic tool.²⁰ However, there is again still much work to be done in assessing the films in terms of their propagandistic impact, and indeed in identifying the propagandists behind their creation. Even the development of political parties into more recognisably modern forms in this period, incorporating centralised structures, annual conferences, publishing departments, political agents, and central offices is rarely analysed in terms of the relationship of such progress with the development of propaganda.²¹ This thesis aims to tackle these issues.

One of the key bodies of work is that of propaganda historians themselves, and how they have dealt with this period of British history. The general consensus seems to be that this period was contextually important as a prelude to the propaganda of the twentieth century, but the attention given to the actual operation of British propaganda before the First World War, especially outside of the imperial sphere, has at best been sporadic and cursory. Initially this is the result of the concentration of propaganda theorists on the First World War due to its proximity, significance, and particularly the contemporary debates surrounding Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*,²² and the early propaganda theorist H.D. Lasswell writing a history of propaganda of the First World War.²³ However, it was also Lasswell who established a key difference between traditional and modern forms of propaganda arguing that,

War: Direction, Experience and Image (London, 2000); Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The Boer War and the Media', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13, No.1 (2002).

¹⁹ Stephen Badsey, 'War Correspondents in the Boer War', in Gooch, *The Boer War*, p. 187.

²⁰ For example, Rachael Low and Roger Manvell, *The History of British Film, Volume 1: The History of the British Film, 1896-1906* (London, 1997); Simon Popple and Vanessa Toulmin (eds.), *Visual Delights: Essays on the Popular and Projected Image in the 19th Century* (Trowbridge, 2000); Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell (eds.), *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* (London, 2004); Michael Eckardt, 'Pioneers in South African Film History: Thelma Gutsche's Tribute to William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, the Man who Filmed the Boer War', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25, No.4 (2005), pp. 637-47.

²¹ For some examples see, Angus Hawkins, 'Parliamentary Government' and Victorian Political Parties, c.1830-c.1880', *English Historical Review*, 104, No.412 (1989); Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century: the Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford, 1994); Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998); John Vincent, *The Formation of the British Liberal Party: 1857-1868* (London, 1966).

²² Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime: containing an assortment of lies circulated throughout the nations during the great war* (London, 1928).

²³ H.D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (London, 1938).

Propaganda rose to transitory importance in the past whenever a social system based upon the sanctions of antiquity was broken up by a tyrant. The ever-present function of propaganda in modern life is in large measure attributable to the social disorganisation which has been precipitated by the rapid advent of technological changes... Literacy and the physical channels of communication have quickened the connection between those who rule and the ruled.²⁴

The propaganda theorist Jacques Ellul, in fact, took this further, arguing that ‘propaganda must be total’ and ‘there is no propaganda as long as one makes use, in sporadic fashion and at random, of a newspaper article here, a poster or a radio program there... That is not propaganda.’ For Ellul, propaganda is a modern technique and as such is based on scientific analysis and method.²⁵ Such an idea echoes the earlier work of Walter Lippmann whose application of the techniques of psychology led to his belief that ‘modern propaganda has succeeded in developing methods of scientific analysis in place of simple experience, intuition, and trial-and-error innovation.’²⁶ Such ideas prohibited periods before the development of such methods, and therefore before the First World War, from being accepted as propagandistically modern. However, this also, of course, raises the important question of what is meant by ‘modern’. Richard Price, in a critique of Stephen Attridge’s work on the Boer War as a ‘pivot of modernity’, argued that, ‘If one historical moment is going to be privileged as marking the move to modernity, then we need to have some sense of what criteria are being used to substantiate this claim and how those criteria distinguish it from other periods, such as those on either side of it.’²⁷ This thesis will therefore firstly create a set of criteria for identifying and distinguishing ‘modern’ propaganda, and secondly, demonstrate that often what theorists conceive as modern, and characteristic of the twentieth century, in fact existed or was developing in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Ideas such as those of Lippmann have continued into more modern studies of the history of propaganda, Nicholas O’Shaughnessy arguing that the twentieth century should be determined as, ‘the propaganda century – with as much legitimacy certainly as it might be termed say, the ‘scientific century’.’²⁸ Historians and theorists, such as O’Shaughnessy, have often made a clear distinction between the traditional and modern forms of propaganda, but the dividing line between the two is often seen to be 1914 and the distinction has also not been clearly defined or characterised. This is not to say that there has been no recognition of the importance of the propagandistic developments of the nineteenth century, or that the term ‘modern propaganda’ is never applied to that period. Jowett and O’Donnell, for example, argue that, ‘the combination of demands created by democratic political institutions and the increasing sophistication of propaganda techniques used in warfare

²⁴ Lasswell, ‘The Theory’, p. 631.

²⁵ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes* (New York, 1965), pp. 3, 5-6.

²⁶ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York, 1922). See, Qualter, *Propaganda*, p. 51.

²⁷ Richard Price, ‘One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture’, *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (2006), p. 615.

²⁸ Nicholas Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction* (Manchester, 2004), p. 38.

marked the emergence of an awareness of propaganda as an ubiquitous force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁹ William Albright maintains that organised, modern propaganda can even be distinguished before this as, ‘propaganda in the modern sense begins approximately at the middle of the nineteenth century.’³⁰ In a book charting the development of propaganda through history, Oliver Thompson has argued that it is easy to see the modern mass media of cinema, radio and television as creating a new era of propaganda, but they should rather be seen as a ‘slightly speeded up version of traditional cybernetic techniques.’³¹ However, not only are these admissions of the importance of the nineteenth century in the development of propaganda scarce, those who do admit it rarely progress to actually study propaganda in this period. Indeed, Thompson himself has admitted that in many periods propaganda is still ‘almost totally ignored’, even though the propagandistic behaviour ‘of one era has an almost inevitable by-product in the next.’³²

Even those histories of propaganda that offer insightful comments on the impact of nineteenth century propaganda on the twentieth century do so from the standpoint of a work on twentieth century propaganda. Gary Messinger, in his work on propaganda in the First World War, stressed that the growing interest in opinion manipulation amongst individuals and pressure groups permeated the government during the nineteenth century, such propagandistic involvement, ‘[making] the jump to extensive official propaganda easier when the war came.’³³ Muriel Grant has also argued that rapid democratisation necessitated new techniques in politics, themselves made possible by innovations in communications technology, and that this new style of politics became represented by state sponsored public relations, censorship and publishing bodies.³⁴ However, Grant’s book is primarily concerned with the role of propaganda in inter-war Britain. Perhaps an exception is Terence Qualter whose work on the development of propaganda has demonstrated that both the theory and practice of propaganda had reached ‘a fairly advanced state’ by 1900. His work is also important, and indeed almost singular, in drawing attention to the significance of the early theorists of propaganda such as Graham Wallas.³⁵ However, Qualter himself admits that before the First World War, ‘there was still little popular awareness of the importance, or even the possibility, of mass public opinion control.’³⁶ This thesis aims to challenge this belief, and perhaps one reason for its prevalence is the lack of attention given to the etymology in nineteenth century Britain and therefore to how it was understood by contemporaries. Such etymological studies form another body of important historiographical debate with which this thesis will engage.

²⁹ Garth Jowett & Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London, 1999), p. 95.

³⁰ William Albright, *Public Opinion* (New York, 1939), p. 290.

³¹ Oliver Thompson, *Mass Persuasion: A historical analysis of the development of propaganda techniques* (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 15.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 102.

³³ Gary Messinger, *British Propaganda in the First World War* (Manchester, 1992), pp. 1, 11, 14.

³⁴ Muriel Grant, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 22-27.

³⁵ Terence H. Qualter, *Graham Wallas and the Great Society* (London, 1980); Terence H. Qualter, ‘The Manipulation of Popular Impulse: Graham Wallas Revisited’, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 25, No.2 (1959), pp. 165-73.

³⁶ Qualter, *Propaganda*, p. 53.

The modern conception of the word ‘propaganda’ has been the subject of great debate, studied variously for its association with rhetoric, communication, persuasion, manipulation, lies and deceit. Its complex relationship with all these words, and especially the impact of the most extreme manifestations of its definition, has meant that it is difficult to trace and even more so to define. Lindley Fraser has also argued that it is naturally shaped and reshaped by each context in which it is utilised resulting in a shifting, ambiguous definition.³⁷ This is significant, as it is this mutation of the meaning and understanding of propaganda that tends to be forgotten by its historians, often because of their belief that until 1914 propaganda retained its seventeenth century semantic origins. Philip Taylor has forwarded that, ‘Before 1914, propaganda meant simply the means by which an adherent of a religious doctrine disseminated his ideas to a wider audience’, and it is only, ‘since the First World War... the meaning has changed somewhat and has assumed all sorts of pejorative connotations.’³⁸ Even Jowett & O’Donnell, who, despite stating that propaganda theory was developing with Wallas’s *Human Nature in Politics* before the First World War, argue that ‘propaganda’ in its modern sense did not enter common usage until after 1918.³⁹ Although maintaining that ‘propaganda’ would have taken on immediate pejorative connotations for Protestants in the seventeenth century, Pratkanis and Aronson claim that, ‘the word propaganda did not see widespread use until the beginning of the twentieth century when it was used to describe persuasion tactics employed during World War One and those later used by totalitarian regimes.’⁴⁰ Contrary to these positions, this thesis will demonstrate that this common perception of the etymology of propaganda before 1914 is erroneous. As will be seen, this period saw not only the development of the modern, politicised use of propaganda as a term, but of a complex variety of contemporary definitions ranging from forms very similar to those found later in the twentieth century to those unique to this period. This of course has implications for how modern propaganda should be defined in order to be inclusive of nineteenth century Britain.

Such a definition is also significant because, in order to understand how propaganda operated in this period, we must understand what exactly propaganda meant to contemporaries. C.S. Lewis, writing generally on the importance of etymological studies, stated that, ‘If we read an old poem with insufficient regard for change in the overtones, and even the dictionary meanings, of words since its date, if, in fact, we are content with whatever effect the words accidentally produce in our modern minds – then of course we do not read the poem the old writer intended.’⁴¹ This is perhaps especially important with a highly contested word such as propaganda which has been mutated by a dizzying array of ‘tactical definitions’ over the centuries, especially latterly.⁴² Such a theory has been applied in other historiographical genres, particularly with regard to the concept of imperialism.

³⁷ Lindley Fraser, *Propaganda* (Oxford, 1957), p. 14.

³⁸ P.M.Taylor, ‘Propaganda From Thucydides to Thatcher: Some Problems, Perspectives and Pitfalls’, Address to the Social History Society of Great Britain Conference (1992), p. 7.

³⁹ Jowett & O’Donnell, *Propaganda*, p. 104.

⁴⁰ Antony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *The Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion* (New York, 2001) p. 5.

⁴¹ C.S. Lewis, *Studies In Words* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

R.H. MacDonald's *The Language of Empire* argues convincingly that it is vital to understand contemporary perceptions of imperialism and the varied discourse surrounding Empire as, 'it represents the metaphorical system through which the individual gains identity, and through which he or she relates to the institution which holds power.'⁴³ Koebner and Schmidt have written extensively on the history of the concept of imperialism, dubbing their work the 'biography of a political word' in constant flux.⁴⁴ Similarly, in his thesis on imperial pressure groups, Andrew Thompson dedicates a chapter to understanding the language of imperialism and meanings of empire, arguing that to contemporaries the term 'empire' was often delusive as it was being continually contested, and resultantly language itself became very much a part of the political process.⁴⁵ In considering the etymology of propaganda in nineteenth century Britain, this thesis will conduct a similar survey and use the study to both create a clearer definition of modern propaganda as well as to understand how propaganda operated in this period.

This is not to say that there have been no surveys of the etymology of propaganda. Indeed, Badsey opens his analysis of propaganda's role in the defence of Empire with a preliminary, and, he argues, unrewarding, search for references to 'Empire Propaganda' in the National Archives.⁴⁶ However, as this chapter will reveal, conducting a more in depth survey of the etymology of the word using more varied sources offers far richer results. Looking in more detail at the relationship between rhetoric and propaganda, Taithe and Thornton have especially paid attention to the importance of considering, 'the way that such communication in itself was viewed by participants in the political process and those outside it. The shaping of the term propaganda is also an indication of the way the political nation judges the manner in which political messages are communicated.'⁴⁷ Within this volume, László Kontler begins his study of propaganda in the French Revolutionary era by stating that, 'this chapter looks at the notion of propaganda in a crucial phase in the changes of the idea in western political discourse.' He argues that the 1789 revolution, and the propaganda pamphlet campaigns it inspired, began the process of altering the principally religious connotations of the interchangeable words 'proselytising' and 'propagation' and imbuing them with a new political, and often pejorative, sense.⁴⁸ The legacy of this link between revolutionary France and politicised propaganda is important within this thesis, as it provided the basis for one prominent and pejorative understanding of the term propaganda in later nineteenth century Britain.

Kontler's work also draws attention to another issue with which this thesis must contend. Just as this thesis will argue that the idea of modern propaganda should be extended back by sixty years

⁴³ R.H. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 4, 233.

⁴⁴ Richard Koebner & Helmut Dan Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge, 1964).

⁴⁵ Andrew S. Thompson, 'Thinking Imperially? Imperial Pressure Groups and the Idea of Empire in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain', Ph.D thesis, University of Oxford, 1994.

⁴⁶ Stephen Badsey, 'Propaganda and the Defence of Empire', in Gregory Kennedy (ed.), *Imperial Defence: the old world order 1856-1956* (London, 2008), p. 218.

⁴⁷ Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton, 'Propaganda: A Misnomer of Rhetoric and Persuasion?', in Bertrand Taithe & Tim Thornton (eds.), *Propaganda: Political Rhetoric and Identity, 1300-2000* (Guildford, 1999), p. 3.

⁴⁸ László Kontler, 'Superstition, Enthusiasm and Propagandism: Burke and Gentz on the Nature of the French Revolution', in Taithe & Thornton (eds.), *Propaganda*, p. 97.

from 1914, so there have been similar claims for much earlier periods. The works by J.P.D. Cooper on propaganda in the Tudor state,⁴⁹ Jason Peacey on the existence of a Cromwellian ‘propaganda state’,⁵⁰ and Robert Holtman and Wayne Hanley on Napoleonic propaganda⁵¹ all suggest an earlier existence of modern propaganda. By considering the etymology of propaganda and establishing a set of criteria to distinguish its modern form, this thesis will contend with this historiography arguing that the later nineteenth century remains uniquely significant in its role in the development of modern propaganda.

The role of the press in these periods will enter into this debate, and it is to the historiography surrounding its development that we now turn. There is naturally a prodigious historiography on the operation of the press in this period, much owing to the importance attached to its development by contemporary authors. Arguments such as those framed by Frank Taylor in a speech of 1898, *The Newspaper Press as a Power both in the Expression and Formation of Public Opinion*,⁵² are echoed throughout contemporary journals, newspapers, debating halls, and in the works of historians. Rephrased in terms of the study of propaganda, such debates pose key questions: how much was the press a tool to manipulate public opinion, and how much was it a measure of propagandistic success? Aled Jones has argued that this question is still of great relevance today, but one important difference is that the ‘forming of opinion’ through newspapers was seen by Victorian commentators as a vital educative process in an era of growing literacy and enfranchisement.⁵³ Similarly Mark Hampton has argued that contemporary commentators at least between 1850 and 1880 attributed to the press ‘vast powers of education, moral uplift, ‘elevation’ and influence’.⁵⁴ With such a positive attitude towards the coercive power of the press, this thesis will investigate whether it was possible that propaganda itself could be viewed in such a benevolent light and whether the etymology of the word reflects this.

Certainly the opportunity for mass manipulation did not escape some politicians in this period, and another key development was the forging of a more extensive bond between the press and political spheres. This was not a novel idea in 1854, as there was an established tradition of politicians, government officials, groups, and individuals patronising newspapers and individuals to promote their policy.⁵⁵ However, Goldfarb-Marquis has argued that the informal, often socially reinforced, bonds between the press and political spheres formed a significant part of the successful British propaganda effort during the First World War by forging an alliance which meant that direct

⁴⁹ J.P.D Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State: Political Culture in the Westcountry* (Oxford, 2003).

⁵⁰ Jason Peacey, ‘Cromwellian England: A Propaganda State?’, *History*, 91, No.302 (2006), pp. 176-99.

⁵¹ Robert Holtman, *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Louisiana, 1950); Wayne Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799* (New York, 2005).

⁵² Frank Taylor, ‘The Newspaper Press as a Power both in the Expression and Formation of Public Opinion’, in *Tracts on Universities, 1858-98* (London, 1898).

⁵³ Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 87-95.

⁵⁴ Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in England, 1850-1950* (Illinois, 2004), p. 49.

⁵⁵ E.g. Phillip Harth, *Pen for a Party: Dryden’s Tory Propaganda in its Contexts* (Princeton, 1993).

censorship and centralised control were often unnecessary.⁵⁶ How was it then that previously sporadic bonds became an integral part of the British mode of propaganda, and a major reason for the success of its propaganda in the First World War and after? The answer lies in the sixty years before 1914 when the removal of the ‘taxes on knowledge’ and the advance of literacy offered the opportunity for the creation of a mass press and with it the opportunity for mass manipulation by its patrons. This is certainly borne out by various works on the development of the press-political bond in this period. David Brown has convincingly shown that politicians such as Lord Palmerston were extremely adept at ‘compelling’ the press to work on their behalf in creating a favourable public opinion.⁵⁷ Moreover, Stephen Koss’s seminal work on the rise and fall of the political press has charted the ‘labyrinthine networks’ between the gentlemen of the press and politicians throughout the nineteenth century, perhaps embodied best by the inimitable J.T. Delane, editor of the *Times*.⁵⁸ This thesis will look further at the role of Delane, his contemporaries and successors in terms of the development of the press-political bond and its centrality to the development of propaganda.

Importantly, Koss has also pointed out that although a historical analysis of the press often fails to support the idea of its omnipotence in this period, ‘the fact remains that readers and writers alike believed not only that such influence existed, but also that it was pervasive... Mistaken or not, this conviction created its own reality.’⁵⁹ This perceived reality also seems to have survived the dawn of the ‘new journalism’ by the late nineteenth century, epitomised by the press baron Alfred Harmsworth and his flagship *Daily Mail*, launched in 1896. Despite being seen as a malevolent influence on the burgeoning electorate by those who had espoused the benefits of the educational ideal, the sheer size of the audience these new newspapers could command made the strengthening of the ‘labyrinthine networks’ vital for any politician, individual or pressure group desiring influence over public opinion. Historians such as J. Lee Thompson and Peter Catterall have written extensively on Harmsworth and have demonstrated how the press baron created an extremely potent propagandistic tool in his press empire and as a result became a focal point of the press, political bond.⁶⁰ While Koss argues that such bonds were fading by the turn of the century, this thesis will argue that the rise of mass democracy and with it a mass, commercially-orientated press made traditional systems of patronage redundant but, far from lessening the need for propaganda, such a system demanded a subtler, more persuasive and inclusive approach to the media as politicians had to work increasingly within the confines of their own political system. As works

⁵⁶ Alice Goldfarb-Marquis, ‘Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13, No. 3. (1978).

⁵⁷ David Brown, ‘Compelling but not Controlling?: Palmerston and the Press, 1846-1855’, *History*, 86 (2001); David Brown, *Palmerston and the Politics of Foreign Policy, 1846-55* (Manchester, 2002).

⁵⁸ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, Volume One: The Nineteenth Century* (London, 1981), p. 27.

⁵⁹ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, Volume Two: The Twentieth Century* (London, 1984), p. 7.

⁶⁰ J. Lee Thompson, *Northcliffe: Press Baron in Politics, 1865-1922* (London, 2000); J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the press, and propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914-1919* (London, 1999); Peter Catterall, Colin Seymour-Ure & Adrian Smith (eds.), *Northcliffe’s Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996* (London, 2000).

such as A.N. Porter on Milner's skill as a propagandist and manipulator of the press during the Boer War have shown, this mutation did little to deter politicians and officials from utilising this mass medium for their own ends.⁶¹

A similar pattern can be found in the new bonds being forged between the military and media first forced into existence by the circumstances of the Crimean War. Philip Knightley's book on the rapid assimilation of the war reporter into a political position as 'propagandist and mythmaker' has done much to highlight the importance of this relationship, even in the years before 1914, emphasising the importance of William Howard Russell in this process.⁶² As Russell himself noted, 'No power on earth can now establish a censorship in England, or suppress or pervert the truth. Publicity must be accepted by our captains, generals, and men-at-arms, as the necessary condition of any grand operation of war.'⁶³ The perceived impact of this publicity will be assessed by this thesis in terms of the development of propaganda, particularly the reaction of politicians and military officials to the Crimean War. Certainly by the time of the Boer War numerous changes had been made and, contrary to Russell's belief, a censorship system had been established to cope with the massive media presence. However, Jacqueline Beaumont's work on this new system concludes that its lack of uniformity and inconsistencies often rendered it more of a hindrance than an aid to the military establishment.⁶⁴ Indeed, in a recent publication, Philip Taylor and Paul Moorcraft argue that the years before the First World War were a prelude to the arrival of the truly mass media and were characterised by 'erratic media restrictions'.⁶⁵ However, although the system of censorship was not perfected in the period 1854-1902, this actually put more pressure on the development of sophisticated bonds between the media, military, press and politicians. These relationships were a vital precedent for the twentieth century but they also need to be studied in their own right, as, divorced from the formidable propaganda machines of the post-1914 era, they offer the historian a unique view of the operation of propaganda in a burgeoning democracy.

Given the period of British history in question and the growing importance of imperialism as a propagandistic theme in that period, one final historiographical debate that needs to be highlighted is that launched by Richard Price about the nature and success of imperial propaganda. In a book which analysed the reaction of working men's clubs to the Boer War, he argued that the working classes were unconcerned by empire, and that imperial propaganda failed to penetrate their ranks.⁶⁶ There has been some support for this argument amongst historians of the working classes in this period. Standish Meacham contended that the Trades Union Congress during the Boer War avoided any debate on the 'principles of participation' and argued that most working class people

⁶¹ A.N. Porter, 'Sir Alfred Milner and the Press, 1897-1899', *Historical Journal*, 16, No.2 (1973).

⁶² Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Protagonist and Myth-Maker From The Crimea to Iraq* (London, 2003).

⁶³ Despatch to Delane, 1 December 1854; Hankinson, *Man of Wars*, p. 99.

⁶⁴ Beaumont, 'The British Press'.

⁶⁵ P.M. Taylor & Paul Moorcraft, *Shooting the Messenger: The Political Impact of War Reporting* (Virginia, 2008).

⁶⁶ Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working-Class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902* (London, 1972).

were far too insular to be concerned about the progress and success of British Imperialism.⁶⁷ This is at least partially borne out in Jonathan Rose's influential work *The Intellectual Life of the English Working Classes*, which aimed to uncover working class ideology, political orientation, and popular culture. He argues that many working class perceptions of the Boer War reveal that their attitudes were shaped by a profound instinct of loyalty, but that it was familial not imperial.⁶⁸ However, Price's argument has been effectively countered by another branch of historiography. Mackenzie's *Studies in Imperialism* series has contended that the abundance of imperial propaganda saturated the whole population, penetrating at every social level.⁶⁹ T.G. Ashplant, working on the character and composition of the London Working Men's Clubs, has argued that by the 1890s a marked change was occurring in these clubs as politics was being replaced by 'patriotic entertainment', in effect becoming popular music halls.⁷⁰ Michael Blanch has also demonstrated that increasing working class involvement in military activities as a source of recreation, from rifle clubs to drill units in factories, brought the masses into contact with imperial militarism.⁷¹ At a local level Jon Lawrence's work on popular politics in Wolverhampton has shown that provincial working-men's clubs in fact responded very differently to the metropolitan clubs of Price's study and were vociferous in their support of the Boer War.⁷²

More recently Bernard Porter and Andrew Thompson have attempted to find a middle ground in this debate. While arguing that Price's dismissal of working class involvement in imperialism was 'denial', Porter also rejects Mackenzie's assumption that imperial propaganda must have had an effect simply because there was so much of it. His answer was to focus on the demand rather than the supply of propaganda and attempt to establish how far it was actually penetrating and why its production was so extensive. Porter contends that although imperial propaganda in this period was undoubtedly ubiquitous, there is actually little evidence of its success amongst the working classes, the idea of popular imperialism being more a contemporary perception than reality.⁷³ Andrew Thompson has attempted to forge something of a middle ground between Price and MacKenzie, arguing that the obvious trappings of popularity of Empire demonstrated both a popular awareness of imperialism as well as an acceptance, and that this acceptance amounted to less than enthusiasm but more than indifference or ignorance.⁷⁴ However, the fact that socialists in this period believed that the working classes were being drawn in by imperial propaganda and, conversely, that imperialists believed that the same propaganda was failing to engage the working classes is just as significant as the reality. These contemporary perceptions influenced the form and scale of the

⁶⁷ Standish Meacham, *A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914* (London, 1977), pp. 197-8.

⁶⁸ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale, 2002), pp. 335-7.

⁶⁹ E.g. John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984).

⁷⁰ T.G. Ashplant, 'London Working Men's Clubs, 1875-1914', in Eileen Yeo & Stephen Yeo (eds.), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure* (Sussex, 1981).

⁷¹ Michael Blanch, 'British Society and the War', in Peter Warwick (ed.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Essex, 1980).

⁷² Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp.109-10.

⁷³ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004).

⁷⁴ Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow, 2005).

propaganda, and the fact that it was being targeted at a mass, working class audience is important in terms of the development of modern propaganda itself. This thesis, therefore, aims to contribute to this debate, but from the point of view of propaganda, not imperialism, and will tackle two key questions. Was propaganda aimed at or accessible to the working classes, and if so why? Was such propaganda seen as the best method of courting the new mass society?; and did the Boer War act as a catalyst in this process?

Generally, the historiographical basis of this thesis is characterised by both the lack of scholars' interaction with the notion of propaganda and also the failure of its constituent parts to engage with each other. What is absent, therefore, is a synthesis of these historiographies which will reveal a pattern of propagandistic development when analysed as part of a history of propaganda and alongside an empirical study of the phenomenon in its own right. Without this synthesis, the sense of development and ability to track progress across the whole period is lost, and comparisons, even those identified by contemporaries, are missed. John Ellis's work on the correlation between the 'Methods of Barbarism' and the 'Rights of Small Nations' campaigns has shown in microcosm that there are important connections to be made in the sphere of propaganda between this period and that of the First World War.⁷⁵ There are many more of these connections to be uncovered in terms of the transfer of media, techniques, ideas, and individuals serving as a legacy to the twentieth century more generally. As has been seen, there is already some synthesis within the historiography, notably in the *Studies in Imperialism* series which has expertly brought the legion of imperialist media and ephemera together. However, its purpose was not to chart the development of propaganda or to engage with propaganda as a concept, but was rather to analyse the function and presence of an imperial ideology, and to stimulate interest in the social and cultural history of modern British imperialism. Certainly Mackenzie himself sees the cathartic products of the imperial media and societies as evidence of a highly charged propagandistic environment, and it is impossible to escape the impact of imperialism on this period or indeed on the development of propaganda. However, conversely propaganda also had a significant impact on imperialism, and it is from the point of view of the propaganda, not the Empire, that this period will be analysed.

It is also for this reason that Mackenzie fails to utilise a theorised conception of propaganda, especially one taking contemporary understanding into account. As a result, this thesis will progress the analysis of propaganda in this period as a whole, relying more directly on the conceptual history of propaganda found in the first chapter, thereby moving the emphasis of analysis to the propaganda itself. This will also be achieved by the application of a tri-partite structure to each case study designed to understand the process of propaganda at each stage of its operation. Whilst the chapter concerning the etymology and theory of propaganda will form a conceptual history of propaganda in this period, the subsequent chapters will analyse the operation of the intent, content, and reception of that propaganda. The intent will be analysed in terms of who was orchestrating the propaganda, what they believed themselves to be doing, and why it was conceived. The actual

⁷⁵ John Ellis, 'The Methods of Barbarism' and the 'Rights of Small Nations': War Propaganda and British Pluralism', *Albion*, 30, No.1 (1998).

operation of the propaganda within each case study, its various forms, devices, and methods comprise the content. Finally, the reception of these campaigns will be analysed by tackling the questions of intended audience and the reaction of that audience, both perceived and actual.

Analysing any stage of the operation of propaganda presents methodological problems, especially when attempting to reconstruct it over a hundred years later. Propaganda notoriously relies on emotion and often secrecy, and its source is therefore not always meant to be apparent to contemporaries, which makes it difficult for the historian to identify. It is often difficult enough to recognise the moment of and reason for the inception of a particular campaign, film, pamphlet, or article, or indeed to uncover the identity of the initial propagandist. Additionally, the actual content of a proposed campaign can be lost to the historian in part or whole. However, the lack of source material is most problematic when attempting to assess the reception of a particular propaganda campaign, or even the reaction to a particular medium. As Thompson states, ‘Even in the twentieth century, figures for multiple media penetration are difficult to come by and our evaluation of propaganda campaigns as recent as those of Hitler and Stalin must to some extent be guesswork.’⁷⁶ With this in mind, in an era before opinion polls, finding a reliable source providing evidence on the opinions of the majority of people becomes near impossible. Often there are few such extant sources, especially for Robert Roberts’ ‘undermass’ who were potentially the most vulnerable targets of the propagandist.⁷⁷ Works such as Jonathan Rose’s have shed some light on an otherwise inaccessible world by drawing on and analysing workers’ memoirs, social surveys, and other sources, but the evidence is far from complete or conclusive.⁷⁸

However, it is a question that cannot be avoided, not least because it helps to answer the complex question of the success of propaganda in this period and the level of its penetration. It is possible to reconstruct an initial impression of reception by analysing circumstantial evidence such as newspaper circulations, audience figures and crowd compositions, but these sources of information can never expose the depth of people’s individual opinions. One answer is to concentrate more on the context in which the propaganda was received, a methodology that can at least open up the environment in which the propaganda was operating, and therefore the reaction of a particular audience to a particular campaign given those external pressures. Porter has argued that looking at the context of the ‘great imperial onslaught’ is one key to assessing how imperial propaganda was received.⁷⁹ However, this thesis will take this idea further, as, apart from underpinning the development of propaganda more generally in this period, the analysis of context can also be applied to the other stages of the operation of propaganda. An understanding of the context can further our understanding as to why a particular propaganda campaign was conceived, and why it took the form it did, again underlining the importance in this thesis of analysing not only the contemporary circumstances but also contemporary opinions towards the idea of propaganda itself.

⁷⁶ Thompson, *Mass Persuasion*, p. 8.

⁷⁷ Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (London, 1973).

⁷⁸ Rose, *The Intellectual Life*.

⁷⁹ Porter, *The Absent-Minded*, p. 193.

The media themselves also present methodological issues, not least because of the range available. Attempting to read these media against contemporary perspective again involves problems of interpretation. It is difficult to understand exactly how an audience during the Boer War may have watched a film, and it is all too tempting to come to Strebel's conclusion that what they saw constituted 'primitive propaganda'.⁸⁰ However, as with Fenton's camera in the Crimea, the sources available from photographic and cinematograph journals reveal the credibility given to such media in their nascent years, as well as underlining the relative lack of cinematic sophistication amongst the audiences, both of which provided far more opportunity for the propagandist. Each medium naturally presents these difficulties, and needs to be read in line with its nature, but most importantly in its contemporary context. A contextual rather than a textual reading prevents an over concentration on the individual film, cartoon, or photograph rather than the campaign of which it formed a part. Indeed, the audience themselves were not viewing or receiving each piece of propaganda divorced from the broader contextual environment.

As has been seen, there is a complex and varied historiography underlying this thesis and in order to uncover the full extent of the development of modern propaganda in this period much of it will be synthesised within this study. However, this thesis is also based on a substantial body of empirical evidence, some new and some not used in this context before. The need to engage with such varied and complex topics across a substantial period of British history has resulted in the need to utilise an equally varied body of primary source materials including contemporary publications, published volumes of letters, newspapers and journals, private papers and other archival collections. Each of these sources brings an insight into this period, as well as a set of methodological issues which need to be highlighted. For instance, the published diaries, memoirs and collected letters of key individuals particularly can be enlightening in terms of reactions to particular events and developments. However, care has to be taken given the nature of such edited material, often selected to emphasise a particular point. One such set of published primary sources are the several volumes of William Howard Russell's letters and despatches, which often have the avowable aim of presenting him as a noble war correspondent and ratifying his accounts of the appalling conditions of the Crimea.⁸¹ This potential bias also extends to the published histories that have been used in this thesis, such as Donald Read's, *Power of News: The History of Reuters* which states clearly that it is a history of the news organisation commissioned by Reuters themselves.⁸²

This thesis has also utilised a wide range of newspapers and journals, attempting to ensure that a cross-section of the press was consulted. This includes national newspapers such as the *Daily Mail*, regional newspapers such as the *Birmingham Daily Post* and *Manchester Guardian*, as well as a variety of journals and periodical literature across the political spectrum such from the liberal *Fortnightly Review* to the conservative *Quarterly Review*. Clearly across these newspapers and journals, there are biases

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Strebel, 'Primitive Propaganda: The Boer War Films', *Sight and Sound*, 46, No.1 (1976-7).

⁸¹ For example, Nicholas Bentley (ed.), *Russell's Despatches from the Crimea: 1854-1856* (London, 1966); Roger Hudson, *William Russell: Special Correspondent of 'The Times'* (London, 1995); Hudson, Roger, *William Russell: Special Correspondent of 'The Times'* (London, 1995).

⁸² Donald Read, *The Power of News: The History of Reuters* (Oxford, 1999).

towards particular parties, individuals and ideas, and, as a result, they often do not necessarily offer the historian a factual record of events. It is also often difficult to distinguish the identity of the propagandist in a newspaper, as the news they present tends to be filtered through from the source of information and the journalists, who themselves may be anonymous, to the position and style applied to the article and the censoring or embellishing hand of the editor. Nevertheless, as this thesis will demonstrate, the press had a key role in both the development and delivery of propaganda in later nineteenth century Britain and the use of these sources can, therefore, offer an insight into why a particular campaign was orchestrated, the target audience and, through the use of other sources and corroborating information, the identity of the propagandist.

One key newspaper which both commented on and actively participated on the development of propaganda in this period is *The Times*. Its use has been greatly aided by the availability of the Times Digital Archive, and the growing number of such digital archive repositories have been of great assistance in researching this thesis. This is particularly the case when considering the etymology of a word and digitised Parliamentary Papers, journals, newspapers and other sources have enabled a far wider range of literature and reports to be analysed than would normally be possible. In terms of the first chapter of this thesis, this has meant that level, variety and changing nature of the use of the word and idea of propaganda in nineteenth century Britain has been uncovered for the first time. However, the ease of access and research using these digital sources does present a challenge to the historian, particularly when using them to study the development of a word and idea. The variety of different reports and literature that can be consulted can lead to taking a specific item out of context, and it is possible for the historian to misunderstand what is being said and why. It has therefore been necessary to ensure that such sources and the study of the etymology of propaganda more generally is properly contextualised, using other primary and secondary material to work alongside the individual instances of the word propaganda in a particular report or article.

In terms of the chapter on the etymology and theory of propaganda, other collections in non-digitised archives offer further evidence of the changing use of the word. However, the private papers of many different contemporaries, as well as official government documentation and discussions, also offer insights into how individuals, political parties and governments started to understand how propaganda could be used as a political force and as a tool to manipulate public opinion, and how they found new and innovative methods of employing it. The choice of archives and individuals was in part led by the case studies, but also by the level to which an individual or party was likely to have been at the forefront of developing propaganda either out of desire or, as will be seen, out of necessity. For instance, the papers of J.T. Delane, editor of *The Times*, and William Howard Russell, *Times* correspondent in the Crimea, demonstrate how a national propaganda campaign could be initiated, augmented and potentially have a powerful effect. The papers of politicians such as Aberdeen and Palmerston reveal how the government was forced to react when facing the unprecedented circumstance of a wartime media presence, and in turn catalysed the development of propaganda. Other archives of political and private correspondence also reveal how particular politicians, such as Palmerston and Alfred Milner, were increasingly

aware of the potency of public opinion and wished to control it, in turn catalysing further and deeper bonds between the media and politics.

Other selected archives have related more specifically to propaganda campaigns, particular debates around censorship, or the development of media in this period. Both the War Office papers in the National Archives and the Royal Mail Archive provide valuable information on the application of censorship before, during and after the Boer War and highlight the debate that went with those decisions, specifically the unease over the evolution of propaganda processes. At the same time the papers of Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham University and of Alfred Milner at the Bodleian library reveal how, in times of war, censorship and control of the flow of information was deemed to be a necessity and of propagandistic benefit. As will be seen, these official and private papers, when taken in conjunction with the leaflet and pamphlet output of, for instance, the Conservative Party, point to a chain of decisions surrounding the release of information: what is said, by whom, for what purpose and the composition of the target audience. Whilst this tripartite analysis of a particular propaganda campaign in terms of intent, content and reception is often obscure to historians, material in the archives shed as much light as possible on each area. The archives of government departments, politicians, political parties, military officials, and those involved in the media therefore form a key part of the evidence base for the arguments within these chapters.

The body of evidence within this thesis will therefore form part of the answer as to where propaganda in the twentieth century came from, but will naturally create as many questions as answers: How did propaganda operate without a centralised propaganda department? Was the adoption of modern forms of propaganda a coherent policy in this period or a series of reactions? Who exactly were the propagandists, and did their identity change over this period? How important was the merging of private and public spheres to the development of modern propaganda? Was propaganda in this period distinct to Britain, and if so why? In terms of this final question, Philip Taylor has admitted to a 'lifelong fascination with why the British have been particularly nervous about something they have demonstrated time after time that they were extremely good at', and his work on British propaganda in the twentieth century has helped to answer this quandary.⁸³ However, this thesis hopes to uncover the origin of this paradox by studying British propaganda in the period before the First World War, in the context of a developing democracy.

Contemporaries themselves were certainly engaging with this issue as one journalist of the *Morning Chronicle* argued in 1857,

Englishmen should always be on their guard against the excesses into which they may be led by their noble moral instincts. They are too often illogical and inconsistent, slaves of fixed ideas and puppets of impulse. Fiercely opposed, for instance, to the modern propaganda of revolutionary and socialist principles, they stoutly maintain their right to

⁸³ Philip Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. ix.

have a propaganda of their own. It would be impossible to calculate the amount of positive mischief inflicted upon Europe, by that quondam policy of Lord Palmerston, which consisted in pertinaciously forcing English principles and institutions on nations utterly unfitted for them.⁸⁴

This says a great deal about the nineteenth century use and understanding of the concept of propaganda: the link with seditious or pernicious activities and resultant pejorative connotations; the trouble with accepting and utilising propaganda in Britain as something distinct from those connotations; the use of that propaganda to disseminate British values, all issues raised in the article, authored in 1857, but also are pertinent to the study of propaganda in the twentieth century. There is also mention of ‘modern propaganda’ which prompts important questions: what did contemporaries consider to be modern propaganda?; why does this idea appear at this point in the nineteenth century?; and how does it differ from twentieth century conceptions of modern propaganda? Such questions form the basis for this thesis. Although political and social contextual developments will be shown to be of great importance, this is not aimed to be a history of political culture or imperialism in the later nineteenth century, but rather of propaganda and its relationship with those ideas. This thesis also cannot do full justice to the complexities and variety of propaganda in this period, domestic and external, in conflict and in peace, from Unionist to Socialist. However, it is hoped that it serves to open a propagandistic dialogue between two distinct but importantly similar centuries. If historians are to understand the propagandistic upheavals of the twentieth century, they must first look to where such propaganda came from, why it developed and what form these developments took in a world untainted by the memory of a World War.

⁸⁴ *The Morning Chronicle*, 22 December 1857.

Chapter 1: The Etymology and Theory of Propaganda in Nineteenth Century Britain

Generations came into the possession of words and ideas as they came into the possession of public buildings. They call them their own and no longer remember who built them and for what purpose... Their use and foundation reveal the mind of each generation... And, just as words have an impact upon actions, so there is an impact of actions upon words... There is no period in history which may not be enlightened by a pursuit of semantic inquiries; the semantic approach to history has something to reveal in all periods.¹

Although Koebner and Schmidt were referring to the etymology of imperialism, their principle is readily transferable to that of propaganda. Indeed, their argument that the most interesting objects of semantic study are words aimed to ‘sway opinions’ is particularly poignant.² As has been noted in the introduction, subsequent historians have analysed the mutation of the understanding of ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’ and are generally in agreement that they were considered flexible terms. However, it is this very flexibility that both reflects the context in which the word was used and opens up the culture of those who used it for analysis. For this reason, R.H. MacDonald, in his study of the language of Empire, has argued that both the word and imperial literature in general should be, ‘encountered in their first ‘freshness’, [and] should be understood, if at all possible, in their contemporary context.’³ In the same way, propaganda as a word and idea needs to be understood and studied in its original context in order to better understand how propaganda functioned.

Despite this, historians to date have generally overlooked this need, all too frequently skipping etymologically from the inauguration of the *congregatio sacra de propaganda fide* in 1622, over three centuries of rapid progress and change, to propaganda’s metamorphosis into a politicised, pejorative term during the First World War. Resultantly the etymology of propaganda in nineteenth century Britain remains obscure, and yet it seems inconceivable that an era of such turbulent change had no effect on an already contentious word. It is therefore the aim of this chapter to chart the etymology of propaganda through the period 1854-1902 and analyse its contemporary use in relation to its origins and to the post 1914 definition. It is important to note that this is not a comprehensive history of a word, but rather a survey utilising private papers, journals, Parliamentary Papers and other media sources to uncover what ‘propaganda’ meant in this period. However, such a study has several purposes. Firstly, it offers a basis from which to analyse the operation of propaganda from a contemporary perspective in relation to the case studies that follow. One of the key factors in preventing this period being regarded as propagandistically modern is the retrospective application of twentieth century characteristics of propaganda. However, with an understanding of what propaganda meant to contemporaries themselves, misinterpretations and misconceptions associated with such impositions can be avoided. Of course

¹ Koebner & Schmidt, *Imperialism*, p. xiii.

² Ibid.

³ MacDonald, *The Language*, p. 4.

this is not always practical because, as will be seen, there is not enough evidence of contemporary perceptions of propaganda to offer a complete picture. However, by combining contemporary understanding with our own, it is possible to create a clearer picture of the nature of propaganda in this period. Secondly, studying the etymology of a word opens up the context and culture in which the word was used. James Thompson argued of public opinion in nineteenth century Britain that words are shaped by a cluster of associated concepts that imbue them with certain connotations and evaluative force, and as such are moulded by their circumstances.⁴ Words like propaganda are generally used for a specific purpose, and uncovering what the author intended can tell us a great deal about both the author and his intended audience. Beyond this, as Lewis has suggested, ‘when a word has several meanings historical circumstances often make one of them dominant during a particular era.’⁵ If the original meaning can be unlocked, it offers the opportunity to understand the circumstances that produced a mutation in the definition and operation of propaganda.⁶

Finally, this etymological survey can help to establish this era as propagandistically modern. It will be shown that not only are there clear correlations between nineteenth and twentieth century conceptions of propaganda, but that the nineteenth century also maintained its own unique definitions of propaganda marking a definite break with its seventeenth century semantic origins. The very fact that propaganda was becoming a more commonly used phrase outside of its traditional, religious meaning demonstrates that this was an important period of development in the history of propaganda. Further, propaganda was not only becoming commonly understood in its modern sense by the mid-nineteenth century, but was also being analysed and theorised in a similar vein. Again, due to the concentration on post-1914 propaganda, historians have generally neglected its early theorisation. This is not least due to the fact that it was not contemporarily recognised as propaganda theory, nor was the word propaganda often used by the theorists, an important feature which will be revisited later in the chapter. However, the development of a mass, literate electorate created an unprecedentedly powerful public opinion whose perceived irrationality and susceptibility to manipulation was causing many Liberal theorists to lose faith in their optimistic conception of mass democracy. As a result, a generation of theorists such as J.S. Mill, Walter Bagehot and later Graham Wallas began to reconsider this form of politics, focussing more on human nature and the presence and power of manipulation, and as such laid the groundwork for a theory of propaganda. This chapter will explore these theories both to reveal their place as precedents for the theories of propaganda in the twentieth century and to underline the fact that contemporaries themselves perceived that a novel force was operating in British politics.

However, before embarking on a survey of the etymology and theory of propaganda in this period, this thesis will define exactly what is meant by the term ‘modern propaganda’ and consider

⁴ James Thompson, ‘The Idea of ‘Public Opinion’ in Britain, 1870-1914’, Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 1999, p. 6.

⁵ Lewis, *Studies*, p. 12.

⁶ Quentin Skinner has also dominated a significant historiography around how words change their meaning and the importance of those mutations in allowing access to historical texts and authors. For example, Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Volume I (London, 2002).

why it is distinguishable from what can be called ‘traditional propaganda’. Undoubtedly something new was emerging in this period but it is necessary to consider its nature and assess why this particular period prompted such a mutation. In 1926 Bruce Bliven argued, ‘In my judgement we are only at the beginning of the Age of Propaganda’.⁷ This conception of the twentieth century as the ‘Age of Propaganda’ has become prevalent amongst historians of propaganda, Pratkanis and Aronson using the phrase as the title of their book on the modern day manipulation of the public, and O’Shaughnessy referring to the twentieth century as ‘the propaganda century’.⁸ Given the conviction that the twentieth century represents something uniquely modern, how have historians defined modern propaganda, and why is it deemed to be exclusive to the twentieth century?

Perhaps the most prominent proponent of this idea is Jacques Ellul, not least because he argues that propaganda must be total to be regarded as propaganda at all.⁹ In Ellul’s view, the ‘technological society’ creates the ideal circumstances in which propaganda can operate and, in turn, propaganda maintains modern society in a symbiosis peculiar to the twentieth century. Therefore, to Ellul, it is the circumstances of the technological society that provide the platform for the emergence of modern propaganda. The fact that the masses had come to participate in political affairs, the simultaneous existence of an individualist and mass society, the growth of a varied mass media capable of saturating the whole population, and the development of a scientific basis to propaganda, utilising psychological and sociological techniques to manipulate human nature, are all highlighted as contributing to the unique propagandistic environment of the twentieth century.¹⁰ Ellul’s arguments have subsequently been criticised for taking the idea of the ‘age of propaganda’ too far by making any form of propaganda exclusive to the twentieth century. Taithe and Thornton have argued that, ‘Ellul’s insistence on effectiveness which ties all propaganda to the development of mass production and technological drives thus neglects the earlier uses of the term and the issue of where propaganda fitted in the early societies and states which did not enjoy modern mass media.’¹¹ Of course Ellul’s focus also neglects a society, such as nineteenth century Britain, in which there was a developing mass media and mass society and where the word itself was used in a modern sense. Despite pointing to the problems with Ellul’s twentieth century bias and being more inclusive in their history of propaganda, Taithe and Thornton themselves still argue that state propaganda was not a recognisable force before the First World War. What they define as ‘thick propaganda’, that is ‘propaganda which attempted to influence ideas on all levels’, is only attributed to the period after 1914, and even some propaganda campaigns in the First World War are considered ‘crude, ill thought-out and even counterproductive’.¹² This then implies that modern propaganda must be sophisticated and well orchestrated, a process Taithe and Thornton argue was

⁷ Bruce Bliven, ‘Let’s Have More Propaganda!’, *The World Tomorrow* (December, 1926), p. 254.

⁸ Pratkanis & Aronson, *Age of Propaganda*; O’Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda*, p. 38.

⁹ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. 3.

¹⁰ Ellul, *Propaganda*, pp. 9-11, 90-94 & 121-2.

¹¹ Taithe & Thornton, ‘Propaganda’, p. 4.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.

aided by the advent of new media such as the telegraph and cinema.¹³ However, it is important to point out that modernity should not necessarily be taken as inevitably leading to a sophisticated and successful propaganda, and there remain plenty of instances of ill thought-out campaigns into the twenty-first century. Rather, as this chapter argues, modernity implies that the apparatus to conduct a sophisticated and organised campaign are at least present, if not necessarily utilised.

Another common trait attributed to modern propaganda was first highlighted by Harold Lasswell, who wrote in the 1920s that propaganda had only been of transitory importance before technological development had forced its modern-day permanence.¹⁴ Although his concentration was still on the First World War, Lasswell therefore established the idea that the transitory importance of propaganda in the past, utilised sporadically and at times of crisis, had been superseded by the ubiquity and permanence of propaganda in his own context. O'Shaughnessy has subsequently highlighted the unusual prevalence of propaganda in modern society arguing that the insecurities of the past that catalysed propagandistic activity are now near constant, and the complexity of modern life has necessitated the ubiquity and permeation of information.¹⁵ Similarly Pratkanis and Aronson have stated that, 'the persuasion landscape of today differs vastly from those of the past', most notably because in our 'message dense' environment we are being constantly bombarded with persuasive communications to the level of complete saturation.¹⁶

In the 1950s, the political scientist Lindley Fraser proffered the idea that propaganda, although an established phenomenon, had only very recently developed into a science. Fraser also highlighted that modern propaganda is both systematic and consistent and has become a necessary part of the successful operation of a modern society. As a result, modern democratic politicians ignore propaganda at their peril as, 'during the last thirty years and more democratic governments have more and more recognised the need for explaining to the public the reasons for measures they have felt it necessary to introduce.'¹⁷ F.C. Bartlett, perhaps because he was writing in the context of the Second World War, drew similar conclusions but focussed more specifically on the contemporary prevalent dictatorships, who, he argues, had developed modern propaganda as a response to the need for a far wider approval than their totalitarian predecessors. However, Bartlett continues, 'no modern state can afford to neglect political propaganda' due to a need to justify publicly the continuous policies and decisions it must make to operate.¹⁸ Propaganda's modernity then is determined by some authors by its necessity in modern societies and the resultant ubiquity that necessity produces.

Other authors have differentiated between traditional and modern propaganda by looking at the advance in the theorisation of propaganda and the emergence of a recognisable propaganda critique. Lasswell was one of the first recognised propaganda theorists and wrote in his history of

¹³ Ibid, p. 10, 14.

¹⁴ Lasswell, 'The Theory', p. 631.

¹⁵ O'Shaughnessy, *Politics and Propaganda*, pp. 49-54.

¹⁶ Pratkanis and Aronson, *Age of Propaganda*, pp. 9, 14.

¹⁷ Fraser, *Propaganda*, pp. 15, 197.

¹⁸ F.C. Bartlett, *Political Propaganda* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 464-5.

propaganda that, ‘there is little exaggeration in saying that the World War led to the discovery of propaganda by both the man in the street and the man in the study.’ He argues that this is especially true of the layman who also had no common name for propaganda prior to 1914, whereas scholars had at least a ‘scientific inheritance’ with which to work.¹⁹ It should be recognised, however, that much of Lasswell’s research was conducted in close proximity to the First World War, and this context may well have influenced his attribution of its importance to the development of propaganda. However, much later Jowett and O’Donnell similarly forwarded the idea that, despite the precedents of theorists such as Graham Wallas, the First World War remained the watershed moment in the history of propaganda studies given that even contemporary scholars were surprised by the potency of wartime propaganda.²⁰ They also argue that due to the consciousness of the power of propaganda, as well the clear perception that it had been misused, the word itself became part of common usage after 1918.²¹

This is not to say that historians and political scientists have never linked the idea of modern propaganda to the nineteenth century. William Albig, who stated that ‘propaganda in the modern sense’ began in the middle of the nineteenth century, has maintained that the change is distinguished by organisation on a mass scale, and its direction by propagandists with a special understanding of the art. He continues, ‘Propaganda is pervasive in our time. There has always been some propaganda, but in the modern age it is organised, intentional and relatively more effective. Moreover modern propaganda emphasised distortion and derationalises the popular opinion process.’²² Gary Messinger also promotes the idea of modern propaganda existing in some form prior to 1914 and states that it was the organisation of propaganda on a mass scale by central government that marked a key change in the history of propaganda. Although he argues that parties were beginning to adopt public relations techniques and government departments were forming fledgling press divisions during the nineteenth century, it took the upheavals of the First World War to catalyse the advent of most of the ‘modern techniques and principles of propaganda.’²³ Similarly Philip Taylor and Oliver Thompson have charted the history of propaganda far beyond the twentieth century, and both attribute some degree of change to the novel circumstances of the nineteenth century. However, Taylor still points to the twentieth century and specifically the First World War as the significant step in terms of modern propaganda as, despite the advent of mass media in the late nineteenth century, ‘At first the impact of the new media in the conduct of war propaganda was comparatively small’ and, ‘It was the convergence of total war and the mass media that gave modern war propaganda its significance and impact in the twentieth century.’²⁴ Perhaps the clearest link between the nineteenth century and modern propaganda has been made by Terence Qualter who, as has been stated, argued that the unprecedented context in which public

¹⁹ Lasswell, *Propaganda*, p. v.

²⁰ Jowett & O’Donnell, *Propaganda*, pp. 105, 208.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²² Albig, pp. 284, 290, 309.

²³ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 2, 11-12.

²⁴ Oliver Thompson, *Easily Led: A History of Propaganda* (Stroud, 1999); P.M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era* (Manchester, 2003), p. 174.

opinion and politics were developing in that period necessarily led to the advent of a novel form of propaganda.²⁵

As can be seen, an analysis of the work of propaganda historians and political scientists suggests that there is a distinguishable force that can be designated as ‘modern propaganda.’ The general consensus is that it emerged during the twentieth century and as a result of the First World War. However, this thesis contends that ‘modern propaganda’ existed in the sixty years prior to 1914, and it is firstly the aim of this chapter to analyse what defines ‘modern propaganda’ as a phenomenon and to draw out several of its key characteristics, a synthesis of ideas and concepts that has not previously been established. Firstly, there is the presence of a mass audience in that more citizens are in constant contact with the state and have the capability to receive propaganda being both literate and politically aware. Secondly, there is a mass media at the disposal of the propagandist capable of disseminating propaganda to this mass audience. Allied to this mass media are sufficient technological advances in the communications network to enable the fast and frequent transfer of information to the mass audience. Thirdly, the context of the modern age results in ubiquitous, permanent, and pervasive propaganda so that the audience is continuously exposed to a saturated propagandistic environment. Fourthly, propaganda is no longer either the preserve of an elite few within government or practised by a handful of extra-Parliamentary pressure groups and has been adopted in both the public and private spheres on a large scale, the former often absorbing the propaganda of the latter. Many historians point to the creation of centralised propaganda departments such as the Ministry of Information as the most obvious manifestations of this process, but this thesis will reveal that such organisations are not necessarily a prerequisite for the existence of modern propaganda. Fifthly, the departments, groups and individuals producing and disseminating propaganda must do so in a systematic and organised fashion, utilising the technological environment available to produce sophisticated propaganda. This sophistication will in part come from an understanding of the science of propaganda, adopting techniques from psychology, sociology, and the commercial world to best approach a variety of audiences. Finally, propaganda must be commonly understood in its modern, political, and often pejorative sense, as well as being analysed by contemporary theorists.

Although the premise of this thesis is that the development of modern propaganda is found in the period 1854-1902 in Britain, it is not attempting to deny the significance of the First World War in terms of propaganda, or indeed that propaganda has become increasingly embedded in political and social life during the twentieth century as a whole. However, modern propaganda is not the sole preserve of the twentieth century and more attention needs to be shown to the vast progress made during the sixty years prior to 1914 and the impact these changes had on the twentieth century. In short, there needs to be a dialogue between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in terms of propaganda which can be partly achieved by preventing the idea of modern propaganda being exclusive to the First World War and beyond. The etymological survey that follows is then in

²⁵ Qualter, *Propaganda*, p. 32.

part an attempt to demonstrate that nineteenth century Britain fulfils the criteria for modern propaganda, but also, and as a result, initiates a dialogue between the two centuries. That dialogue reveals how propaganda operated in a similar fashion in both centuries, but also how a burgeoning democracy with a mass media and a greatly augmented communications network understood and used propaganda before the twentieth century. In this way, a study of the etymology of propaganda can also highlight how unique this period was, modern yet markedly different to the twentieth century.

There are, of course, clear methodological issues with such an approach, not least, as Lewis has argued, because nineteenth century texts and words can be as opaque as Anglo-Saxon and therefore as easy to misunderstand.²⁶ The problem in the nineteenth century arises particularly when the reader assumes they understand the word as it appears in the same form in their own context, unaware that its contemporary meaning was subtly or totally different. How do we begin to unravel contemporary discourse and understand, over a century later, why a particular word was chosen and exactly what it meant to its author? If there are variations in meaning, what impacted on those variations? Was the comprehension of the word limited in any way, that is to say, how far can we say that the word penetrated public discourse? Of course, not all of these questions can be answered, or at least answered in full. However, there are not only a great deal more texts available to analyse than might be imagined but the very fact that the word propaganda appears so frequently provides a greater opportunity to find links and correlations in meaning between the sources. Parliamentary papers, periodicals, newspapers, private letters, diaries and contemporary literature all provide evidence that propaganda was used commonly throughout this period, and also that the word not only mutated in meaning over time but also possessed a variety of meanings simultaneously. The survey will therefore be approached thematically, paying attention not only to the word used but the context in which it was used, and the identity of the author. As Lewis argues, a particular word is not always chosen because it is the best available but rather for its impact on its audience and, as a result, its selection can tell us a great deal about the author.²⁷

The first theme becomes clear immediately by consulting various contemporary dictionaries. Although Koebner and Schmidt argue that, ‘the part played by a word in the history of a society does not become apparent in the context of exemplary phrases and quotations which dictionaries offer’, dictionaries can offer a starting point to access the contemporary meaning of a particular term.²⁸ This is particularly true, as Lewis points out, if contemporary dictionaries are used, as these can give us at least one definition from that period.²⁹ Using this logic, an excellent place to start is W.T. Brande’s *Dictionary of Science, Literature and Art* published in 1842. Brande defines propaganda

²⁶ Lewis, *Studies*, p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

²⁸ Koebner & Schmidt, *Imperialism*, p. xv.

²⁹ Lewis, *Studies*, p. 17.

as, ‘The name given to an association, or, as it is termed, the congregation *de propaganda fide*, established at Rome by Gregory XV in 1622, for diffusing knowledge of Christianity throughout the world... Derived from this celebrated society, the name ‘propaganda’ is applied in modern political language as a term of reproach to secret associations for the spread of opinions and principles which are viewed by most governments with horror and aversion.’³⁰ It is fascinating to see that such an early definition demonstrated that, to Brande at least, propaganda had not only become a political force, but had already acquired its status as a pejorative term and as such is remarkably similar to the conception of propaganda in the twentieth century. It seems immediately clear then that it was not solely the First World War that imbued propaganda with its political or pejorative connotations. Some propaganda historians have even referred to this early definition, but do not then explore the implications further. For example, L. John Martin outlines the origins of the word and quotes Brande, arguing that his dictionary reveals an early pejorative sense but that it would be a long time before a lexicographer took note of any popular usage. He also adds that the sporadic appearance of propaganda through history was replaced at the time of the French Revolution when it came to be recognised as a potent tool. Given this, it is strange that Martin then fails to analyse the subsequent propaganda in the nineteenth century, dismissing it with the phrase ‘other incidents followed’, before stating that it was not until the First World War that propaganda was systematically engaged in.³¹

One point that Martin does highlight, however, is the link between the new conception of propaganda and the Napoleonic era. Another dictionary that predates Brande’s is Ernest Barker’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1832) which defines a ‘propagandist’ as ‘a person who devotes himself to the spread of any system of principles’, but also importantly cites Robert Walsh’s work on Napoleon: ‘Bonaparte selected a body to compose his Sanhedrim of political propagandists.’³² These definitions are therefore connected to seditious and revolutionary activity and more specifically to Napoleon himself. Revolutionary France was still topical at the time of Brande and Barker’s dictionaries, and it seems reasonable that this informed their definitions. The work of Robert Holtman and Wayne Hanley has demonstrated that Napoleon was himself an adept propagandist, using his military victories to gain fame and translating this celebrity into power by the adoption of techniques of propaganda.³³ Indeed Hanley argues that, ‘Although other historical figures had manipulated various media for political gain, Napoleon Bonaparte was the first non-monarch in the modern era to realise the limitless possibilities of propaganda.’³⁴

There is even a precedent for the etymology of propaganda in the Napoleonic era itself as can be seen in the work of Edmund Burke and Friedrich Gentz. László Kontler has argued that the 1789 revolution, and the propaganda pamphlet campaigns it generated, began the process of altering the

³⁰ W.T. Brande, *A Dictionary of Science, Literature and Art* (London, 1842), p. 991.

³¹ L. John Martin, *International Propaganda: Its Legal and Diplomatic Control* (Minnesota, 1958), pp. 5-6.

³² E.H. Barker, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 volumes (London, 1832); Robert Walsh, *Biographical Sketch of Joseph Napoleon Bonaparte Count de Surveilliers* (London, 1833).

³³ Holtman, *Napoleonic*; Wayne Hanley, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Propaganda, 1796-1799* (New York, 2005).

³⁴ Hanley, *The Genesis*, p. xiv.

principally religious connotations of the interchangeable words ‘proselytising’ and ‘propagation’ and imbuing them with a new political, and often pejorative, sense.³⁵ Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) reveals his understanding of the impact of Catholic proselytism, and how he saw a similar power emerging through the propagators of the French Revolution stating, “The literary cabal had some years ago formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in propagators of some system of piety. They were possessed with a spirit of proselytism in the most fanatical degree; and from thence, by an easy progress, with the spirit of persecution according to their means.³⁶ In another work, *Thoughts on French Affairs* (1791), Burke went on to assess how this new form of proselytism would develop. ‘What direction the French spirit of proselytism is likely to take and in what order it is likely to prevail, it is not easy to determine. The seeds are sown almost everywhere, chiefly by newspaper circulation, infinitely more efficacious and extensive than ever they were. And they are a more important instrument than generally is imagined...they are the whole reading of the far greater number.’³⁷ Thus Burke was producing a novel method of analysing and interpreting the socio-political conflicts in France by the application of ideas of religious proselytism to a secular, political context.

Burke himself never used the word ‘propaganda’ in his assessments but that is not to say that the word was not in use in this period; indeed, it is strange that Burke avoided any direct use of ‘propaganda’ as it was explicitly applied by Burke’s contemporaries to the revolutionary government in Paris. In August 1792 a central propaganda agency, the *Bureau de l’esprit public*, was established under the aegis of the Minister of Interior, Jean Marie, and it was almost instantly referred to as ‘The Propaganda’ in Britain³⁸. A correspondent with the Prince of Wales as early as 1790 identified the dangers of such a body, stating, ‘All Kings have, at this moment, a new race of Pretenders to contend with; the disciples of the propaganda at Paris or, as they call themselves, les Ambassadeurs de genre humain.’³⁹ A further definition of this body was provided in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1797, ‘the Propaganda, a society whose members are bound, by solemn engagements, to stir up subjects against their lawful rulers.’⁴⁰ Thus the political equivalent of the 1622 Propaganda had immediately gained pejorative connotations owing to the context in which it was used, with the word entering another framework of associations. Perhaps Burke’s eschewing of the word propaganda to describe the new political phenomenon in France is an early example of the fact that throughout the nineteenth century it possessed numerous alternative definitions, and Burke’s sense of the word may not, in his mind, have suited this application. This is something that will be

³⁵ László Kontler, ‘Superstition’, p. 97.

³⁶ Edmund Burke, ‘Reflections on the Revolution In France’, Paul Langford (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, Volume VIII (Oxford, 1989), p. 160.

³⁷ Edmund Burke, ‘Thoughts on French Affairs’, Langford, *The Writings*, pp. 347-8.

³⁸ Kontler, ‘Superstition’, p. 103.

³⁹ Sir John MacPherson to the Prince of Wales, 27 Sept 1790; A. Aspinall (ed), *The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales 1770-1812*, Volume II 1789-1794 (London, 1964), pp. 98-99.

⁴⁰ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, August 1797, p. 687.

considered when assessing the ideas of later political theorists, again highlighting the importance of avoiding a retrospective imposition of our own view of a word.

Burke had also identified the nature of the revolutionary war, famously stating, 'It is with an armed doctrine that we are at war.'⁴¹ His contemporary William Pitt used a very similar phrase when defending the necessity of a grant of money for the war; 'We are not in arms against the opinions of the closet, nor the speculations of the school. We are at war with armed opinion; we are at war with those opinions which the thought of audacious, unprincipled and impious innovations seeks to propagate amidst the ruins of empires.'⁴² Both men highlighted the complex nature of this new form of propaganda, moving beyond the traditional view voiced by the author of the *Gentleman's Magazine* article which identified it within the framework of the original 'Propaganda' as an autonomous body aiming at universal tyranny, seeing it as a more fluid and pervasive force within society. Indeed, a biography of Pitt written later in the nineteenth century contained a chapter on Pitt's orchestration of 'The English Propaganda' in response to the French threat.⁴³ A further step in the theory of propaganda was taken by another contemporary European author, Friedrich Gentz. In his analysis of the French Revolution, *On the Origin and Character of the War Against the French Revolution* (1801), he saw that propaganda's traditional sense of 'religious enthusiasm' had been replaced by 'political fanaticism' which had made the French troops and civilians bolder and more impetuous. However, despite the adverse effect of such revolutionary propaganda, Gentz also suggested that the only way to fight the revolutionary spirit was with similar tactics, implying a form of allied counter-propaganda, even concluding his work by outlining some guidelines for operating a system of propaganda. He wrote in markedly Machiavellian language,

Public opinion ought not to be neglected or disdained for a single moment. Instruction and guidance must be the permanent concern of the princes. They should exert their influence upon the ideas and principles of the age in all explicit ways, through frequently-repeated solemn declarations, through publications, through sermons, through the education of the people... It is not sufficient to have the revolutionary principle denounced as a product of madness and lunacy in isolated proclamations and ephemeral pamphlets; one must penetrate into the very fundamentals, and the evil ought to be chased back relentlessly to its first spring.⁴⁴

As has already been demonstrated by the actions of Napoleon and Pitt (amongst many other contemporaries) in this period, the ideas of Burke and Gentz were based on their own context and

⁴¹ Edmund Burke, 'First Letter on a Regicide Peace', in Langford (ed.), *The Writings*, Volume IX, p. 199.

⁴² Hans Speier, 'The Rise of Public Opinion', in Harold D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner & Hans Speier (eds.), *Propaganda and Communication in World History, Volume 2, Emergence of Public Opinion in the West* (Hawaii, 1980), p. 161.

⁴³ Lewis Sergeant, *William Pitt* (London, 1882). A contemporary review of this book can be found in *The Graphic*, 14 October 1882, p. 394.

⁴⁴ Kontler, 'Superstition', pp. 106-109.

circumstances. Governments and individuals were beginning to understand the importance of controlling ‘public opinion’, itself a phenomenon which had been identified and analysed by the end of the eighteenth century. It was only then a small step for both intellectuals and governors to understand that the best method of ensuring the support of that opinion was to manipulate and control it by the use of propaganda. These ideas were to develop further as the century progressed and public opinion itself became a more prominent political force. However, the key legacy from this period was the association of seditious, revolutionary activity with propaganda and the impact of context on that association. As will be seen, the upheavals and European revolutions of the 1840s, wars and revolts in the Balkans, Schleswig-Holstein, France, Austria and Italy, and the rapid advance of socialism by the 1880s all created an unprecedented and turbulent context that promoted a particular this use of the word propaganda.

The link between France and the concept of propaganda lasted well into the nineteenth century as is evidenced in numerous journals and newspapers. Indeed, articles throughout the century harked back to the Napoleonic era, attributing to it the idea of revolutionary propaganda. One editorial in *The Times* during the Crimean War, when France was a British ally, referred to the Peace of Amiens only coming once Britain had defeated France’s ‘Republican propaganda’ which had spread across Europe.⁴⁵ Similarly, Bonamy Price, in an article for *Fraser’s Magazine* stated that, ‘The war against revolutionary France was not only a contest for existence... it was also a resistance against the political propaganda which sent the first French armies into the field to upset the institutions of every nation in Europe, and replace them with some form of the supremacy of the masses.’⁴⁶ Another author in the *Quarterly Review* looking back on the Napoleonic era argued that there were few British sympathisers for, ‘the great Republican propaganda against throne and altar.’⁴⁷ W.B. Morris as late as 1900 wrote of Edmund Burke that he regarded the contempt of nations for one another and ‘their propaganda of exotic ideas as one of the chief fountains of revolution and national disaster.’⁴⁸ Pitt was especially promoted as the antidote to such insidious ideas and was portrayed as working hard to counteract the political propaganda pouring over the Channel, one journalist concluding, ‘Revolutionary France was not an agreeable neighbour, and at this time she was actively engaged in a Republican propaganda throughout the monarchies of Europe. This England bore patiently.’⁴⁹ It seems clear then that in the context of the French revolutionary wars Britain was deliberately separated from propagandistic activity, in fact being perceived as its principal opponent. In the context of a comparison with revolutionary France, Britain was invariably made to appear detached from propagandistic activity. It is possible, therefore, to start to uncover an uneasiness with the idea and application of certain meanings of propaganda in Britain linked to the perceived antitheses of British traditions and democracy, Napoleonic authoritarianism, revolution and sedition. As was the case in the post-1918 era,

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 27 April 1855.

⁴⁶ *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, February 1864, p. 138.

⁴⁷ *Quarterly Review*, January 1872, p. 36.

⁴⁸ *Dublin Review*, July 1900, p. 78.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, January 1892, p. 33.

propaganda became a foreign tool to many British contemporaries, their preoccupation becoming a defence against that phenomenon. It is also interesting to note that British authors were quite prepared to impose the idea of and word propaganda back on to the Napoleonic era even as the word mutated over the nineteenth century as a whole.

Even before the 1848 revolutions swept across Europe, propaganda was being used in a similar vein to the Napoleonic era. In a letter to 3rd Viscount Palmerston dated 1831, Lord Ponsonby, the Joint Commissioner to the provisional government of Belgium, wrote that there was disorder in Belgium not least because there were French plans to annex the country. He continued, 'I hear also that the Propaganda at Paris have dispatched to Brussels a Gen Favier well known for the part he played in Greece, and who is a regular agitator. A man of no great ability but great audacity.'⁵⁰ It seems then that the idea of a French organisation, based on the original Catholic college but political in nature, was still a cause for concern in Britain. The juxtaposition of the words propaganda and agitator is significant, particularly as there has been a great deal of debate in the twentieth century on whether they encompass the same idea. Clearly agitation could be seen as synonymous with propaganda of this kind, offering a direct link to the ideas of certain twentieth century propaganda theorists, and most notably Lenin.⁵¹ It certainly seems to have suited Ponsonby's understanding of propaganda, especially as used in France, to label one of the Propaganda's agents an agitator. Ponsonby's fears were still being realised by the end of the decade as W.A. Ardent wrote of the state of affairs in Belgium that the revolutions there had been sparked by propaganda 'setting the masses in motion'.⁵² By 1848, when much of Europe was in the throes of revolution, French revolutionary activity was once again linked with propaganda. The Paris correspondent for the *Economist* wrote, 'The minds of Frenchmen, who are already too much inclined to military avocations, will be more ready than ever to wage war against their neighbours. When a nation has always at its command 1,500,000 or 2,000,000 soldiers, it must be excited to conquest and propaganda war.'⁵³ A decade later another journalist for the *Economist* wrote that the French government had at its disposal 'a secret propaganda' with immense means and a 'prodigious extent'.⁵⁴ The concept of propaganda was therefore tightly bound to that of revolution in this period and became a word to help contemporaries explain the tumultuous upheavals of this period.

However, the widespread turbulence of the revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century seem to have pushed the application of propaganda beyond France, one author arguing early in 1850, 'The revolutionary propaganda is not confined to one state; its ramifications extend over the whole of Europe; if it were to gain the upper hand in any one country, it would seize upon and sweep down

⁵⁰ Lord Ponsonby to Palmerston, 2 January 1831, Palmerston Papers, PP/GC/PO/29/1-4, SUSC.

⁵¹ Lenin, following Plekanov, was one of the key advocates that a propagandist and agitator were different, the former presenting many arguments to a small audience, the latter one argument to a large audience. F. Victor Jerome (ed.), *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works*, Volume 5, May 1901-February 1902 (Moscow, 1961), pp. 409-10.

⁵² *British and Foreign Review or, European Quarterly Journal*, October 1838, p. 534.

⁵³ *The Economist*, 24 June 1848, p. 709.

⁵⁴ *Fraser's Magazine*, October 1859, p. 1210.

even those countries which had hitherto escaped its influence.⁵⁵ In this period there are frequent references to the propaganda of successive revolutionary groups; the Magyar propaganda, the propaganda of the German National Association, Panslavist propaganda, and Greek propaganda. These were especially recognised as forces in the disintegration of the ‘sick man of Europe’ as revolutionary groups sought independence by means of disseminating nationalist propaganda. This is especially seen in Parliamentary correspondence from this period, as reports were written on the various insurrections and harmful effects of propaganda on the Ottoman Empire. Two sequential reports from 1877 analysed the active Slav propaganda that was successfully instilling revolutionary ideas across the Empire and argued that the Turkish government was being severely damaged by its failure to resist such active propagandas.⁵⁶ A decade later there are further reports on the efficacy of Romanian and Greek propaganda organisations attacking the Ottoman Empire, and it was highlighted that the propaganda of one Panslavist organisation was even mentioned in the French press.⁵⁷ Clearly such revolutionary propaganda was of concern to the British government which seems to have kept a close eye on its progress across Europe, as it was deemed an increasing and increasingly potent threat to national stability. Propaganda was therefore becoming an issue for states and governments in this period, as it was seen to initiate, catalyse and sustain the revolutions that were causing so much concern. This is especially significant as those in power were becoming aware of how potent a force propaganda was, or at least was perceived to be, and this knowledge could lead to propaganda being adopted by those governments (if diligently rephrased) as a force with which to tackle revolutionary propaganda.

This was also true within Britain’s own Empire. As it expanded, so did the number of rebellious groups, and their seditious activities were inevitably branded as propagandist. Again propaganda was being used as a word to explain growing unrest, and the increasing success of seditious activities within the expanding Empire. In this way propaganda as a word evolved along with the context of developments in foreign policy but still maintained its pejorative connotations from previous periods and events. Part of the success of the Indian Mutiny was, in one report on recommendations for military changes in India, attributed to the effectiveness of ‘Bengali propaganda’ in disseminating its ideas.⁵⁸ One article in *Fraser’s Magazine* charts the development of ‘traitorous activities’ in British India which were greatly aided by the ‘central propaganda at Patna’.⁵⁹ During the period of upheaval in the Sudan culminating in the death of General Gordon, there are several articles that point to the central place of propaganda in catalysing the Mahdist revolt. E.M. Clarke in the *Dublin Review* referred to the propaganda of Abu-Abdallah and the dervishes, the

⁵⁵ *Fraser’s Magazine*, January 1850, p. 92.

⁵⁶ ‘Further Correspondence Respecting Affairs of Turkey 1876’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1877, C.1640, 143); ‘Correspondence Respecting the Conference at Constantinople and the Affairs of Turkey, 1876-77’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1877, C.1641, 225).

⁵⁷ ‘Correspondence Respecting Affairs in the East’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1889, C.5824, 93,100,392).

⁵⁸ ‘Minutes of General Lord Sandhurst and Sir G. Clerk Recommending Changes in Military Commanders-in-Chief in India’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1871, C.203, 5).

⁵⁹ *Fraser’s Magazine*, January 1872, p. 200.

dervish confraternities offering the perfect machinery for the operation of propaganda.⁶⁰ A year later, as Britain awaited news from Khartoum, another author outlined the history of the crisis arguing that the Islamic religious orders formed the perfect machinery for Mahdist propaganda rendering any sect member, ‘willing to transform himself into a propagandist agent, a soldier, a bravo, even a cowardly poisoner.’⁶¹ Although taken individually such sources only offer a snapshot of the etymology of propaganda and of the evidence for its use. However, taken together they start to form a more significant and coherent evidence base for its use in relation to revolution. Propaganda was undoubtedly seen as a destructive force within the Empire to be prevented and eradicated where possible especially when it was seen as a threat to harmony and potential union. During a period of upheaval in Egypt, one Parliamentary report expressed concern about the propaganda of the Military Party in Egypt.⁶² Similarly in an article entitled ‘Ireland Beyond the Sea’, the author argued against riling Irish Nationalist sentiment as, owing to the large degree of emigration from Ireland to other parts of the Empire, ‘we are filling the world with a class of colonists who will be constant centres of anti-English propaganda, a permanent source of weakness to the Empire, and an absolute bar to any real Imperial union.’⁶³ Naturally, Britain’s imperial wars, especially the Boer War, led to a plethora of accusations of subversive propagandistic activities on behalf of their enemies, as well as the development of a different conception of propaganda as utilised by the imperialists against those enemies, as will be seen in chapter four.

By the later nineteenth century this seditious, revolutionary sense of the word was advancing further owing to both the increasing perception of the potency of propaganda and the spread of socialism in Europe. H.M. Hyndman wrote in 1881 that there was an obvious proliferation of revolutionary ideas in the new age and the propaganda of anarchists and socialists was ‘steadily carried on’, but importantly linked this development to technological advancements meaning that such ideas ‘move faster in these days’, spreading across Europe with far greater ease.⁶⁴ However, as early as 1871, socialism was being linked with propaganda in relation to a report on the *Internationale* French socialist association which was said to carry on its propaganda ‘with great vigour’ and the use of at least twenty newspapers across the Continent.⁶⁵ British writers saw this new force as active in and dangerous to England, as Parliamentary reports on socialist propaganda being spread amongst groups such as Scottish crofters, London dock workers and trade unions began to proliferate.⁶⁶ Indeed, trade union propaganda was often seen as particularly virulent, one report stating that one shipping union’s propaganda consisted of ‘intimidation, coercion and violence’ in

⁶⁰ *Dublin Review*, April 1884, pp. 393, 409.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, April 1885, pp. 359-60.

⁶² ‘Correspondence Respecting Affairs of Egypt’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1882, C3391, 128).

⁶³ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 June 1887, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *Nineteenth Century*, January 1881, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Quarterly Review*, October 1871, p. 556.

⁶⁶ ‘Royal Commission of Inquiry into Condition of Crofters and Cottars in Highlands and Islands of Scotland’, Reports of Commissioner (PP 1884, C.3980, 2701); ‘Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by Labour Correspondent of Board of Trade’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1890, C.6176, 6); ‘Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by Labour Correspondent of Board of Trade’, Accounts and Papers (PP 1890-91, C.6476, 213).

stark contrast to our modern conception of propaganda.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, this understanding of propaganda is in keeping with the common thread of sedition and revolution seen from the turn of the nineteenth century. Invariably such activities were viewed with concern and an aim to stamp out the propaganda as quickly as possible. However, one forward thinking article entitled ‘Liberty of Conscience’ posited that rather than trying to suppress all hints of socialist propaganda, ‘In all these cases, as also in the case of Communistic propaganda, I am convinced that in the open air of liberty and free discussion there is safety; it is by the closing down and shutting in of noxious exhalations from free access to atmospheric influences that those malignant fevers are generated which may decimate our citizens.’⁶⁸ This is then an early expression of Bliven’s belief, highlighted previously, that the scourge of a propaganda can be met by the ventilation of attitudes from all viewpoints.⁶⁹ However, it is still made clear that there is a distinction between the propagandistic activities of socialism and the liberal encouragement of free discussion.

Perhaps another motive for this argument was the fact that propaganda was proving a very potent political tool as indicated by both membership figures and then electoral results by the 1890s. An article previewing the elections to be held in 1891 argued that there was likely to be a far larger radical vote in London than ever before because the ‘Socialist Propaganda’ had been zealously pushed.⁷⁰ Propaganda’s potency was certainly understood by socialist leaders themselves. T.R. Threlfall set out the key aims of political Labour in February 1894 advising, ‘An immediate and active propaganda in every industrial constituency where the conditions appear hopeful [and] the obtaining, through trade councils, local trades unions, and branches of the Labour Electoral Association, of requisitions and public meetings whereby the opinions of the working classes may be obtained.’⁷¹ A year later Keir Hardie summarised the aims of the Independent Labour Party and the methods of achieving those aims, ‘propaganda by means of literature and public meetings’ being placed at the heart of their strategy.⁷² Such articles reveal a key understanding amongst socialist leaders that the working classes were a growing political force in Britain and, as will be seen in chapter three of this thesis, other parties’ acknowledgment of this fact led to new forms of political propaganda being generated across the political spectrum. However, this recognition was perceived to have come later to some parties than others. In another article written shortly before the turn of the century, Keir Hardie and Ramsey MacDonald wrote that the Liberal Party was in terminal decline as, ‘Its purpose was drawn from a political and social state that has gone; its principles of propaganda, the sentiments to which it appealed... stand no longer in the forefront of progressive forces.’⁷³ It is significant that Hardie was himself assessing the efficacy of the Liberal principles of

⁶⁷ ‘Royal Commission on Labour Minutes of Evidence’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1892, C.6708-V, 625).

⁶⁸ *Dublin Review*, October 1875, pp. 567-8.

⁶⁹ Bliven, ‘Let’s Have’.

⁷⁰ *Quarterly Review*, January 1891, p. 266.

⁷¹ *Nineteenth Century*, February 1894, p. 214.

⁷² *Ibid.*, January 1895, pp. 6, 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, January 1899, p. 21.

propaganda in terms of their modernity and relevance as such analysis of propaganda had become increasingly common in the later nineteenth century.

The use of propaganda in this period would so far suggest that it was a political, pejorative word used to tarnish domestic and foreign seditious, revolutionary forces, and one that was adopted by those forces who recognised its political application, and indeed necessity, in the modern world. However, this recognition did not escape other political groups, or indeed the government itself as it was suggested that propaganda could be beneficial if put in the right hands, especially as a counter to revolutionary propaganda when it could be accepted at least as a necessary evil. This idea was even retrospectively applied to prime ministers and politicians of the early nineteenth century. An article about Lord Castlereagh linked him with a 'liberal propaganda', and another assessed David Urquhart's propaganda campaign against Palmerston and compared it to later and contemporary propaganda groups including the then notorious Primrose League: 'Urquhart's propaganda against Palmerston exercised in his day a power over the Northern Constituencies at least comparable to the spell of the Primrose League. Much of the machinery of that as of other later organisations is perhaps an unconscious reproduction of the tactics of the great anti-Palmerstonian, who lived to see his methods effectively copied by the leaders of the Anti Corn Law League.'⁷⁴ Palmerston himself was analysed in a further article in the *Quarterly Review* which argued that, though patriotic and popular, the statesman was reckless, especially in pursuing his 'constitutional propaganda' which led to conflict with several foreign nations.⁷⁵ This propaganda was still seen in a pejorative sense, as a harmful force, but was nevertheless attributed to past British politicians, marking it apart from the revolutionary, subversive sense highlighted above.

However, even this secondary negative sense was not always applied to propaganda, and in certain British political circumstances it was deemed a beneficial force. Indeed, one author, bemoaning the advance of 'new journalism' in Britain, argued that, 'The proprietors of newspapers are essentially tradesmen, who make no attempt to disguise the fact. Their object is not the exalted one of maintaining a political propaganda for the benefit of a party, but to make as much money as they conveniently can by the judicious investment of their capital in industry.'⁷⁶ This not only highlights a commonly held belief in this era that traditional forms of political patronage in the press were revered ahead of new forms of journalism, but also that etymologically propaganda was not necessarily used negatively. By the 1880s British political parties were also beginning to see the benefit and necessity of not just utilising press support but of generating their own propaganda as a form of defence against radical groups. However, as one article entitled 'The Past and Future of the Conservative Party' reveals, the word propaganda was still preferred when addressing the radical groups, whereas other, more congenial phrases were adopted when referring to other political parties. After underlining the need to counter the growing Radical propaganda in Britain, the author continues, 'the Conservative must organise opinion, and seek to divert the imagination of the

⁷⁴ *Quarterly Review*, January 1862, p. 235; January 1897, p.156.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, April 1878, pp. 307-8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, October 1880, p. 534.

people into different channels. We must show the masses of the electorate, who have no lack of natural shrewdness, where their real interests lie, and for this purpose we wish to direct the attention of all conservatives to the admirable work which is being done by the Constitutional Union.' Propaganda in Conservative hands, therefore, became the 'organisation of opinion' and 'a diversion for the imagination'.⁷⁷ However, only two years later another author seemed quite happy to attribute the word to Conservatism, but again as a necessary defence against radicalism: 'If Conservatism is to form an effectual check to modern Radicalism it must adopt the same views, it must become popular it must become vigorous and creative... Conservatism can only become vigorous by an active propaganda of its principles.'⁷⁸ Such ideas marked a growing trend amongst members of the main political parties that circumstances had altered in Britain whereby they could not ignore mass opinion, and indeed had to actively court it. As a result, propaganda came to be seen as a necessary, though not always welcome, part of British politics, especially when phrased as a form of counter-propaganda. The word propaganda mutated along with this new acceptance.

Outside domestic politics, the Parliamentary papers make clear that propaganda was used in similarly mixed terms, both in a pejorative and positive sense, but is equally applied to the action of the British government. In 1872, a report on the slave trade in Zanzibar warned that although work to settle slaves on the coast was a good idea in principle, 'whatever we do we must be careful to avoid giving our work the aspect of a propaganda, or an attack on the present Government.'⁷⁹ However, in the same year, another report on Immigration of the Argentine Confederation argued that the only way to ensure emigration to Argentina was by an active domestic propaganda and the appointment of an agent in Buenos Ayres to be put in charge of the 'needful propaganda' of immigration there.⁸⁰ The British also seem to have been content to use the word when describing their paternalistic actions in the Empire, guiding their colonies towards civilisation, in marked contrast to its use to describe rebellious actions in those same colonies. One Deputy Commissioner in India, writing in 1882, argued that there was a great need for 'preliminary propaganda' in India to help persuade the people of their need for an extended local government.⁸¹ Such propaganda was seen as a useful tool with which to rule the Empire, replacing, or at least supplementing, more coercive measures. Similarly a report on sanitary measures in India made various suggestions as to how to improve conditions and awareness, and, interestingly under the subtitle of 'education', the author stated that, 'One of the first requirements is to propagate as widely as possible a knowledge of the simple facts of the etiology of malarial disease... The propaganda is being disseminated in ever increasing measure by the precept and example of medical officers in many places.'⁸² There are also numerous reports concerning British trade which by the 1880s almost invariably argue British

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, October 1881, p. 408.

⁷⁸ *Nineteenth Century*, April 1883, p. 686.

⁷⁹ 'Correspondence on the Slave Trade, E. Coast of Africa', Accounts and Papers (PP 1872, C.657, 55).

⁸⁰ 'Report from H.M. Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Ayres on Immigration to Argentine Confederation', Accounts and Papers (PP 1872, C.659, 80).

⁸¹ 'Correspondence between Secretary of State for India and the Government of India on Proposals for Extension of Local Government in India', Accounts and Papers (PP 1883, C.93, 317).

⁸² 'Report on Sanitary Measures in India in 1898-99', Reports of Commissioners (PP 1902, C.1357, 125).

interests would be best served by a more active and aggressive propaganda and the appointment of agents to orchestrate their campaigns.⁸³ The seemingly divergent connotations that propaganda could simultaneously hold in this period offer an insight into a word, idea and concept in flux, reflecting the overall development of the phenomenon of propaganda itself.

A further example of the divergent manner in which the word propaganda could be used is in the treatment of Joseph Chamberlain during his Tariff Reform campaigns, as his actions were labelled as propagandistic by both his enemies and allies alike. In an article in the *Economist* entitled 'Mr Chamberlain's Duty', the author argues that if Chamberlain has a clearly calculated plan for Imperial preference, 'it is his absolute duty, in the uncertainty whether or not he will convert his fellow countrymen, to conduct his own propaganda.'⁸⁴ It seems that Chamberlain took this advice to heart, as a year later there were a plethora of reports on his use of propaganda to further his fiscal policies, not always in a positive light. In one article on the Unionists and Home Rule, the author bemoans the fact Liberal Unionist Association money will most likely be spent on Chamberlain's 'fiscal propaganda' rather than on forwarding policies for which the Unionists originally allied.⁸⁵ There is therefore a sense that propaganda was becoming a vehicle not only to promote Britain abroad, but also as a force to utilise against domestic enemies. Various articles make reference to Arthur Chamberlain's attack on Joseph Chamberlain and his 'raging, tearing propaganda' for tariff reform which, it was argued by his enemies, had greatly unsettled trade.⁸⁶ The efficacy of Chamberlain's propaganda, whether applauded or despised, is however never questioned. One article refers to the fact that due to tariff reform propaganda, 'For four or five, indeed it may truly be said for eight or nine, months the British public thought and talked, in a serious fashion, of nothing but fiscal reform.'⁸⁷ Another indicated that Chamberlain 'and his henchmen in the press' should give more attention to their propaganda and the deleterious effect it was having on British trade and the impression of Britain abroad.⁸⁸ The fact that Chamberlain should be so singled out and linked to propagandistic activities is significant given his role as a propagandist during the Boer War, a factor that will be considered in chapter four. It is also worth considering Chamberlain's own views of propaganda. His article on the 'The Labour Question' in 1892 outlined the various forms of political Labour that threatened Britain but argued that their influence on the working classes was weak concluding that, 'their propaganda may be safely left to the care of the police.'⁸⁹ Chamberlain's own conception of propaganda was therefore associated with revolution and sedition, and underlines the point that even those politicians deemed successful propagandists saw themselves in a very different light. When the action was applauded or seen as

⁸³ E.g. 'Reports from H.M. Diplomatic and Consular Officers Abroad on Trade and Finance', Accounts and Papers (PP 1887, C.4915, 249-50); 'Statistical Tables and Report on Trade Unions, Fourth Report', Accounts and Papers (PP 1890-91, C.6475, 582).

⁸⁴ *Economist*, 13 June 1903, p. 1041.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 January 1904, p. 118.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31 December 1904, p. 2135.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 April 1904, p. 643.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 9 January 1904, p. 43.

⁸⁹ *Nineteenth Century*, November 1892, p. 10.

beneficial, it was not linked to the concept of propaganda, further consolidating in some minds the pejorative connotation of propaganda.

One area that demonstrates a more obviously positive definition of propaganda in this era, as well as offering an intriguing comparison with the twentieth century, is its link with educational activity. Propaganda theorists in the twentieth century have variously attempted to compare or contrast education with propaganda. In the 1920s, Bertrand Russell argued that education and propaganda were equal obstacles to free thought in modern democracies, the former giving citizens the ability to understand the latter but not to criticise it.⁹⁰ However, in the 1930s, E.D. Martin made it clear that the two were entirely separate, the key difference being that education, ‘strives for the closed mind rather than the open mind.’⁹¹ Similarly, Lindley Fraser forwarded that, although education could become propaganda, particularly with reference to the manipulation of history, the separation remained as to whether the student was desired to be docile or think independently.⁹² A decade later Jacques Ellul mixed the two terms referring to education as ‘pre-propaganda’ and a necessary prelude to the propaganda of integration in mass society. He posited that, ‘Poor and uncultured populations are appropriate objects of propaganda of agitation and subversion. The more miserable and ignorant a person is, the more easily will he be plunged into a rebel movement. But to go beyond this, to do a more profound propaganda job on him, one must educate him. This corresponds to the need for “political education”.’⁹³ More recently Jowett and O’Donnell, whilst acknowledging that ‘one person’s propaganda may be another person’s education’, stated that in their view, ‘the elements of deliberate intent and manipulation, along with a systematic plan to achieve a purpose that is advantageous to the propagandist, distinguish propaganda from a free and open exchange of ideas.’⁹⁴ With such differing opinions, the nineteenth century perception of these two interlinked concepts can offer a novel angle to the debate.

Generally, nineteenth century authors seem to have seen education and propaganda as simultaneously synonymous and antonymic. Context had an impact on this variance, as did the identity of the propagandist, but in at least some cases the liberal ideal of educating the masses crossed over into the etymology of propaganda. One example as to how propaganda could be seen simultaneously as both pejorative and synonymous with education can be found in the minutes of the Royal Commission on Labour. As previously mentioned, the government aimed to keep a careful eye on any industrial or labour group, especially those disseminating propaganda. In this case, a commission on labour was inquiring into the propaganda activities of cooperative societies. After establishing that the Lincoln Co-operative Society began its propaganda work in 1877, the interviewee, Mr J.T.W. Mitchell, submitted a table for the perusal of the commission entitled, ‘statistics in reference to agricultural town and village branches established in pursuance of a plan of

⁹⁰ Bertrand Russell, ‘Free Thought and Official Propaganda’, in Bertrand Russell (ed.), *Sceptical Essays* (London, 1935), pp. 149, 160.

⁹¹ E.D. Martin, *The Conflict of the Individual and the Mass* (New York, 1932), p. 9.

⁹² Fraser, *Propaganda*, pp. 157-173.

⁹³ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. 112.

⁹⁴ Jowett & O’Donnell, *Propaganda*, p. 11.

practical propaganda adopted by the Lincoln Equitable Co-operative Industrial Society in 1877. Mitchell then admitted to 4000 l. being spent on 'co-operative education' to which the interviewer asked, 'That would be put towards what is known as the educational funds?', being answered, 'It was used in propaganda'. Clearly Mr Mitchell saw propaganda activity as part of the educational work of the co-operative. However, in a subsequent interview with Dr. E.R.L. Gould on the efficacy of labour bureaux more generally, the interviewee stated that merely by 'the spread of information giving a knowledge of the facts', the labour bureaux in certain quarters had been dissuaded from strikes and agitation. He continued, 'That, I think, is the great point which we must look to for the influence of those labour bureaux; a moral and educative influence, an enlightening influence; they are to be considered as organs of enlightenment, not in any respect as agencies of propaganda or of reproof.' In the appendix to Dr Gould's evidence, he also clearly linked propaganda with the working classes, stating that, 'It is a common mistake to suppose that labour bureaux were created solely to advocate the claims of working men. Labour organisations have everywhere demanded their foundation, but have always regarded them as organs of enlightenment, not as agencies of propaganda.'⁹⁵ Thus propaganda could be considered from within an organisation as a positive, educational force, but from outside the same organisation the two terms could be seen as entirely opposed and brandished against enemies. Although propaganda was increasingly being seen as important and potent, it was not adopted to describe the activities of many of those organisations because the word itself had gained certain pejorative connotations.

Other groups that publicly expressed themselves as propaganda organisations promoted their aims purely as enlightenment and education. The Empire Fiscal Propaganda maintained that their aim was to 'enlighten the people on the fiscal measures of the Empire.'⁹⁶ One group, who published *Ethical Democracy: Essays in Social Dynamics*, called themselves the 'Society of Ethical Propagandists'. As will be seen when we come to look at the work of early propaganda theorists, this group advocated the use of 'educational propaganda' as a tool against the new corrupting forces in democracy.⁹⁷ Similarly, a book entitled, *The Early Propagandist Movement in English Population Theory* charted the history of the 'Neo-Malthusian Propaganda' which sought to educate the masses as to the benefits to population control.⁹⁸ The Parliamentary papers reveal that many other private enterprises, set up as propaganda organisations to educate the public on a particular issue, were not only tolerated but applauded for their beneficent activities. One report from the Inspector of mines warmly congratulated the Cumberland Mines and Quarries Centre which was educating the workers in matters of first aid and safety: 'I think it is only fair to repeat... that the great success which has distinguished the work is mainly attributable to the zeal and energy displayed by Mr Leck... who has largely devoted his leisure hours to Ambulance propaganda, with material advantage to the mining

⁹⁵ 'Royal Commission on Labour, Fourth Report', Reports of Commissioners (PP 1893-94, C7063, 6-7, 229, 446).

⁹⁶ *Empire Fiscal Propaganda*, 'Plain and Practical Fiscal Measures for the Development of the British Empire', *Tracts on Trade and Finance, 1849-1904* (London, 1904), p. 3.

⁹⁷ Stanton Coit (ed), *Ethical Democracy: Essays in Social Dynamics* (London, 1900); Martin J. Wiener, *Between Two Worlds: The Political Thought of Graham Wallas* (Oxford, 1971), p. 65.

⁹⁸ J.A. Field, *The Early Propagandist Movement in English Population Theory* (London, 1911), pp. 1-19.

community.⁹⁹ Another Committee looking into the success of new Evening Continuation Schools congratulated the scheme, given that there was plenty of scope for voluntary work both in propaganda and teaching, clearly separating the two but seeing both as necessary for the furtherance of the scheme.¹⁰⁰ The perceived efficacy of propaganda was also aiding its adoption as a positive term, but only when linked to beneficial or altruistic activities, especially those involving education.

This positive sense of propaganda as an educational tool was therefore readily accepted closer to the central administration in Britain. Context is significant, as this acceptance came at a time of debate on the benefits of a developed education system. A report by Mr Watts aiding the ‘select committee on scientific instruction’ argued that the Department of Science at South Kensington was failing to educate the vast majority of its targets, stating that, ‘the Department of Science if Government really feels an interest in the spread of scientific instruction, should become a propaganda.’ He then informs the commission as to how the propaganda campaign would work, targeting those areas of the nation deficient in scientific instruction and prevailing upon the local MP to take up the case for a scientific school. He added that the reason such education has failed in many areas is due to parents not receiving a decent education themselves, and thus not valuing it for their children, a problem that could only be solved by, ‘an active propaganda being set up, and the expenditure of a considerable sum of money for a few years.’ A subsequent interviewee, Mr T. Lawton, obviously supported such a stance stating, ‘we have to create a taste for science amongst the masses and this [propaganda] is where the money is wanted.’¹⁰¹ Such a report not only underlines the increasing belief in the need for popular education, but that propaganda was the most effective tool for attracting the masses to the idea of education. Nor were Mr Watts’ views unique, as a report by a Professor of Agriculture at Bangor University also argued that the Board of Agriculture and Treasury would benefit enormously from the application of propaganda to promote agricultural education.¹⁰² Similarly, a select committee concerning the Museums and Art Department congratulated the organisers of that department for their ingenious propaganda of the arts, informing and instructing the public by a variety of methods.¹⁰³ Indeed, in some circumstances it was the political characteristic of propaganda that was of concern to government officials rather than its anti-educational nature. In a report on the teaching of Gaelic at Universities, Horace Plunkett MP argued that a propaganda on behalf of such education would be beneficial as long as ‘it remains non-political.’¹⁰⁴ This offers a clear challenge to the current definitions of propaganda not only by tying it to the concept of education but also seeing it as apolitical.

⁹⁹ ‘District Reports of the Inspectors of Mines, for 1901’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1902, C.1062, 55).

¹⁰⁰ ‘Committee of the Council on Education: Report’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1896, C.8248, 12).

¹⁰¹ ‘Select Committee to inquire into provisions for giving instruction in Theoretical and Applied Science to the Industrial Classes’, Reports of Committees (PP 1867-68, C.432, 290, 293, 299, 304).

¹⁰² ‘Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the subject of Agricultural Education in England and Wales’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1908, C.4207, 252).

¹⁰³ ‘Select Committee on Museums of Science and Art Department’, Reports of Committees (PP 1897, C.341, 503, 508).

¹⁰⁴ ‘Third Report of the Commissioners on University Education’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1902, C.1229, 240).

However, in other circumstances propaganda and education remained very separate, even antonymic, terms. The determining factor was generally the identity of the propagandist. Various British articles castigate foreign associations and organisations for the practise of allowing propaganda to infiltrate their education system. One author commented on the Italian school administration stating, ‘All the school masters were convoked at one time, and I tried to impress on them that their duty was tuition, and not political propaganda.’¹⁰⁵ The association of France with propagandistic activity, even when not in the sense of sedition or revolution, continued with the educational sense of propaganda. One article attacks the university teaching of Professor Michelet, ‘who used his chair for political propaganda, “transforming his lectures”, according to the words of one pupil, “into pieces of oratory addressed, not to a select body of students, but to a crowd.”’¹⁰⁶ A further article in the *Quarterly Review* looks back disapprovingly on the French government for attempting to create an organisation to promote their own propaganda. The author highlighted how the French Institute created the French School in Athens in order to combat English influence in Greece but, ‘As has often happened, Greece conquered her invaders; and by degrees the school which was to have been the source of a political propaganda has become a place of higher study.’¹⁰⁷

These attacks and distinctions also spilled over into the religious sphere and especially battles between Catholics and Protestants offering some continuity with the original definition of propaganda. Apart from a continuation of suspicion of the original Propaganda, Catholic journals attacked the advance of Protestant propaganda in schools. An article entitled ‘Literature for the Young’ found in the *Dublin Review* condemns a series of Protestant magazines, arguing that although they were ostensibly created, ‘for the edification and education of the young’, in reality they are merely, ‘mischievous elements of propaganda against a common enemy – Catholicism.’¹⁰⁸ Apart from this traditional propaganda battleground, the Kandy Buddhist High School in Ceylon was also criticised for exceeding its educational remit and carrying on ‘a propaganda against Christianity.’¹⁰⁹ Even domestically there appears to have been a great deal of concern about the teaching of religion in schools and how to bring up a ‘good Christian child’ without reverting to denominational propaganda. In 1886 the Reverend Duncan was questioned as to his desire to set up a Church of England School in Wales, despite its mainly dissenting community, as it was feared that it could only be for the ‘purpose of propaganda’. The Reverend strongly objected to the idea that his schools would be used ‘for propagandism’.¹¹⁰ This debate seems to have continued in the contemporary journals, J.G. Fitch writing that, ‘it is no part of the duty of the teacher to give instruction in controversial theology, or to permit the school to serve as a propaganda for the tenets of any particular religious denomination.’¹¹¹ Frederic Harrison also contended, in relation to the

¹⁰⁵ *Fraser's Magazine*, November 1872, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁶ *Quarterly Review*, January 1901, p. 19.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, January 1902, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Dublin Review*, October 1881, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, September 1898, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ ‘Royal Commission to inquire into the Working of Elementary Education Acts’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1886, C.4863, 421).

¹¹¹ *Nineteenth Century*, July 1894, p. 4.

creation of a new education centre, Newton Hall, that, 'it is a social duty in those that have acquired useful knowledge to impart it, and that so sacred an obligation should be kept from the haggling of the market, at least so far as it assumes the form of a religious propaganda.'¹¹² Education is therefore clearly separated from propaganda at least in its more traditional religious sense, but, as in the twentieth century, the nineteenth century understanding of the two terms is more complex, becoming intertwined in various circumstances and opposed in others, again reflecting the general complexity and variety of meanings in contemporary use. This disparate application of 'propaganda' also had the result of prompting contemporaries to qualify and clarify what they themselves meant by the word. This reveals a great deal about how the word was understood in this period, what actions were associated with it, and what was deemed as successful propaganda. As with dictionaries, whilst individual opinions do not give us the nineteenth century definition, they do suggest what the individual or group meant by the term and why it was applicable in that context, which in turn provides an understanding of the author and culture in which they were writing.

The question of what media should be utilised in propaganda seems to have been a common feature of nineteenth century definitions. One article concerning the promotion of sanitation and cleanliness in Britain forwarded the idea that the only solution to combating poor hygiene was a full scale propaganda campaign. 'It might be advocated in the Press or all political parties without sacrifice of political principle... It might be preached from the pulpits...; it could be advocated in all schools.'¹¹³ Public opinion as an idea and political force was hotly contested at this time, and one key debate was which of the 'trinity' of press, petition and platform reflected that opinion most accurately.¹¹⁴ As will be seen, the theories of public opinion and propaganda ran concurrently, and it is significant that two of the 'trinity' are mentioned by this author in relation to a propaganda campaign. Clearly the author was not concerned by the introduction of propaganda in schools given the nature of the campaign, again suggesting that the two ideas could be entirely compatible in this period. Both press and platform are also mentioned in relation to the nature of a propaganda campaign on behalf of 'national sobriety' as orchestrated by Lord Grey: 'He realised that the most effective way of establishing the scheme on a scale able to cope with the magnitude of the questions at stake was to associate it with the county areas, and to enlist the support of the men of most influence and weight in each county; and by means of a vigorous propaganda in the press and on the platform he has succeeded in getting the idea taken up in a practical form by the establishment of the County Public Trust Companies all over the kingdom.'¹¹⁵ In both these cases and many others, the press appears to have occupied a prominent place in any propaganda campaign, again reflecting contemporary belief in the power of the press, whether as author or reflection of public opinion. The growth of the popular press and advance of 'new journalism'

¹¹² Ibid., May 1902, pp. 6-7.

¹¹³ Ibid., January 1901, p. 97.

¹¹⁴ On the idea of the Gladstonian trinity of platform, petition and press and their relative endurance as expressions of public opinion, see Thompson, 'The Idea', ch.2.

¹¹⁵ *Quarterly Review*, October 1902, pp. 385-7.

provided the ideal context in which newspapers could begin to be regarded as a potent propagandistic tool.

One development that ran alongside the advance of the media was an emerging system of censorship which was often reacting to the modernising media. A report looking into the censorship of stage performances highlights another debate on the relative potency of propaganda through different media. Although the chairman of the Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays stated that propaganda can be found in many media forms, he posited that propaganda in the theatre differed from propaganda of the printed word in that, 'no disorder and tumult can arise through the mere purchase of a book.' However, the interviewee, the Fabian and playwright George Bernard Shaw, argued that propaganda on the platform, such as rousing political speeches, can have an equally disturbing effect but there was no effort to censor them.¹¹⁶ This was a return to the pejorative conception of propaganda as something harmful and to be controlled, some contemporaries even regarding censorship as the antidote to propaganda and not as its 'Siamese twin'.¹¹⁷

By the end of this period then there seems to have been some concentration on the nature of propaganda, what its effects were when disseminated through certain media, and what techniques were regarded as successful. As has been seen, propaganda was often seen as a potent and necessary force, detrimental if left unchecked, and in some cases even damaging if not opposed by a counter-propaganda. Certain forms of propaganda were undoubtedly seen as more harmful, and offer comparison with modern conceptions of propaganda. Moreover, certain forms of propaganda were regarded as inappropriate and distasteful. In a 1890 report on strikes, a notice from 'The Shipping Federation' stated that it, 'has abundant information that the coercion, intimidation, and violence practised under the new trades union propaganda are most distasteful to a large portion even of the men enrolled in the unions, and that vast numbers of union and non-union workers would gladly be in accord with their employers, and be free to carry on their avocations undisturbed by the turmoil and exactions which now oppress them.'¹¹⁸ Violence and propaganda were therefore seen as compatible in this age which stands in stark contrast to the twentieth century when the general consensus is with Lindley Fraser who argued that propaganda could not involve either violence or bribery.¹¹⁹ However, it is clear that the author of this notice at least saw propaganda involving violence as ineffective propaganda, and the relative success of propaganda was again something contemporaries seem to have considered. This was especially the case with the idea of propaganda being more potent when reinforcing rather than creating an opinion or idea. Henry Abraham, for example, wrote about attempting to promote the idea of Trades Unionism amongst

¹¹⁶ 'Report from the Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays (Censorship)', Reports of Committees (PP 1909, C.303, 49).

¹¹⁷ P.M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 4.

¹¹⁸ 'Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by the Labour Correspondent on the Board of Trade', Accounts and Papers (PP 1890-91, C.6476, 213).

¹¹⁹ Fraser, *Propaganda*, p. 3.

women in Ireland stating, 'It ought to be very much easier to start the propaganda in Ireland than it was in Great Britain; for here it is preaching a cause that has been fought and won.'¹²⁰

Private groups and individuals from across the political, religious, and commercial spectrum were obviously realising the utility of propaganda to promote their organisations, and many had a clear conception of what such propaganda entailed. The *Dublin Review* argued that the Catholic Church would only make headway amongst the lower classes in England by the incorporation of two influential instruments of propaganda, the first being the more general organisation of women, and the second being the creation of the 'Catholic Tract Society'.¹²¹ In an assessment of the propaganda of Methodism, one article quoted a Dr Kolde as highlighting what he believed were the constituent parts of their propaganda; 'most excellently edited periodicals for Sunday reading, not poisoned with party politics... Also an extensive system of Colportage, unwearied visitation of the sick, and the Sunday School.'¹²² When a committee considering licensing laws asked an interviewee about how he had established his associated drinking clubs around the United Kingdom he admitted that there was no propaganda in place to help in this process yet, but intended to create 'a perfect organisation'.¹²³ There is then clear evidence of contemporaries theorising propaganda because of the perception of its increased potency and success at all levels. Another report into the policy of small holdings in Britain seems to be obsessed with localised propaganda efforts on behalf of small holdings and indeed with the idea of centralising propaganda in the hands of county councils. Mr J. Harris was first quizzed as the secretary of the Agricultural Organisation Society and admitted that he does 'a good deal of propaganda work in furtherance of its objects', but that none has been done in regard to agricultural education. Mr E.S. Howard and Mr F. Impey were both asked, 'Do you think it should form part of the duty of the county council responsible for carrying out a small holding system to issue some form of propaganda, in other words to inform people what they can obtain?' Mr Impey was even questioned about what form he thought that county council propaganda should take, the answer being that summaries of provisions should be displayed in post offices, railway stations, on church doors, as well as the clerk of every representative body being supplied with all necessary information.¹²⁴ Clearly a great deal of thought was going into both how private propaganda operated and whether such actions were transferable to central authorities. In this way governments were beginning to absorb the propagandistic tendencies and activities of private enterprises and starting to adopt them themselves.

This growing awareness of the characteristics and attributes of propaganda did not escape political parties. The Conservatives were charged with combating radicalism by mimicking its adoption of propaganda, but one article in the *Nineteenth Century* then went on to clarify how this would be done stating, 'by means of lectures and the press and a complete reorganisation of the

¹²⁰ *Dublin Review*, July 1891, p. 44.

¹²¹ *Dublin Review*, April 1869, p. 484.

¹²² *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, December 1886, pp. 895-99.

¹²³ 'Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws', Reports of Commissioners (PP 1897, C.8523, 190).

¹²⁴ 'Report of the Department Committee appointed to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into and report upon the subject of Small Holdings in Britain', Reports of Commissioners (PP 1906, C.3278, 210, 212, 258, 342).

party machinery.¹²⁵ The author clearly associates propaganda with the use of the available media to reach an audience, but also as involving a well-structured and efficient party machinery to orchestrate that propaganda. This is important given the context in which this article was written as, during the 1880s, through the energetic work of John Gorst and later John Middleton, the Conservative Party went through significant internal changes, reacting to the new era of mass politics by adopting the form of a modern political party. Gorst himself had opened the first Conservative Party Conference as chairman underlining that its purpose was not, ‘The discussion of Conservative principles on which we are all agreed... [but rather] a meeting to consider by what particular organisation we may make those Conservative principles effective among the masses.’¹²⁶ Although historians have rarely linked this period of conservative modernisation to the emergence of modern propaganda and its adoption by political parties, it is clear that the aforementioned article, and contemporaries more generally, did. Propaganda was therefore beginning to be recognised as the tool with which to gain the support of the newly politicised masses.

Propaganda was often even directly questioned as a word in contemporary literature and especially in official reports and committees as, at least in this form, it was still a relatively new idea. This may have been partly due to propaganda’s association with revolutionary activity, but perhaps also because of the growing understanding and acceptance of its utility. For example, in one report into Friendly and Benefit Building Societies dated 1871, Dr J Watts was tackled as to how he would go about gaining support, both pecuniary and popular, for his Friendly Society. His answer: ‘for that purpose a propaganda would be necessary’, prompted the response, ‘What do you exactly mean by a propaganda in that case?’ Watts replied, ‘If I had it under my control, I would employ men who understood the subject fully, and who should go from town to town, from village to village, and who would call meetings at which they would explain it, and would employ newspapers.’¹²⁷ This itself is significant in the sense that there were now perceived to be individuals who could take on a role as a professional propagandist, and that the role was not, in this context, seen as negative.

Even with such examples of contemporary engagement with the idea of propaganda and the incorporation of definitions, this etymological survey is far from a complete picture. There are many other examples of how propaganda appears in reports and articles on groups and ideas as disparate as the Temperance League, World’s Great Marriage Association, the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners Union and campaigns from the promotion of Co-operative dairies to the use of gold and silver in British coinage. Articles and reports concerning trade, commerce, migration, science, art, literature, music, politics and religion all made use of the word propaganda in one form or another. This sample does, however, draw attention to the fact that the propaganda in this period was very complex, varied, and contested. Propaganda as a word and deed was understood by contemporaries, and it was understood not solely, or even primarily, in relation to

¹²⁵ *Nineteenth Century*, April 1883, p. 686.

¹²⁶ Minutes of the First Conservative Party Conference, 1867, Microfiche 60, Card 1, p. 4, DUL.

¹²⁷ ‘Royal Commission to inquire into the Friendly and Benefit Building Societies’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1872, C.514, 454).

the Papal college of its origin, but as a modern, political, often pejorative term related to the art of persuasion. The link to France and revolutionary upheaval spanned this period, reinforced as Anarchism, Nihilism, Socialism and Communism emerged as political forces. In this way, the use was akin to the twentieth century and therefore propagandistically modern. The complex etymology of propaganda in this period therefore allows the historian to uncover the roots of twentieth century conceptions, as well as reflecting the uneven development of propaganda itself in this period as a precedent to the twentieth century.

However, as has been seen, there is more to derive from this research than a link between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The multiple meanings in this period also reveal a distinct application of propaganda in the nineteenth century. The identity of the author, from Parliamentary officials to Labour Party leaders, had a significant impact on the various meanings attributed to propaganda, as did the context of its use. Periods of turmoil or the advance of socialism led to a more pejorative sense, whilst debates on the importance of mass education or extension of British trade allowed for a more positive interpretation to emerge. Importantly these applications and developments in the use of the word were also often led by private enterprise, governments following on and absorbing, but rarely creating propaganda, thereby marking an important contrast with the era of centralised propaganda ministries and propaganda policy. Governments and officials were clearly interested in how propaganda operated and even in adopting similar tactics in certain circumstances, but their use of the word reflects an uneasiness with the idea that persisted throughout this period and lasted into the twentieth century, not invented during the First World War. However, although pejorative connotations were attached to propaganda before 1914, these were matched by an array of other applications. Most importantly a positive sense of propaganda emerges from its nineteenth century etymology, as a method of getting important or beneficent ideas across or to generate additional memberships, or indeed more generally to educate the public. There was sometimes a very clear distinction between ‘education’ and ‘propaganda’, but in some circumstances they were almost seen as synonymous. Even though some twentieth century theorists linked the two ideas, they were never combined in this way, rather being seen as ‘pre-propaganda’ or as the manipulation of education for selfish ends.¹²⁸ Such theories were perhaps shaped by the influence of two World Wars and the malevolent use of both propaganda and education in those periods which again should act as a *caveat* that the imposition of such theories, however readily accepted in modern times, do not always readily transfer to the conception of propaganda in another era.

One stark example of this fact comes from the very start of the twentieth century. In one article published for The Society for Ethical Propagandists, Ramsey MacDonald argued that the past thirty years had shown that, ‘Democracy took infinitely more interest in getting the vote than they have in using it, that parties have largely abandoned political principles for which they won majorities by hard work and educational propaganda, and have drifted more and more into the hands and state

¹²⁸ Ellul, *Propaganda*, pp. 22, 30-1; Fraser, *Propaganda*, pp. 157-73.

of mind of the skilled election agent whose business is not to build and maintain the fabric of a party, but to win elections.’¹²⁹ Given that our own imposed view of propaganda in this period would be the very advance of skilled election agents and the pejorative connotation of political manipulation that this implies, it reinforces the idea that it is vital to view propaganda through contemporary eyes. Moreover MacDonald’s views were not unique. The need for educational propaganda and its absence from contemporary life was also highlighted by J. Hereford in an article entitled, ‘The Slow Growth of Moral Influence in Politics’. He posited that, ‘In proportion to our need amid the blinding, traditional, materialistic and selfish interests that are continually acting on men, in a complex industrial and commercial civilisation... it may be taken as beyond question that one of our special needs is a far more systematic propaganda of social and political ethics, on propaganda led, informed, directed by a central ethical association, with its active local branches in all the great centres of provincial life.’¹³⁰ It is significant that Hereford drew attention to modern life requiring attention by such a propaganda organisation, as it will be argued that the context of nineteenth century had a bearing on the development of both the etymology and operation of propaganda. Hereford’s comments came at a time when many feared the growth of irrational jingoism and popular passion in politics, as well as a more general deterioration of morality in society. Similarly, a report into electoral systems concluded that education and propaganda were the answer to the growth of popular passion in Britain.¹³¹ Therefore far from being the problem, propaganda was not only seen in some quarters as compatible with democracy but also as the solution to its problems.

What then were the origins of ideas such as those of MacDonald, and how did they develop into the fully fledged propaganda theories of the twentieth century? The key lies in the development of the concept of public opinion. Edmund Burke had referred to ‘general opinion’ as the ‘organ of legislative omnipotence’ at the end of the eighteenth century, and the term public opinion itself can be found in dictionaries from 1781.¹³² However, as James Bryce argued in his study of democracy in the United States, ‘In the earlier or simpler forms of political society, public opinion is passive. It acquiesces in rather than supports the authority which exists, whatever its faults, because it knows nothing better, because it sees no way of improvement.’¹³³ It was the unique circumstances of the nineteenth century that altered this situation and acted as a catalyst in the evolution of public opinion, thus leading to its theorisation. The growth of the electorate, communication networks, mass media and education system all provided a context in which public opinion could thrive and

¹²⁹ J.R. MacDonald, ‘The People in Power’, *Ethical Democracy: Essays in Social Dynamics* (London, 1900), p. 61.

¹³⁰ *Nineteenth Century*, August 1900, p. 10.

¹³¹ ‘Report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Systems’, Reports of Commissioners (PP 1910, C.5352, 129, 134).

¹³² Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 94, 182.

¹³³ James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, Volume II (London, 1893), p. 271.

become more active, and, resultantly by 1852, Joseph Moseley was able to state, ‘There is no word that has played so important and conspicuous a role in the policies of recent times, as Public Opinion. None more often occurs, and there is none on which cases of difficulty more often turn than this. The word, if not the thing it expresses, is new, and the thing, if not new, is new in the importance it plays.’¹³⁴

Such a perceived significance attracted theorists, authors and commentators to study public opinion. Moreover this trend caused G.C. Thompson, writing in the 1880s, to observe that the idea had become sovereign in England and indeed that it had become common currency.¹³⁵ Debates flourished as to what exactly public opinion was, how it emerged, who could claim to be a constituent part of it and whether the ‘trinity’ of petition, press and platform reflected or created opinion.¹³⁶ These debates will be encountered later in this thesis, but of concern here is the context of nineteenth century Britain, which created circumstances in which public opinion needed to and could be controlled. As Albig argues, ‘As special interest groups increased during the nineteenth century, types of special pleading, one form of which has latterly been labelled ‘propaganda’, became more common. The control of opinion became the objective of various religious, political, economic and reform groups.’¹³⁷ Theorists therefore, concerned with the concurrent rise in potency yet decline in reputation of public opinion, aimed to establish the process of control. The overriding feeling in this period tended towards concern and fear as to how society and politics were developing in contrast to the liberal conception of mass democracy: ‘Already a problem for liberalism by the middle of the century, ‘public opinion’ came fully into view as a problematic entity in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.’¹³⁸ Although traditional liberal ideas survived, the embodiment of public opinion was moving away from the iconic John Bull to the ‘man in the street’, who in many eyes could be both irrational and belligerent.¹³⁹ This new fear was expressed by R.B. McCallum who argued, ‘Suppose the House of Commons became the creature of a rude and ill-educated electorate? Suppose that the most balanced, the most informed and educated and intelligent sections of the nation were to be submerged by a mass opinion concerned only to vent its bitter prejudices and pursue its short sighted interests.’¹⁴⁰ The problem presented itself that politicians could, and indeed had to, manipulate this irrational public. C. Matthew attributed this process first to Disraeli who had, ‘a clear and early understanding that... the empirical role of politics was largely in the creation of opinion by the deliberate exploitation of sub-conscious, non-

¹³⁴ Joseph Moseley, *Political Elements, or the Progress of Modern Legislation* (London, 1852), p. 119.

¹³⁵ Geo Carslake Thompson, *Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield*, Volume I (London, 1886), p. 10.

¹³⁶ For an analysis of these debates and the conception of ‘public opinion’ more generally in the later nineteenth century see, Thompson, ‘The Idea’.

¹³⁷ Albig, *Public Opinion*, p. 24.

¹³⁸ Thompson, ‘The Idea’, p. 20.

¹³⁹ Miles Taylor, ‘John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England c.1712-1929’, *Past and Present*, 134 (February, 1992), pp. 93-128.

¹⁴⁰ R.B. McCallum, ‘The Individual in the Mass: Mill on Liberty and the Franchise’, in Philip Appleman (ed.), *1859: Entering an Age of Crisis* (Indiana, 1959), p. 149.

rational influence.¹⁴¹ However, these ideas were also permeating more intellectual circles and form the basis of the first propaganda theories.

J.S. Mill had expressed a fear of mass opinion in his seminal work, *On Liberty*, which argued that not only over-bearing state intervention, but the conformity of the masses was stifling individualism in society, and, as a result, ‘At present individuals are lost in the crowd. In politics it is almost a triviality to say that public opinion now rules the world.’¹⁴² It was the mental fixity and lack of intellectual curiosity of this mass public that Mill feared, and it was this intolerance of non-conformity that made the propagandists’ work so easy.¹⁴³ Although Mill did not confront the danger that powerful minorities might manipulate and control this mass in *On Liberty*, he did in a later newspaper article.¹⁴⁴ However, what is of etymological interest in *On Liberty* is Mill’s discussion of Christianity and its propensity to ‘propagandism’. He wrote, ‘No reasonable person can doubt that Christianity might have been extirpated in the Roman Empire. It spread, and became predominant, because the persecutions were only occasional, lasting but a short time, and separated by long intervals of almost undisturbed propagandism.’¹⁴⁵ In this sense, propaganda was actually seen as a tool whereby a minority could overcome the ‘tyranny of the majority’ and establish itself within society, which again challenges the assumption that a twentieth century conception of propaganda can be imposed on this period.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps of most interest was Mill’s prophetic view of a, ‘central organ of information and instruction’ which was conceived as a force to combat the ills of democracy by educating individuals to a point where they are capable of rejecting mass conformity.¹⁴⁷ However, as Qualter has argued, Mill’s legacy for theorists of the later nineteenth century was the idea of a tyrannous majority, and it was this aspect of his work that was shaped into ‘a guiding principle of propaganda’.¹⁴⁸

Walter Bagehot, especially in his work ‘Physics and Politics’ (1872) furthered these early theories of propaganda. He predated Graham Wallas and many others in the application of psychological ideas, as well as Darwinian principles, to politics and reached the conclusion that essentially ‘primitive’ human material had to operate within an increasingly modern political system and could not cope.¹⁴⁹ Primitive nature meant that man’s most powerful motivations were neither rational nor conscious, seriously challenging the liberal ideal of representative government and mass democracy.¹⁵⁰ Bagehot had, however, earlier applauded the ‘bovine’ nature of the mass as one of the great safeguards of democracy against the restlessness and rashness of genius, stating, ‘the most essential mental quality for a free people, whose liberty is to be progressive, permanent, and on a

¹⁴¹ Thompson, ‘The Idea’, p. 24.

¹⁴² J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Stephan Collini (ed.), (Cambridge, 1989), p. 66.

¹⁴³ Qualter, *Propaganda*, p. 37.

¹⁴⁴ F.E.L. Priestly (ed.), *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. XII (Toronto, 1986), p. 166.

¹⁴⁵ Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁶ Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁷ Mill, *On Liberty*, pp. 114-5.

¹⁴⁸ Qualter, *Propaganda*, p. 37.

¹⁴⁹ Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics or thoughts on the application of the principles of ‘natural selection’ and ‘inheritance’ to political society* (London, 1872), p. 135.

¹⁵⁰ Wiener, *Between*, p. 75.

large scale: it is much stupidity.¹⁵¹ Despite this rejection of Mill's eccentric individual in favour of the dull mass, Bagehot's new conception of the non-rational, emotional base of human action opened the door to the study of how such emotions and irrationality might be managed and manipulated.

Confirmation of the potential of both the tyrannous mass and its manipulation came towards the end of the nineteenth century. As McCallum argues, not even Mill 'fully estimated the extent to which chauvinism, soon to be called jingoism, would unite the masses... leading them to denounce Gladstone, the Little-Englanders, to shout Majouba and Khartoum, to mourn more over Gordon slain than benefits withheld.'¹⁵² The advance of popular imperialism did much to catalyse further theorisation of public opinion, its manipulation and 'human nature in politics'. Significantly, the Boer War proved not only the zenith of the jingoism of new imperialism but was also an 'intellectual watershed', as political theorists assessed the implications of such popular passions.¹⁵³ It was in this context that James Bryce began his assessment of public opinion in the United States, le Bon analysed the crowd and mob instinct, and Graham Wallas advanced Bagehot's ideas to tackle 'non-rational inference' in politics and its susceptibility to manipulation.¹⁵⁴ Other theorists also contributed to the debate on the modern state of politics.¹⁵⁵ Sir Henry Maine, again following Bagehot, criticised past political theory for ignoring the influence of psychology and argued that habit, not reason, was the dominant psychological characteristic of human nature, and thus the 'will of the people' on which democracy was based seemed fundamentally flawed.¹⁵⁶ William James developed this 'new psychology' even further, realising that Darwinism revealed mental processes outside of the natural sphere of human consciousness and that the resultant behaviour was caused by an interaction between an individual's nature and their environment.¹⁵⁷ Other authors, such as Blanchard Jerrold, were becoming interested in the relationship between the augmented power of public opinion and 'how this dominant force may be created influenced, or directed.'¹⁵⁸ At the end of the century Moisei Ostrogorski published *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties* which dealt with the many 'unforeseen tendencies of democracy' as well as its many shortcomings which included the, 'lack of precision for the necessity of organising the electorate' and the growth of mass, monolithic parties.¹⁵⁹ Similarly influential were various works by H.G. Wells who, apart from his success as a author of fiction, wrote extensively on the 'problems of mental and social organisation that open upon one directly one abandons a mystical faith in the mind of the

¹⁵¹ Walter Bagehot, 'Letters on the French Coup d'Etat of 1851, III', *The Inquirer*, 20 Jan. 1852; See, Norman St John Stevas, *Walter Bagehot* (London, 1963), pp. 48-54.

¹⁵² McCallum, 'The Individual', p. 160.

¹⁵³ Thompson, 'The Idea', p. 250.

¹⁵⁴ Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*; Gustave le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London, 1896); Wallas, *Human Nature*.

¹⁵⁵ For an excellent overview of the political thought of many of these theorists see, Wiener, *Between*, pp. 71-89.

¹⁵⁶ Sir Henry Maine, *Popular Government* (London, 1885).

¹⁵⁷ William James, *Principles of Psychology* (London, 1890).

¹⁵⁸ Jerrold, 'On the Manufacture', p. 1081.

¹⁵⁹ Moisei Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties* (London, 1902).

masses.¹⁶⁰ Unlike many of his contemporaries, however, Wells went further. He suggested, through his character Willersley, that there was a way out for democracy and that way was offered by ‘social service – education.’¹⁶¹ He contrasted with his contemporary, C.F.G. Masterman, whose *Condition of England* struck a decidedly pessimistic note and was aimed as, ‘a warning that things were not well and an enquiry as to what change was likely.’¹⁶² Paralleling the development of the word itself, propaganda was being compared to and contrasted with education, and theorists were often seeing the latter as the antidote to and antithesis of the former in a similar fashion to many twentieth century political scientists.

This was especially the case when it came to distinguishing between the irrational appeals to emotion that characterised propaganda and rational education, an idea that was advanced by Graham Wallas. As Wiener has argued, all the aforementioned theorists had an impact on the shaping of Wallas’ ideas.¹⁶³ Both Mill and Bagehot had an early influence on Wallas, the latter helping to move his focus towards political psychology. Although Wallas never used the word propaganda in his seminal work, *Human Nature in Politics* (1908), what he describes and fears is very akin to the twentieth century conception of propaganda. Wallas contended that people do not see the reality of ideas like ‘state’, ‘law’, or ‘freedom’ but their ‘word-symbol’. Symbols therefore go through a process of translation and, ‘while we can make a conscious rational translation from symbol to entity, we are likely to rely on a habitual, emotional association. The natural consequence is that often the translation will be inaccurate, imprecise, or ambiguous.’¹⁶⁴ As a result, it became possible to manipulate the stimuli in order to produce effect, that is, to employ propaganda. Wallas explicitly stated that he feared the, ‘cold-blooded manipulation of popular impulse and thought by professional politicians’, and it was this transfer from the idea of the process by which public opinion is ascertained (which had occupied mid-nineteenth century thinkers) to how it is created that marks a decisive moment in the history of propaganda theory.¹⁶⁵ Wallas attacked the rationalism of nineteenth century liberalism, arguing that men were not ruled by rational inferences but by emotion and therefore political ideas had to possess emotional force as well as reason: ‘Politicians, consequently, had to shape opinion... they had to shape opinion, moreover, by means other than rational argument.’¹⁶⁶

The context of popular imperialism, the Boer War, jingoism, modern political parties and election campaigns, party agents and advertising, the ‘new journalism’ and mass media more generally all inspired as well as ratified Wallas’ account of mass democracy and its problems. Again echoing Bagehot, Wallas himself saw the importance of contemporary context, writing on the cusp of the First World War, that, ‘men find themselves working and thinking in relation to an environment

¹⁶⁰ Wiener, *Between*, p. 78.

¹⁶¹ H.G. Wells, *The New Machiavelli* (London, 1911), p. 138.

¹⁶² C.F.G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London, 1909); Lucy Masterman, *C.F.G. Masterman: A Biography* (London, 1968), p. 120. It is interesting to note that Masterman went on to establish and run the War propaganda Bureau in 1914.

¹⁶³ Wiener, *Between*, pp. 71-89.

¹⁶⁴ Qualter, *Graham Wallas*, p. 92.

¹⁶⁵ Wallas, *Human Nature*, p. 66.

¹⁶⁶ Wiener, *Between*, p. 77.

which, both in its connection with all sides of human existence is without precedent in the history of the world.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, as Qualter summarises, ‘The very nature of society provided the propagandist with an audience ready and willing to receive the message he was now, for the first time, technically equipped to deliver.’¹⁶⁸ As will be seen in the subsequent chapters, it appeared more obvious than ever that rational appeals to the electorate had been superseded by ‘the creation of opinion by the deliberate exploitation of sub-conscious non-rational inference’.¹⁶⁹ However, whilst rejecting the traditional over-intellectualisation and optimism of previous theorists, Wallas, like Wells, sought to move past the cynical disillusionment of his contemporaries to find a solution. To this end, he promoted realism within political discourse and accepted realistic standards of performance for the electorate given the new understanding of human nature.¹⁷⁰ New forms of social organisation to promote equality could be created both in wealth and education so that propaganda could not be dominated by a few individuals, and the masses could be capable of receiving the propaganda disseminated critically.¹⁷¹ As long as the fundamental issue of the irrationality of the masses was tackled, propaganda in the public service could even become an instrument of general good and help to achieve national cooperation.¹⁷²

In this way, Wallas bridged two worlds bringing Victorian Liberal optimism and theory up to date with a modern conception of human nature and how it interacted with its modern environment.¹⁷³ However, it seems that, despite using the term propaganda relatively later on, he also straddled two sets of propaganda theory: first the predominant twentieth century conception of propaganda as a detrimental force, corrosive in democracies and abused in authoritarian states, and second being an idea hinted at during the twentieth century and more recently advocated by Philip Taylor. Bernard Bliven’s call for more propaganda was later echoed by John Grierson who saw it, and especially film propaganda, as the only way to engage the population in public affairs and fought a lonely battle to get British officials to accept the benefits of total propaganda before and during the Second World War. Of course, by then, revelations such as Arthur Ponsonby’s *Falsehood in Wartime* had done so much damage to the reputation of propaganda that it was deemed by most democracies as untenable in politics, at least in public view.¹⁷⁴ More recently, however, Philip Taylor has promoted the idea that democracies have nothing to fear, ‘about either the prominence of propaganda or the necessity of conducting it on behalf of democratic values.’ Even in light of the twenty-first century’s global war on terror, he still maintains that, ‘we need more propaganda, not less.’¹⁷⁵ As with at least one conception in the nineteenth century, propaganda can be used to counter its own, hate-inspired excesses as well as stem the tide of apathy that was highlighted by Wallas and his contemporaries as a problem in democracy, and one that has only become more

¹⁶⁷ Graham Wallas, *The Great Society: A Psychological Analysis* (New York, 1921), p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ Qualter, *Graham Wallas*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁹ Wallas, *Human Nature*, p. 98.

¹⁷⁰ Wiener, *Between*, p. 213.

¹⁷¹ Qualter, *Graham Wallas*, p. 139.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 148-9.

¹⁷³ Wiener, *Between*, pp. 1, 216.

¹⁷⁴ Ponsonby, *Falsehood*.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor, *Munitions*, p. 320.

endemic. Whilst these debates have continued to attract attention, we should not forget the precedent of propaganda theorists before the First World War, who not only saw the danger of propaganda but also first conceived of it as a beneficial political force.

Wallas' position between two worlds and two sets of theory highlights why his early thoughts on the manipulation of public opinion were not propaganda theory in name. As this etymological survey has revealed, the nineteenth century conception of the word propaganda was complex, there being arguably many more simultaneous meanings than in the post-First World War era. This reflects the development of the word and phenomenon itself, which resulted in a lack of clarity in understanding. Perhaps because of the relative strength of the more positive understanding of propaganda in the nineteenth century, Wallas did not feel, like many of his contemporaries, that it was right to equate that term with the malignant force that he was theorising. What is clear, however, is that Wallas' work, though latterly disputed, had a significant impact on the individuals who are generally understood to comprise the first generation of propaganda theorists. Walter Lippmann, who as a student of Wallas', wrote in 1913 that Wallas, 'has not produced a political psychology, but he has written a manifesto for it.'¹⁷⁶ Lippmann himself saw the centrality of developments in psychology and its application to politics in the 'creation of consent'. As psychological research, improved means of communication and a new scientific approach to politics fused there resulted 'a revolution in the practice of democracy' which not only highlighted its shortcomings but offered possible solutions.¹⁷⁷ It is also possible to see the seeds of Lasswell's ideas in Wallas' work on 'significant symbols', and indeed Qualter has argued that his mentor inspired both P.F. Lazarsfeld and David Easton: 'His description of the large part played by non-rational inference in political decision and of the dangers of its unscrupulous cultivation by propagandists was so convincing that it quickly became a platitude.'¹⁷⁸

As has been seen, both the etymology and theory of propaganda in the nineteenth century offer a clear precedent to the twentieth century and as such help to establish a much-needed dialogue between these centuries on the nature and operation of propaganda. However, the nineteenth century also offers something unique, due to the way propaganda had developed as a word and idea: in one conception propaganda equated to Wallas' 'cold-blooded manipulation of the popular impulse', but in another to the education and dissemination of information that was perceived as the solution to that very problem. It is for this reason that there can be no one definition of propaganda in this period, and it even calls into question whether *any* definition of propaganda is in fact a useful concept, since it carries such a variety of connotations and that it mutated in meaning throughout each era. As the work of authors such as Jason Peacey has highlighted, propaganda in the centuries before this period also occupied a unique position. Peacey has dubbed a work on propaganda in the English Civil War and interregnum as 'understanding early modern propaganda';

¹⁷⁶ Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics* (London, 1913), p. 78.

¹⁷⁷ Qualter, *Propaganda*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁸ Qualter, *Graham Wallas*, p. 96.

and Phillip Harth concludes that whilst it would be a mistake to see the propaganda of Dryden's Tories as modern in any sense, it is nevertheless a unique propagandistic phenomenon.¹⁷⁹ Propaganda undoubtedly occupied an important place in these periods, and it is necessary to recognise that, although each era leaves propagandistic legacies, its operation is unique to that period, shaped by its own peculiar context and circumstances. Enenkel and Pfeijffer have also argued, in relation to propaganda in antiquity, that it is all too tempting to impose our modern experiences of propaganda onto the remote past, 'without making the peculiarities of either modern or antique propaganda explicit.'¹⁸⁰ These peculiarities are important to the study of propaganda and anachronistic impositions only serve to obscure them.

This chapter has aimed to avoid such anachronisms by surveying the etymology of propaganda in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as its early theorisation. This survey has revealed important correlations with, and precedents for, the twentieth century. Propaganda in the nineteenth century developed as a political, pejorative term which is recognisable in the twenty-first century. However, there is also a distinct lack of clarity in terms of a nineteenth century conception of propaganda, the complex and various definitions and uses reflecting a period of propagandistic development. Although the First World War undoubtedly clarified the word in the sense that it became a predominantly pejorative term, the idea that modern propaganda is the preserve of the period after the First World War is still erroneous within democracies, and this etymological and theoretical survey should prompt historians to reconsider the idea of 'an age of propaganda'. The removal of the dividing line of the First World War provides a frame for further dialogue between nineteenth and twentieth century propagandas, and demonstrates that modern propaganda as both a word and concept has much deeper roots. The study of the concept of propaganda in this period has also been important as a basis for understanding its actual operation. As has been seen in this chapter, contextual developments had a significant impact and ran concurrently with mutations in the theory and etymology of propaganda. It is the aim of the next three chapters to both analyse these contextual changes in terms of their impact on the development of propaganda and to assess whether the actual operation of propaganda matched its contemporary conception.

¹⁷⁹ Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 303; Phillip Harth, *Pen for a Party: Dryden's Tory Propaganda in its Contexts* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 270-1.

¹⁸⁰ 'Introduction', in Karl A.E. Enenkel & Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer (eds.), *The Manipulative Mode: Political Propaganda in Antiquity, A Collection of Case Studies* (Brill, 2005), p. 2.

Chapter 2: Press, Politics and Public Opinion: The Crimean War as a British Propagandistic Precedent

In many ways the Crimean War was ‘Janus-like’. On the one hand, it was a shocking demonstration of how anachronistic the management of the British army was in 1854, and, on the other hand, the first demonstration of a modern war with the use of trenches, heavy siege weaponry, front-line written and pictorial reportage, and a public able to be involved and absorbed in the foreign policy of its nation for the first time.¹ It is this central paradox that in part explains how a conflict that was considered ‘the only perfectly useless modern war that has been waged’ could have such an impact and lead to the war being considered a pivotal moment in British martial, social, political and media history.² Numerous authors have drawn attention to the precedents and legacies of William Howard Russell’s despatches, Roger Fenton’s photographs, the changing nature of visual representations of war, the shift in relations between the army and society, and the growing potency of the press.³ However, despite this recognition, the vast historiography that accompanies the Crimean War has failed either to synthesise these ideas or to link the upheavals associated with the conflict with the development of modern propaganda. It is therefore the aim of this chapter to examine the propagandistic output of the war itself, as well as to analyse the importance of the legacies of the Crimean War in terms of the development of propaganda.

Much of the War’s impact has been attributed to the chronic conditions in which it was fought. Disease, deprivation, and gross strategic and logistical mismanagement prompted widespread reforms in administration as well as a shift in attitude to the armed forces. However, as Philip Warner rightly points out, ‘probably the majority of battles fought before had been worse and a number of those fought since have been as bad.’⁴ The crucial difference was that the disasters of the Crimean War were being played out in front of a more potent, politically active and vocal public opinion. The nature of warfare had not altered dramatically since 1815, nor indeed had the British army itself, but the context in which wars were fought had. The first part of this chapter will therefore consider the effects of a war being fought in a rapidly mutating social, political, technological, and media environment. It will also analyse what impact contextual developments had on the operation and development of propaganda during the war and whether those developments constituted a move towards a more modern form of propaganda as outlined in the first part of this thesis.

The second part of the chapter will detail the operation of propaganda in this period, looking specifically at the sources, aims, content and reception of pro-war propaganda. It is a common misconception that the Crimean War was ‘perhaps the least popular war in the history of Great

¹ Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856* (New York, 2000), p. 514.

² The words are Robert Morier’s, looking back at the Crimean War in 1870.

³ For example, Hankinson, *Man of Wars*; Baldwin, *All the Mighty World*; Lalumia, *Realism*; Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society: 1815-1914* (London, 1980); Koss, *The Rise and Fall, Volume One*.

⁴ Philip Warner, *The Crimean War: A Reappraisal* (Ware, 2001), p. 3.

Britain'.⁵ The fact that the mismanagement of the war caused popular indignation, the fall of the government and demands for the recall of Lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Crimea, did not mean that the majority of the public desired an immediate end to the war or denounced its aims. Rather, campaigns against the Russians and on behalf of the British army kept bellicosity alive throughout the war and attempted to instil patriotism into the British public. In addition, this chapter will consider the identity of the propagandists involved, determine whether they were promoting the war to a mass audience using a mass media, and analyse the reception and success of the propaganda in terms of its circulation, penetration and effect. Naturally the perennial problem of mapping the reception of propaganda applied to the nineteenth century and there are difficulties in terms of the availability and reliability of sources. As Edward Royle has argued, identifying the motive force behind a press article or campaign is notoriously difficult, as anonymous journalism was common and editorial and proprietorial control was often exercised privately.⁶ In terms of reception, circulation figures can be misleading and cannot be taken as evidence of support for a particular newspaper. However, changes in circulation figures, alterations in style and reported contemporary perceptions can give us some idea of the size, composition and reaction of an audience, and a contextual analysis can further our understanding as to the intent behind a particular propaganda campaign.

Using a similar methodology, the third part of the chapter will focus on the more specific propaganda campaign against the mismanagement of the war. The *Times* campaign, spearheaded by its indefatigable editor, J.T. Delane, occupies a pivotal place in the history of reportage, and relations between the military, politicians and the media. Whilst these precedents are important in terms of this thesis more generally, this campaign will also be analysed in terms of the intent, content and reception of the propaganda itself. Key targets of this particular campaign were the military command, government and political community more generally, but since information from the *Times* was disseminated and reflected through other media, its campaigns and messages filtered down through society. In an era before the creation of any centralised propaganda body, it is tempting to disregard the idea of official propaganda as anachronistic. However, the circumstances had been created in which an official propagandistic response was not only possible but necessary for the successful prosecution of government policy, and indeed that government's very survival. Indeed, 'If there was no actual British government department dedicated to propaganda in Victoria's reign, it was because there scarcely needed to be.'⁷ As will be seen, this was both because of the growing bonds between the politicians and the media, and the willingness to move towards centralised control of the flow of information. As a result, Philip Taylor has argued that the Crimean War was 'a true watershed' in terms of official adoption of propaganda and censorship, although adding the *caveat* that these developments would take a full half century to

⁵ Lalumia, *Realism*, p. xxi.

⁶ Edward Royle, 'Newspapers and Periodicals in Historical Research', in Laurel Brake, Aled Jones & Lionel Madden (eds.), *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (London, 1990), pp. 48-51.

⁷ Badsey, 'Propaganda and the Defence', p. 220.

filter through and take effect.⁸ The final part of this chapter will therefore attempt to establish the impact of the *Times* campaign on these groups, assessing their reaction in terms of propagandistic output, and determining how much of a precedent it set for subsequent politicians and military officials.

“How can any government carry on without the support of the Church and the land?” exclaimed Zenobia. “It is quite unnatural.”

“That is a mystery,” remarked the ambassador. “Here is a government, supported by none of the influences hitherto deemed indispensable, and yet it exists.”

“The newspapers support it,” said the great personage, “...and then there is always a number of people who will support any government – and so the thing works.”

“They have got a new name for this hybrid sentiment,” said the ambassador. “They call it public opinion.”

“How very absurd!” said Zenobia; “a mere nickname. As if there could be any opinion but that of the Sovereign and the two Houses of Parliament.”⁹

Such a passage is indicative not only of the author, Benjamin Disraeli, and his satirical view of mid-nineteenth century politics, but of a more general perception of the growth in the power of public opinion by the 1850s. This should not be taken to mean that there had been dramatic changes in the franchise or the level of education provision by the outbreak of the Crimean War. The Second Reform Act came over a decade after the conclusion of hostilities, and Forster’s Education Act, which saw the creation of compulsory elementary education in England and Wales, was only passed three years later still. However, the lack of legislative support did not prevent the burgeoning of a politically active and literate public in the mid-nineteenth century, and it was this public that was to have such a profound effect on the development of propaganda in Britain.

David Vincent’s research has demonstrated that, even before the Education Act of 1870, literacy and circulation rates were far higher than previously imagined because of ‘collective literacy’. The majority had access to newspapers because of an active communal reading culture provided for by the numerous reading rooms that opened around Britain in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰ The ‘Black Bull Inn Reading Room’ opened in Lancashire in February 1846 with a stockpile of six newspapers, increasing to twenty dailies and weeklies by 1855, and even a boys’ reading room opened in 1854. These enterprises aimed at the general improvement of the new mass society and opened up a variety of reading material that was generally out of the financial reach of many of the

⁸ Taylor, *Munitions*, p. 165.

⁹ Benjamin Disraeli, *Endymion* (London, 1888), pp. 6-7. *Endymion* was written in the 1870s as a retrospect of British politics during the middle of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰ David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1989); Hampton, *Visions*, p. 27.

clientele.¹¹ The resultant circulation figures were considerable, and even conservative estimates for the circulation of any paper were ten times its sales rate. Thus the *Times*, at its peak in this period selling 70,000 copies a day, was actually reaching 700,000 people.¹² However, contemporaries did not always see circulation figures as the best measure of a paper's potency. The politician Sir John Young wrote in 1853 that, 'Every one of the leading papers is read in all clubs and reading rooms. Its good articles or arguments are reprinted or reproduced in the provincial papers, or worked up anew in the shape of speeches...'¹³

Nevertheless, the high circulation of newspapers in this period was not just a symptom of rising literacy rates, but also of an active policy to use the press as a source of education in the new mass society. Reformers had long aimed to use education as an antidote to the increasing revolutionary fervour in mid-nineteenth century Europe. As Altick summarised, 'if the millions could be herded into classrooms, if only for a brief time, they could be permanently immunised against Jacobinism, radicalism, subversion, blasphemy, atheism, and every other ill'.¹⁴ Without a Parliamentary Act to translate this hope into reality, the press was seen as the ideal medium through which to impart the right sort of information and edifying material to a mass audience. To this end newspaper companions such as *The Newspaper and General Readers' Pocket Companion* (1855), were created to inform the growing literate public as to what to read.¹⁵ A rhetoric of 'instruction' and 'education' of the public became common amongst politicians and journalists. The first issue of the revamped *Telegraph* in 1855 declared on its historic decision to charge just one penny, 'There is no reason why a Daily newspaper, conducted with a high tone, should not be produced at a price which would place it within the means of every class of the community. The extension of the circulation of such a journal must prove beneficial to the public at large. If Artisan and Peer can alike peruse daily the same wholesome literary matter, produced by first class writers, the general tone of society must benefit.'¹⁶ David Brown's work on Cobden's use of the press has revealed that by the mid-1850s his aim had moved beyond securing influence to, 'a rather more grandiose sense of an improving mission'.¹⁷ Cobden was far from alone on this mission, and indeed Wilkie Collins's article, 'The Unknown Public' used missionary-like language, highlighting large pockets of 'inconceivably dense ignorance' in Britain that needed the civilising influence of an elevating press.¹⁸

As Hampton points out, to a modern audience such ideas not only smack of condescending paternalism but also of more sinister ideas of social control, manipulation and indeed propaganda.¹⁹ However, as this thesis has demonstrated, Victorian ideas of propaganda and the manipulation of

¹¹ Jones, *Powers*, p. 185.

¹² Hampton, *Visions*, pp. 27-8; *The History of The Times*, Volume II: The Tradition Established, 1841-1884 (London, 1939), p. 358.

¹³ Koss, *The Rise*, p. 25.

¹⁴ Hampton, *Visions*, p. 51.

¹⁵ Jones, *Powers*, p. 183.

¹⁶ Dennis Griffiths, *Fleet Street: Five Hundred Years of the Press* (London, 2006), p. 96.

¹⁷ David Brown, 'Cobden and the Press', in Anthony Howe & Simon Morgan (eds.), *Rethinking Nineteenth Century Liberalism: Richard Cobden Bicentenary Essays* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 84.

¹⁸ 'The Unknown Public' (published anonymously), *Household Words*, 21 August 1858, pp. 217-222.

¹⁹ Hampton, *Visions*, p. 59.

opinion tended to be far closer to, and even synonymous with, ideas of education and beneficence. Contemporary commentators saw that developments in society had created the necessity for such influence which could only elevate the masses from ignorance and at the same time provide them with the tools to voice their own, educated, opinions. It was not, therefore, a one-way process of the elite's forcible control of the public through the press, but the creation of a process of mutual influence and a 'politics by public discussion' whereby the masses could have as much influence on their rulers.²⁰ This duality encapsulated the contemporary dilemma as to whether the press could or should reflect or create public opinion, and a historiographical debate has grown around this central question. Hampton refers to the two strands, the 'liberal ethos' perceiving the press as a tool to educate and inform the public and create an arena for popular discussion and the 'representational ideal' perceiving the press as a reflection of public opinion, conveying messages for the population.²¹ Many authors see the 1850s as a transitional phase where these two ideals met and were interchangeable, Koss arguing that, 'Through successive permutations, the political press was as much a product of the mentality of the times as the key instrument for formulating that mentality.'²² Either way the press took on a new potency able to represent or control vast constituencies, a factor that not only aided editors in their own propaganda campaigns but inevitably came to the attention of others wishing to claim or create the backing of public opinion.

These developments in education and the power of the press did not occur without their own contextual circumstances and were primarily facilitated by rapid technological progress in the period leading up to the Crimean War. The period 1830 – 1848 was one of technological improvement, allowing far greater penetration of media and ideas to a lower social level, especially encouraged by the advent of railways, machine type-setting, rotary printing and photo engraving.²³ Most importantly in terms of communications, a system of electric telegraphy, first laid by Vooke and Whetsone in 1837 between London and Birmingham, began to expand in the 1840s. The implications for the press were obvious, and by 1844 the *Times* had used telegraphy to help it report the birth of Queen Victoria's second child, Albert, just forty minutes after its announcement.²⁴ By the time of the Crimean War, the telegraph was established as a vital method of communication, almost unanimously celebrated in the press world as demonstrated in a poem, published in the *Manchester Guardian* early in 1854:

The vast importance of the wires,
Requires but brief comment;
By their most wondrous agency,
Are wishes quickly sent.
'Tis one of England's triumphs great

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 60-1.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 8-10.

²² Koss, *The Rise*, p. 24.

²³ Thompson, *Mass Persuasion*, pp. 98-9.

²⁴ *The History of The Times, Volume II*, pp. 80-1.

In useful deeds displayed,
 By which a mighty help is given
 To commerce and to trade.²⁵

Although this poem comments on the effect of telegraphy on commerce and trade, its influence on propaganda cannot be underestimated. It was a system that allowed the press and newly emergent press agencies such as Reuters to supply the public with a near constant stream of information, bringing the world and, more importantly, British foreign policy within easy and constant reach of the British public. Contemporary events could now be relayed and popularly consumed very quickly resulting in what Reinhart Koselleck termed an, ‘acceleration of history’.²⁶ This was undoubtedly the case in the Crimean War, as national and provincial newspapers began to fill with guarantees of regular telegraphic despatches from the front as a selling point to the public, the *Cheltenham Examiner* informing its readers of, ‘completed arrangements with the Electric Telegraph Company of London to supply two expresses daily, containing the latest news from the seat of war.’ The editor even promised a special express to be added at any hour of the day or night for any important news.²⁷

However, other private comments reveal a very different feeling towards the new invention. Early in course of the Crimean War Emily Eden wrote to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Earl Clarendon, ‘I cannot recollect taking the war so much to heart in young days... but I believe that detestable electric telegraph makes it worse. It keeps us in a perpetual worry. It may be all very fine to go on saying that railroads and telegraphs have annihilated time and space; they annihilate passengers and truth in equal proportions’.²⁸ Clearly the invention of the telegraph had shortened the distance between the home and war fronts, increasingly the domestic front’s participation in the war. As mentioned in the first chapter, the permanent and ubiquitous nature of propaganda was one of the prerequisites for the development of its modern form, and the telegraph made this possible. Its power to cause a permanent storm of opinion and agitate even over the most insignificant of events is articulated by an article from the *Edinburgh Courant* which argued that the telegraph,

Tells them [the public] of momentous matters with startling suddenness; and the importance of the subject, the deep feeling which it excites, are converted by a very natural process into an undue and exaggerated veneration for the telegraph as an organ of wonderful power. Hence all transmitted through such an organ is regarded as important, and its officers themselves acquire too blind a sympathy with mere speed. They receive anything which is brought in with breathless haste, and in breathless haste they will tell the

²⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 21 January 1854.

²⁶ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: on the semantics of historical time* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 47.

²⁷ *Cheltenham Examiner*, ‘Newspaper Cuttings 1854-58’, 111/8, RMA.

²⁸ Emily Eden to Earl Clarendon, September 1854. Sir Herbert Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of George William Frederick Fourth Earl Clarendon*, Volume II (London, 1913), p. 46.

whole of the United Kingdom, through the Metropolis, that the most startling events have occurred, even when the story is totally without foundation. Its despatches, often false, supply no tests of their own probability, and they are not authenticated.²⁹

This concern over inaccuracy certainly seems to have permeated the press world, as newspapers recognised the problem of unratified telegraphs reaching their offices and faced the dilemma as to whether to publish or not. Delane was warned by Henry Reeve, leader writer for the *Times*, that the telegraphic information on which his article on the Russian naval victory at Sinope was based was not confirmed, stating, ‘These telegraphic messages are very awkward, and had rather not publish it at all than be wrong about it.’³⁰ During the Crimean War itself, Delane was again warned of the inaccuracy of telegraphic messages from the front by the Commander-in-Chief of the British army, Lord Hardinge, arguing that, ‘the telegraph is so rapid to St. Petersburg, that any mistake as to force... must be avoided for the public good.’³¹ However, as will be seen, throughout the Crimean War, such diligence as advocated by Hardinge, Reeve and the *Edinburgh Courant* was rarely followed as the public desire for this constant flow of information about the war grew. The concern over erroneous and unauthorised news has only increased in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as the information environment has developed, but it is significant in terms of this thesis that such a modern dilemma was first experienced during the Crimean War.

Importantly, in terms of propaganda, this admonition went demonstrably unheeded by the development of any mechanisms for formal censorship alongside such technological advances. The last constraints of post-publication censorship of the press were removed in 1830 in Britain, long before the majority of its European neighbours.³² As Goldstein argues, the combination of the increasing liberality of British censorship laws, in alliance with a transformation in the pace and ease of transport and communication, provided the opportunity for both mass organisation of the public and increased pressure on the government. In the turbulent year of 1848, J.S. Mill wrote that, ‘of the working classes it may be pronounced that the patriarchal or paternal system of government is one to which they will not again be subject. That question... was decided when they were taught to read, and allowed access to newspapers and political tracts... It was decided when railways enabled them to shift from place to place.’³³ The Britain of the 1850s had not only a vociferous and active public opinion, but also an active mass media that could be utilised either by that public or by politicians to control it.

Naturally the medium that predominated in this period was the press, as technology had enabled both a fast flow of information, but also cheaper production costs and higher output. As a result, the number of new newspapers and journals in Britain grew exponentially in this period, the years

²⁹ *Edinburgh Courant*, 4 July 1854; ‘Newspaper Cuttings 1854-58’, 111/8, RMA.

³⁰ Henry Reeve to Delane, 11 December 1853, Correspondence of J.T. Delane, Volume 5, f.53, NIA.

³¹ Lord Hardinge to Delane, 20 November 1854, Correspondence of J.T. Delane, Volume 5, f.119, NIA.

³² Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Censorship of the Arts and the Press in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York, 1989), p. 38.

³³ Goldstein, *Political Censorship*, pp. 4-8.

1853-1856 alone seeing the creation of 357 new newspapers and journals.³⁴ Undoubtedly a catalyst of this process was the repeal of the ‘taxes on knowledge’, the last bar to the growth of a cheap daily press. From the 1830s, reformers such as John Cleave and Henry Hetherington had campaigned against the stamp duty on newspapers, producing two illegal unstamped publications (*The Police Gazette* and *Poor Man’s Guardian*) which demonstrated the immense circulation that a cheap newspaper could reach. Debates emerged in the nineteenth century as to the benefits of a cheaper, more regular press especially in the debating and discussion rooms of the mid-nineteenth century. The Manchester Literary Society raised topics such as, ‘The newspaper press – will the recent reduction of the stamp duty raise its character?’ (1836) and, ‘Has cheap literature added to the spread of Civilisation and Morality?’ (1859) which reveal that people were both fascinated by and wary of this new phenomenon in society.³⁵ However, almost invariably the result was favourable to the extension of the press and its beneficial effect on the new reading public.

Nevertheless, these reductions and repeals were not universally desired, with many of the more traditional newspapers fearing the growth and potency of this new cheap press, as one contemporary wrote to Delane,

A lower press, both metropolitan and Provincial, encouraged by the remission of the Stamp Duty of vast circulation, is said to be gradually undermining the old foundations of English Society, spreading socialist and republican opinions, daily acquiring fresh strength... to remedy the evils complained of in the Press – it will be well to look back to the causes, to which its present condition, and its influence on Public Opinion, are mainly to be ascribed. In my view of the case, the principal cause has been, the derangement, the demoralisation, and at last, the absolute destruction of the Political Party. What was formerly a great duty and object of Party – to lead and guide public opinion, has become the business of everybody or nobody.³⁶

Clearly some feared the increased potential of seditious propaganda through the advent of a mass circulation, degenerate press, a fear that was given voice in the use of the word propaganda as seen in the first chapter.

Undoubtedly the press and its potential was also treated with great reverence by many contemporaries, Jeremy Bentham arguing shortly before this period that as soon as the press was freed of its legal fetters and allowed to develop naturally any editor would become, ‘president of a public opinion tribunal’ which the politicians would disregard at their peril.³⁷ The *Northern Star* printed a poem on 4 July 1846 highlighting the empowering quality of the press,

³⁴ Joseph George Muddiman & J.B. Williams (eds.), *The Times Tercentenary Handlist of English & Welsh Newspapers, Magazines and Reviews, 1620-1920* (London, 1920), pp. 84-89.

³⁵ Jones, *Powers*, p. 194.

³⁶ Edward Ellice to Delane, 15 December 1855, Correspondence of J.T. Delane, volume 6, f. 84, NIA.

³⁷ B. Kingsley Martin, *The Triumph of Lord Palmerston: A Study of Public Opinion in England before the Crimean War* (London, 1924), p. 16.

For despots, though united, feel distress,
 And tremble when the thunder of the press,
 Rolls through their kingdoms in the civil storm,
 Proclaiming justice, freedom, and reform.³⁸

Similarly in France in 1850, the orator Cormenin stood at the statue of Gutenberg and addressed a huge audience with the words, ‘now the powerful cylinders of the press machines escape night and day millions of sheets which cross rivers, fortresses, custom controls, mountains and seas, and which assault despotism with the intelligence projectiles of the press... It is by the propaganda of ideas, by liberty of the press that you will conquer.’³⁹ This was the heyday of the press’ influence over society, and its effect was made all the more potent as, ‘the authority of the printed word was accepted as an article of faith’.⁴⁰ A public used to the popular press of the twentieth century is perhaps more cynical of its motives and methods of persuasion, but in the mid-nineteenth century the novelty and respectability of many aspects of the press were enough to give it an aura of credibility and infallibility, both potent aspects of propagandistic endeavour. The British press in the 1850s had arguably reached its modern manifestation, and this novel, affordable source of information, ‘became established as part of the normal furniture of life for all classes’.⁴¹ This was a fact recognised by the highest echelons of British society, James Grant writing to Palmerston that the great success of his *Morning Advertiser* was due mostly to it being, ‘read among all classes and is taken in to all the clubs and reading rooms throughout the country.’⁴²

With such evidence presented to politicians such as Palmerston, the press began to be seen as a route by which a mass audience could be controlled. As a result, ‘It is always important to remember that newspapers in the nineteenth century, even more so than today, were party organs. Their owners and editors were participants in many of the events they reported’, and as a result, ‘newspapers were propaganda.’⁴³ Undoubtedly it was seen as necessary by politicians and parties wishing to advance or consolidate their positions to acquire a newspaper. When Lord John Russell had fallen from grace in the eyes of Parliament and public opinion, he entered into discussions with his friends about the possibility of purchasing a newspaper to assist his public rejuvenation. One friend stated, after explaining the, ‘sad want of cooperation’ with his ideas, that, ‘The thing was to get a Paper – that acquired the rest was easy enough...’⁴⁴ Indeed, a few years previously Russell himself had advised Palmerston that, ‘There is no doubt a great advantage in having some Morning

³⁸ Joanne Shattock & Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester, 1982), p. 269.

³⁹ Goldstein, *Political Censorship*, pp. 31-2.

⁴⁰ Koss, *The Rise*, p. 25.

⁴¹ Hampton, *Visions*, p. 19.

⁴² James Grant to Palmerston, 27 December 1851, Palmerston Papers, GC/GR/98, SUSC.

⁴³ Royle, ‘Newspapers’, p. 54.

⁴⁴ W. Clarke to the Dean of Bristol, 2 January 1856, Papers of Lord John Russell, PRO 30/22/13A, NA.

Paper, which would correct misrepresentations.⁴⁵ Similarly Disraeli, in his rise to political prominence in the 1850s, saw the great benefit in controlling a newspaper which he then created as *The Press*. Shortly before the Crimean War, he wrote, ‘The office of the *Press* will be to enforce, illustrate, develop it [his manifesto]; reply to any criticisms & vindicate it against all comers. The influence of the *Press*, then, will be inestimable, & we must all have a pen in the pie.’⁴⁶

Newspapers continued to be classed as Conservative, Liberal or Radical in their tone, and many gave overt propagandistic support to those parties. However, although there was an established tradition amongst British parties and politicians to use a newspaper as their voice outside Parliament, Royle does not take into account the development that took place in the mid-nineteenth century both in the style and scale of this relationship between the press and politicians. Subtler forces were at work, and the power of the press became reflected both in the increased interest of politicians in manipulating that power and in the increasingly equal relationship between the two parties. The latter of these is perhaps best represented in the pre-eminence of the *Times* which far outstripped its nearest competitors in circulation and respect. One correspondent warned Palmerston that the *Times* had, ‘great influence over the public mind’, the *Saturday Review* adding at the time of the Crimean War that, ‘no apology is necessary for assuming that this country is ruled by the *Times*.’⁴⁷ Answering the question as to whether the press created or reflected opinion, Lord Clarendon argued that, ‘It is a well-known fact that the *Times* forms or guides or reflects – no matter which – the public opinion of England.’⁴⁸ With such potent forces emerging in the press, not only were politicians and parties increasingly desirous of forging a relationship with a newspaper, but also had to change their tack from overt control to subtle ‘compelling’ and the forming of social bonds.

The change in the style and approach was also in part a reaction to the new state of modern society where, as one campaigner for the rights of East India Company officers in England wrote to Lord Dalhousie (Governor-General of India), ‘the established practice in modern times is apparently to move with and address the masses – not mere parties or individuals however great and powerful.’⁴⁹ Working on the same premise, Cobden and Bright, during their campaign for the repeal of the Corn Laws, saw the efficiency of newspaper propaganda and helped establish the ‘Manchester press tradition’ as a force for reform and pacifism.⁵⁰ When in 1855 he was desperately trying to advocate peace to a bellicose nation, Cobden argued that the only method of doing so effectively was to create a cheap, high circulation (of about 30,000) newspaper.⁵¹ The ability of the press to reach a far greater audience inevitably changed the nature of propaganda, as more people could be and had to be reached by politicians and political parties, as well as giving a fillip to private

⁴⁵ John Russell to Palmerston, 4 August 1849, Palmerston Papers, PP/GC/279/1-2, SUSC.

⁴⁶ Disraeli to Lord Stanley, 15 August 1852, M.G.Wiebe, Mary S. Millar, Ann P. Robson (eds.), *Benjamin Disraeli Letters*, Volume VI, 1852-1856 (Toronto, 1997), p. 117.

⁴⁷ Anonymous to Palmerston, 21850, Palmerston Papers, PRE/A/14, SUSC; *History of the Times*, II, p. 167.

⁴⁸ Martin, *The Triumph*, p. 86.

⁴⁹ H. Tucker to Lord Dalhousie, 27 September 1854, Correspondence of J.T. Delane, Volume 5, f. 98, NIA.

⁵⁰ Koss, *The Rise*, pp. 90, 99-100.

⁵¹ Shattock, *The Victorian*, p. 279.

enterprises in their quest to bolster support for their cause. It is perhaps tempting to see that it was only in an era in which a centralised propaganda department was created in conjunction with these bonds, as described by Goldfarb-Marquis in her analysis of British propaganda in the First World War, that they could become part of a modern propaganda process.⁵² However, the necessity and possibility for propaganda on a mass scale by government, private organisations and individuals seen in this period meant that the lack of a central propaganda body or orchestrated policy actually placed a greater premium on these relationships, and forced the creation of a more distinct, but no less sophisticated, form of propaganda as reflected in its etymology.

The press was also joined by a plethora of other voices in this period, creating a more developed media environment and responding to the desire for more, different and stimulating news and entertainment. The creation of the illustrated press, most notably the *Illustrated London News* on 14 May 1842, gave rise to a new genre of visual media. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, this conflict was to develop in the decades after the Crimean War and, in the eyes of many Liberals, lead to the corruption and death of traditional, educative journalism. As Nolan wrote shortly after the Crimean War, 'Never before was the taste and talent of the artist brought into requisition so extensively for the instruction and pleasure of the general public, and never did the mass of readers patronise illustrations as they do now.'⁵³ Forms of media were also therefore emerging which could combine information and entertainment alongside the 'educative' press, resulting in a more complex and attractive media environment and further pressure on the press to popularise. Special artists were despatched to the front to send back the realistic representations of the conflict that the public craved and that traditional forms of martial art could not supply. However, this new craving for realism and documentary forms of reportage inevitably led some to turn to the new medium of photography. The invention of the daguerreotype by Louis Daguerre and of paper photography by William Fox in 1839 had enabled the medium to become far more widely accessible. It became rapidly popular, as the new demand for accurate reproductions of events and people was met by the mimetic quality of the camera. In this way, the camera also became a powerful propaganda tool as, 'the uncanny ability of photography to reproduce reality – to depict apparently without human intervention, an entire world of referents – bolstered the apparently universal recognition of it as a supreme standard of accuracy and truth.'⁵⁴ Despite drawing attention to the obvious limitations of a camera on the battlefield in this period, even the *Times* still admitted that whatever the photographer captured, 'must be real'.⁵⁵ Undoubtedly this could have implications for its manipulation as a propagandistic medium, as apparent realities could be presented to a naive audience as truth.

Outside of these media were the traditional theatres and developing music halls. Theatres often struggled to compete with the immediacy of visual representations of the war, but the jingoism

⁵² Goldfarb Marquis, 'Words as Weapons'.

⁵³ E.H. Nolan, *The Illustrated History of the War Against Russia*, Volume 1 (London, 1857), p. 4.

⁵⁴ Robert Craig, 'Fact, Public Opinion, and Persuasion: The Rise of the Visual in Journalism and Advertising', in Bonnie Brennen & Hanno Hardt (eds.), *Picturing the Past: Media, History and Photography* (Illinois, 1999), p. 50.

⁵⁵ Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (London, 1964), p. 67.

surrounding the Crimean War aided the growth of a thriving music hall scene in the later nineteenth century. Theatre was also potent as a form of propaganda due to the distinct form of audience participation, patriotism and drama that surrounded productions in this period. When added to the cathartic production of literature, from the poetry of Tennyson to the scores of books, journals, pamphlets, letters, diaries and articles during this period, there was the potential for an unprecedented, saturated media environment. Therefore by 1854 not only had an environment developed in which a more politically active, educated and literate public were able to access more media quickly and constantly, but also, as will be seen, the Crimean War itself catalysed this process further. As Henderson argues, the public opinion that had been transformed by these contextual circumstances was a different force from the time of the Napoleonic Wars. It was more mobile, much quicker to respond to external stimuli and therefore much more rapid in influencing policy.⁵⁶ Even the embodiment of British public opinion, John Bull, reflected the change shedding his beleaguered, gullible characteristics and political apathy in favour of a portly, firm-minded patriot.⁵⁷ Public opinion was now not only far larger and more vocal, but also paradoxically more readily manageable, propaganda being made both possible and necessary by the same contextual developments. As will be seen, this inevitably gave rise to a generation of politicians and other interest groups willing to use propaganda of a novel form on an unprecedented scale.

It was in this context and amid these vast changes that the Crimean War was fought. It is remembered, and was seen by contemporaries, as the most brutal, mismanaged and futile war Britain had fought in centuries. Although many wars fought before and after the Crimea were as disastrous, the difference was, as the Second Duke of Wellington complained to Delane in the midst of the Crimean disasters, ‘in these days the ‘public’ makes war and does not like to be in the dark.’⁵⁸ The participation of the public in foreign policy and warfare, especially as it was so novel, was bound to have an effect, and Muriel Chamberlain even goes as far as to argue that, ‘the press did in the Crimea what TV did in Vietnam.’⁵⁹ However, although we have no equivalent polls to analyse for the period 1854-56, unlike the Vietnam War, the Crimean War seems to have been and remained incredibly popular despite its realities being played out in front of the British public. This chapter will therefore now assess why this popularity existed, how it was maintained and how the development of propaganda impacted on this process.

Even before the outbreak of war, a latent Russophobia was obvious in Britain, led by the popular Parliamentarian, Lord Palmerston. His role in kindling this xenophobia and turning it to his own ends is important both as a demonstration of his own early experiences of coordinating a propaganda campaign and of one of the forces that lay behind the success of patriotic propaganda

⁵⁶ Gavin B. Henderson, ‘The Pacifists of the Fifties’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 9, No.3 (1937), p. 326.

⁵⁷ Taylor, *John Bull*, p. 114.

⁵⁸ 2nd Duke Wellington to Delane, June 1855, Correspondence of J.T. Delane, Volume 6, f.44, NIA.

⁵⁹ Muriel Chamberlain, *Lord Palmerston* (Cardiff, 1987), p. 97.

during the Crimean War. Palmerston's antipathy towards Russia was noticeably amplified as part of the wider outcry in Britain after the Tsar's declaration of the end of Polish national independence in November 1835. Despite Lord Melbourne's hesitations, Palmerston urged a full campaign to be orchestrated against Russia; 'Expose her plans, and you half defeat them. Raise public opinion against her and you will double her difficulties – I am all for making a chatter against her.'⁶⁰ Palmerston's aim was simple, to counteract and frustrate Russian foreign policy wherever possible by ensuring the support of a virulently Russophobic British society. This could not be done, as Palmerston wrote, 'unless we employ agents who meet the unsleeping activity of hers, with something like equivalent zeal.' Although it is unclear how central Palmerston was to the ensuing, vociferous campaign, he is shown to have requisitioned the aid of returned 'foreign agents' James Fraser, John McNeill and David Urquhart who began producing pamphlets and writing news articles with their intimate knowledge of Eastern affairs.⁶¹ Russophobia was embedded in the British psyche, especially due to the suspicion of Tsarist absolutism and policy, as demonstrated by pamphlets such as that of Lieutenant Colonel Evans on the dangers of Russian aggrandisement written in the 1820s.⁶² Thus the Crimea was to be the culmination of decades of antagonism between Russia and Britain, and Rostovsky argues the result was that an, 'ideological chasm now developed between liberalism and Tsarism, which became a potent propaganda weapon against Russia', and it was this weapon that was wielded so efficiently by the media and certain individuals in provoking a war in 1854.⁶³

It was, however, the naval engagement at Sinope that, 'unloosened a storm of extraordinary violence against Russia. The wave of emotion was resistless in England and took no account of the true facts.'⁶⁴ Newspapers and journals began to fill with news of the unprovoked, 'unwonted massacre' of a Turkish fleet lying at anchor with no warning. A *Gentleman's Magazine* article concluded, 'It appears that of the 4,500 men forming the crews of the Turkish vessels, more than 2,800 perished in battle; they are said to have behaved with great bravery – the Russians with great cruelty.'⁶⁵ However, it was perfectly within the rights of the Russians to attack the fleet of a nation with which they were at war. The story was, however, manipulated into a version suitable for the temper of the British nation, Greville recalling that Delane had spoken to Aberdeen of 'an unprovoked attack on a convoy of transports at anchor', a clearly tendentious assessment then reproduced in the pages of the *Times*.⁶⁶ Delane's newspaper became full of caustic letters, diligently reproduced for general consumption, such as W.S.'s letter, 'Why Spare Odessa', in which the author argued, 'We have yet to teach the Russian empire the law of nations and the laws of civilised

⁶⁰ Palmerston to Melbourne, 31 October 1835. Cited in Kenneth Bourne, *Palmerston: The Early Years, 1784-1841* (London, 1982), p. 561.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 561-2.

⁶² Spiers, *The Army*, p. 98.

⁶³ A.Lobanov-Rostovsky, 'Anglo-Russian Relations through the Centuries', *Russian Review*, 7, No.2 (1948), p. 46.

⁶⁴ David A. Welch, *Justice and the Genesis of War* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 57.

⁶⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine*, (January-June, 1854), p. 71.

⁶⁶ 14 December 1853; Charles C.F.Greville, *The Greville Memoirs: A Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria from 1852 to 1860*, Volumes I (London, 1887), p. 111.

warfare. We have to show them the just consequences of destroying an unoffending and inferior Turkish fleet “peacefully reposing on its shadow” in a Turkish harbour – the just consequences of teaching their wounded men to fire on their benefactors in the act of administering undeserved cordials to them on the field...⁶⁷ This widespread reaction was only limited to Britain, French opinion remaining distinctly apathetic to the events at Sinope and the war more generally.⁶⁸ This could in part point to the more advanced development of an unfettered and vociferous press in Britain, but also highlights Doob’s comment that public opinion is in fact a far more potent force in terms of foreign policy in a democracy than in an authoritarian regime.⁶⁹ Again this reveals why a more developed, but also unique, form of propaganda could, and had to, emerge in Britain in these circumstances.

Queen Victoria wrote to the King of the Belgians of her experience of the elated crowds that gathered to send off the first troops bound for Russia and commented on the *Times* coverage of subsequent celebrations.⁷⁰ Warmongering and a constant fascination with the war were evident from early 1854, as Victoria stated, ‘all Englishmen now have war engraved on their hearts’, and Greville noted in his diary, ‘Nobody now thinks of anything but of the coming war and its vigorous prosecution. The national blood is up, and those who most deprecated war are now all for hitting as hard as we can...’⁷¹ Even in Manchester, the city renowned for free-trade, laissez-faire, liberalism and pacifism at this time, war was jubilantly received. Sergeant-Major Gowing reported that crowds of thousands had gathered at the railway station to send off the troops, ‘wrought up to such a pitch of excitement as almost amounted to madness’.⁷² It was a level that seems to have been maintained with some consistency though, and Victoria again corresponded to the King of the Belgians, ‘the entire country is entirely engrossed with one idea, one anxious thought – the Crimea’, and *Punch* argued that, ‘the progress of the campaign... engrossed the attention of all classes to the exclusion of all other topics.’⁷³ The advances in technology, the media and society were having an immediate effect on how the war was received by the public, and on the size and nature of the public receiving it.

These patriotic and widespread feelings continued into the first year of the war. Although the term jingoism was not coined until 1878, the music hall song that saw its origin referred to a war between Britain and Russia and, ‘the reality was discernable much earlier, even before the Crimean campaign in 1854.’⁷⁴ The chorus ran,

⁶⁷ *Times*, 21 November 1854.

⁶⁸ Welch, *Justice*, p. 73; Lynn Case, *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire* (New York, 1972), p. 32.

⁶⁹ Leonard W. Doob, *Public Opinion and Propaganda* (Hamden, 1966), p. 225.

⁷⁰ Queen Victoria to King of the Belgians, 28 February 1854 and 14 March 1854; Arthur Christopher Benson & Viscount Esher (eds.), *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty’s Correspondence between the Years 1837 and 1861*, Volume II, 1844-1853 (London, 1907), p. 17.

⁷¹ Victoria to the King of Prussia, 17 March 1854; Benson, *The Letters*, p. 24; Greville, *Greville Memoirs*, p. 135.

⁷² Myerly, *British Military*, p. 104.

⁷³ Victoria to King of the Belgians, 13 October 1854; Benson, *The Letters*, pp. 63-4; Lalumia, *Realism*, p. xx.

⁷⁴ J.W.M.Hichberger, *Images of the Army: The Military in British Art, 1815-1914* (Manchester, 1988), p. 1.

We don't want to fight but by Jingo if we do,
 We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too,
 We've fought the Bear before, and while we're Britons true,
 The Russians shall not have Constantinople.

Michael Paris has argued that the potency of imperial propaganda and jingoism in the late nineteenth century should not negate the idea of a militant society earlier in the century, when bellicosity and patriotism were more common than believed.⁷⁵ Undoubtedly the contextual changes in the mid-nineteenth century allowed more people access to foreign policy, their inherent patriotism enhancing their interest and thereby increasing popular involvement in conflicts such as the Crimean War. As a result, war in this period extended into the realm of popular culture as revealed in the number of local petitions, pamphlets and anti-Russian leaflets produced. One such leaflet on 10 January 1854 even advertised a boxing match between 'The Warkleigh Pet and the Csar'.⁷⁶ The emergence and ongoing popularity of this 'pleasure culture of war' as a feature of mass society and entertainment can be dated to the mid-nineteenth century, and it was the nascent mass media that reflected and developed this culture.

Popular culture was also fed a diet of atrocity propaganda, not a novel part of warfare, but certainly used extensively against the Russians in 1854. An abundance of stories circulated in Britain concerning the Russian treatment of prisoners and wounded British soldiers. Many of these were provided by returning soldiers or letters written home containing provocative tales that, 'the enemy seemed to take delight in shooting down poor helpless wounded men, who were trying to limp back...'; and even of Russians grinning over the bodies of British soldiers whom they had just bayoneted repeatedly.⁷⁷ There were numerous reports of the Russians illegally using flags of truce or neutrality to fool the British, consolidating the idea of Russia as an uncivilised and dishonourable nation. These started in the reports of the Crown Law Officers concerning the fraudulent use of the Ionian and neutral flags by Russian vessels.⁷⁸ In previous wars, reports of Russian atrocities may not have transferred from official Foreign Office reports to the public at large. However, not only was there a more active participating audience in the Crimean War requiring the information, but there are also clear links between politicians such as Earl Clarendon at the Foreign Office and leading newspapers, all needing positive coverage of the war. Although this bond will be explored in more detail later, it is important to mention that Clarendon was in close contact with Delane throughout the Crimean War, and exchanged information with him on numerous occasions. It is perhaps then not surprising that several leaders are found in the *Times* attacking Russian atrocities and abuse of the flag of truce. In May 1854, as the British fleet entered the Black Sea and bombarded Odessa, one leader argued, 'the Russian authorities in Odessa are to blame for having

⁷⁵ Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London, 2000), p. 13.

⁷⁶ HO 45/5462, NA. This box also contains numerous petitions desirous of a vigorous prosecution of the war against Russia.

⁷⁷ Robert B. Edgerton, *Death or Glory: The Legacy of the Crimean War* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 219-20.

⁷⁸ Queen's Advocate Harding to Earl Clarendon, 24 January 1855 and 3 May 1855, FO 834/2, NA.

drawn down this terrible calamity on their unfortunate fellow citizens by an outrage on a flag of truce, which is almost unparalleled in the warfare of civilised nations.⁷⁹ Of course, from the *Times* these stories filtered throughout the provincial press, the *Ipswich Journal* arguing that the successful bombardment of Odessa was, ‘punishment for the massacre at Sinope, as well as for the savage atrocity of firing upon a flag of truce.’⁸⁰ Similarly, Palmerston used his influence at the *Morning Post* to ensure articles appeared that vilified the Russians and manoeuvred himself into a position whereby he was perceived as the only man to stand up to such an enemy.⁸¹

A similar pattern was followed in the misconstrued story of the ‘massacre of Hango’ which occurred on in June 1855 and involved the slaughter of several British naval officers and crew who had displayed a flag of truce. The facts were unclear, and there were several Russian refutations as the flag had apparently not been visible and they had acted under the pretext that the boat was attempting a marine skirmish. However, these denials were labelled ‘excuses and palpable subterfuges’ in *Punch* which produced an emotive cartoon depicting the Russians as savages purposely encouraging the British boat to land whilst several men lay in wait with rifles and clubs.⁸² The *Illustrated London News* published a front page devoted to the massacre showing a Cossack boat leaving with the British flag of truce.⁸³ The *Times* editorial opened, ‘It has never fallen to our lot, in the course of long experience, to comment upon any one event so distressing to the best feelings of this nation, so disgraceful to the enemy with whom we are at war, and so shameful to humanity, as the massacre committed by the Russians on the boat’s crew of a British man-of-war on 5 June at Hango.’⁸⁴ This information could only have been passed down through official channels, but more importantly it reached the pages of the *Times* with unprecedented speed. In this way, the British public were constantly informed of Russian atrocities, potentially reinforcing the xenophobia and patriotism already present.

The stories certainly seem to have had an impact on their audience, as there ensued a cathartic dissemination of Russophobic books, articles, pamphlets and orations. Opinions on the Tsar, Russia, absolutism and any other material with which to vilify that nation and its ruler became commonplace. One book, *A Routing for the Tsar*, used the supposed testimonies of British soldiers to produce a diatribe against Russian actions in the war using inflammatory language to reinforce the message: ‘Then comes the horrid image of a secret, stealthy, creeping mass, slowly dragging its enormous bulk like some reptile, towards that noble, that devoted band of paladins.’⁸⁵ J. Doran, in his piece ‘Traits of the Czars’ charted a thousand years of misrule and avaricious national aggrandisement, concluding that the present Tsar was the ‘enemy of the human race’.⁸⁶ Another, anonymous, writer commented on the appalling absolutism and backward social policy in Russia

⁷⁹ *Times*, 2 May 1854.

⁸⁰ *The Ipswich Journal*, 13 May 1854.

⁸¹ Jasper J. Ridley, *Lord Palmerston* (London, 1970), pp. 414-6.

⁸² ‘Russian Savages Prepare to Receive a Flag of Truce’, 5 June 1855; *Mr. Punch*, Vol.I, p. 208.

⁸³ *Illustrated London News*, 23 June 1855.

⁸⁴ *Times*, 20 June 1855.

⁸⁵ Martin, *The Triumph*, p. 230.

⁸⁶ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, (January-June 1854), pp. 350-358.

and its effect on the lower classes and the Russian women.⁸⁷ *Punch* began to print a series of cartoons depicting the Tsar as an uncaring despot whilst celebrating the 'Entente Cordiale' between Britain and France.⁸⁸ Similarly, theatres began presenting Britain's traditional enemy, the French, as a noble ally whereas the Tsar became a despotic, evil tyrant whom his subjects wished to overthrow in favour of British style liberalism. Prince Menshikov, the Russian military commander, became 'Mendaxikoff' who falsified Russian news stories.⁸⁹ More generally the Crimean War was framed in the language of civilisation against barbarism. By 1854, Clarendon, initially opposed to the idea of a war, declared that, 'We are not now engaged in the Eastern Question, but in the battle of civilisation against barbarism, for the independence of Europe.'⁹⁰ Alfred Tennyson's 'Maud' took pains to identify Eastern barbaric despotism with Russia alone, the hero of the poem acting in the defence of civilisation.⁹¹

Significantly this was also the language John Bright, in his campaign against the war, used to attack an aggressive British foreign policy. His reference to Britain's 'reversion to barbarism' by engaging in a war with Russia was widely denounced. The *Morning Chronicle*, another newspaper under the aegis of Palmerston, attacked Bright's colleague, Richard Cobden, for equating a conquering policy with barbarism and for deeming the war detrimental to Russia's current progress towards civilisation.⁹² Indeed, the popular reaction to the Manchester Peace Party, of which Cobden and Bright were prominent members, reveals a great deal about the popularity of the war in Britain, and the reception of pro-war propaganda. Even in their home area of Manchester, there were demonstrations and reactions against them. The local newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*, denounced Bright's anti-war oratory as, 'perverse eloquence... stifling the expression of English patriotism'.⁹³ One correspondent reported events in Manchester to Palmerston writing, 'I hope you are aware that Mr Bright has reason to pray for peace in his own constituency for he had to be guarded by policemen when he last paid a visit. I was a witness with hundreds of others and much feared for his safety. Let him not venture here again. I send you some newspapers vouching for the fact.'⁹⁴ Bright was burnt in effigy in Manchester and, whilst privately finding his arguments compelling, Greville noted, that they would fall on deaf ears in the public domain.⁹⁵ It was the public that mattered in this context and the campaign against the Peace Party had obviously been successful, augmented by the work of the Poet Laureate, Alfred Tennyson, who judged perfectly the mood of the public against peace publishing the poem,

Last week came one to the country town

⁸⁷ *Gentleman's Magazine*, (January-June, 1855), pp. 136-143.

⁸⁸ 'The 'Montagne Russe?' – A Very Dangerous Game'; 'La Belle Alliance', *Mr. Punch*, pp. 174, 213.

⁸⁹ Bratton, 'Theatre', pp. 123-4.

⁹⁰ Asa Briggs, *Victorian People: Some Reassessments of People, Institutions, Ideas and Events, 1851-1867* (London, 1954), p. 65.

⁹¹ Elaine Jordan, *Alfred Tennyson* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 154.

⁹² *Morning Chronicle*, 26 January 1854.

⁹³ *Manchester Guardian*, 19 December 1855.

⁹⁴ J. Hudson to Palmerston, 23 December 1854, Palmerston Papers, GC/HU/53, SUSC.

⁹⁵ Henderson, 'The Pacifists', p.330; Entry, 24 December 1854, Greville, *Greville Memoirs*, pp. 211-2.

To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it, and thrice as well:
 This borad brim'd hawker of holy things,
 Whose ear is stuff with cotton, and rings
 Even in dreams to the chink of pence...⁹⁶

Perhaps the final testimony to the success of the patriotic movement was Cobden and Bright both losing their seats in the first elections held after the war that they had opposed.⁹⁷ As Briggs argued, this reaction to Bright reveals how, 'the home front was always more important than the narrow front in the Crimea', highlighting that the presentation of the war was becoming as important as the reality.⁹⁸ The Crimean War demonstrating the new potency of public opinion, its involvement in foreign policy and the ability of propaganda to motivate and manipulate opinion.

Combined with the jingoistic fervour that surrounded the war there was a marked turn in British society's view of war and warfare. As will be seen later in this chapter, the true nature of war was exposed for the first time by new methods of reporting. The traditional view of 'glorious war' ended in 1854 with the stark realisations of disease, starvation and military ineptitude. However, as MacKenzie's research shows, war and militarism seems only to have increased in popularity in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century and wars from the Sudan to South Africa and India were fought with huge popular backing.⁹⁹ The reasons for this reaction are threefold. Firstly, the patriotic propaganda that shrouded the Crimean War prevented the public from desiring a premature end to the war and indeed necessitated it in their eyes. Secondly, the Crimean War disasters caused the temporary death of the officer hero, but were immediately and lastingly replaced by the common soldier as a courageous figure, not the traditional conception of a degenerate brute. Finally, propaganda of another ideology commenced during this period in the hands of the Victorian idealists who believed that war was a rejuvenating and purging force that would heal the immorality that had become established in Britain over forty years of inactivity and peace. As Thompson argues, this idea of war as a beneficial force and duty, propagated in images from the Crimea to Khartoum, soon translated to the idea of 'the white man's burden' being placed upon Britain's shoulders, a duty to civilise the world and to prosecute wars whenever necessary.¹⁰⁰

A conspicuous propagator of this latter ideology was Tennyson whose poetry reflected his own views that the self-sacrifice and physical harshness of war would override the materialism and self-interest of the age and that a people united by war would learn a common humanity and values

⁹⁶ Henderson, 'The Pacifists', p. 354.

⁹⁷ Paris, *Warrior Nation*, p. 36.

⁹⁸ Briggs, *Victorian People*, p. 68.

⁹⁹ E.g. John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984).

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, *Mass Persuasion*, p. 102.

higher than the ledger.¹⁰¹ In one of his most famous poems of the period, 'Maud', Tennyson dedicated fifty-nine lines to the celebration of war and denouncement of peace.¹⁰² Maud's troubled central character ends up fighting in the Crimean War, as a just cause mainly because war highlights, 'the value of personal heroism, patriotism, and the meaning of the 'purpose of God, and the doom assigned.'¹⁰³ Although it is obvious that Tennyson was writing from his own viewpoint, revealed by the attitude of his family and himself towards the Russians, it is also possible that, as poet laureate, Tennyson was writing for his public.¹⁰⁴ His stoical view of war and its benefits was shared by the likes of Florence Nightingale who herself despised the materialistic class into which she had been born, finding solace in the hardships and reforming work of the Crimea.¹⁰⁵

However, this is not to say that war was simply regarded as a necessary evil by most Britons as the fervour surrounding the successes and heroic actions of the Crimean War rather reveal a zeal for, and pride in, war. Tennyson again became the voice of public opinion when he wrote 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' on 9 December 1854 for the *Examiner*, a poem which represented both his own emotions and those of the British public. He had been so moved by Russell's reports of the charge that he had written the poem in one sitting and decided to print and send a thousand copies for dissemination amongst the troops in the Crimea to raise morale.¹⁰⁶ The poem was a mélange of emotions promoting the heroic self-sacrifice of the men of the Light Brigade, but sadness at the appalling losses sustained. It was also one of the most successful Victorian poems becoming, 'a cornerstone of propaganda stressing the ethic of self-sacrifice'.¹⁰⁷ Such emotions were echoed in the *Punch* cartoon, 'Enthusiasm of Paterfamilias' which depicts the variety of reactions from jubilation to despair experienced in a British household as the father reads out Russell's report of the charge.¹⁰⁸ These ideas saturated the British public and further instilled a belief not only in the heroism of self-sacrifice in war, but also in the courage of the soldiers who would ride at the guns of the enemy without thought for themselves despite the ineptitude of higher command.

Russell's report, itself a mix of courage and calamity, was then the progenitor of such feelings, as it was read by Tennyson and thousands of other Britons on 2 December 1854.¹⁰⁹ Here then it is possible to see the power of Russell and the *Times* in this period as people reacted to his report and reflected his emotions. Similarly Russell's despatches relating to the successful battles of Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman were imbued with patriotic feeling. His accounts of the battle of Alma read like a 'rattling yarn from the pages of a boys magazine', the young officers were gallant and the soldiers fought courageously and steadfastly. The report of the battle of Balaclava, viewed by

¹⁰¹ Michael Adams, 'Tennyson's Crimean War Poetry: A Cross-Cultural Approach', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40, No.3 (1979), p. 416.

¹⁰² Ridley, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 418.

¹⁰³ Robert Martin, *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart* (Oxford, 1980), p. 387.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 381; Henderson, 'The Pacifists', pp. 334-5.

¹⁰⁵ Adams, 'Tennyson's', pp. 416-7.

¹⁰⁶ Martin, *Tennyson*, p. 381.

¹⁰⁷ Nicholas J. Cull, Entry on 'The Crimean War', Nicholas J Cull, David Culbert and David Welch (eds.), *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopaedia, 1500 to the Present* (California, 2003), p. 100.

¹⁰⁸ 25 October 1854; *Mr. Punch*, p. 192.

¹⁰⁹ Hankinson, *Man*, pp. 73-5.

Russell from a hill top above the ‘valley of the shadow of death’, contained a passage on the heroic stand of the Highlanders defending Balaclava from a Russian cavalry charge, captured memorably by Russell as, ‘that thin red streak topped with a line of steel’. This phrase, mutated into the ‘thin red line’, became a cliché of Victorian jingoism and caught the imagination of the British public. Russell even recorded the heavy losses and British failure at the final attack on Sebastopol on 8 September 1855 with a typically expressive report: ‘the French, like a swarm of bees, issued forth from their trenches to the doomed Malakoff, scrambled up its face, and were through the embrasures in the twinkling of an eye’.¹¹⁰ Hagiographical literature found considerable popularity at this time and the public were responsive to Russell’s heroic accounts, perhaps aiding the theory that the best propaganda is that aimed to reinforce, not override, popularly held beliefs or ideas.¹¹¹

Such reports were read avidly by the British public, and it is possible to draw some conclusions as to their effect. The *Times* circulation increased throughout the war, topping 70,000 by the fall of Sebastopol. Ardent readers, such as Gladstone, wrote of the, ‘wonderful details’ of the battle of Alma ‘and its sequel’, being engrossed by the daily press reports.¹¹² More reactions can be seen in the realm of theatre, which Bratton has argued was adaptable to circumstances, and therefore worked around Russell’s reports. For example, on 3 October 1854 the *Times* published Russell’s letter on the appalling postal service in the Crimea, and on 11 October Astley’s theatre was showing a play that included the comment, ‘the postal arrangements, so much complained of.’¹¹³ The theatres reflected the patriotic attitude of the British public as, ‘the Crimean War produced the most popular military presentations, when theatre managers vied with each other to present thrillingly patriotic displays.’¹¹⁴ Russell himself was very aware of the literal and metaphorical theatre he was creating in Britain and, by twisting an event or adding in a name, he could manipulate the truths told back home in the theatres, music halls and journals. Russell was even included as a noble, long-suffering character in the hugely patriotic and popular *Battle of Alma*, which began at Astley’s on 23 October 1854.¹¹⁵ Similar patriotic displays were to be found in British music of the period, with songs such as ‘Cheer boys cheer’ resonating with the troops and British public alike.¹¹⁶ Such songs were sung throughout the nation during the war, and newspapers printed sheet music and words to these songs, the *Illustrated London News* printing the words and sheet music to the song ‘The Heroes of the Crimea’ in December 1854.¹¹⁷ In the links between these media, therefore, it is possible to see the conception of a mutually reinforcing, saturated propagandistic environment, fulfilling part of the definition of modern propaganda outlined at the beginning of the thesis.

¹¹⁰ Hankinson, *Man*, pp. 67-71, 93-4.

¹¹¹ Paris, *Warrior*, p. 33.

¹¹² Entry 11 October 1854, H.G.C. Matthew (ed.), *The Gladstone Diaries with Cabinet Minutes and Prime Ministerial Correspondence, Volume IV, 1854* (Oxford, 1978), p. 653.

¹¹³ Bratton, ‘Theatre’, p. 124.

¹¹⁴ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, p. 47.

¹¹⁵ Bratton, ‘Theatre’, p. 125, 133-4.

¹¹⁶ Maxwell, *The Life*, p. 69.

¹¹⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 16 December 1854.

The language of war even began to pervade hymns and sermons, praise being given to the common soldiers who bore the worst of the war and yet performed the most heroic acts.¹¹⁸ Similar celebrations of the common soldier were conspicuous in the art world, especially as the decades before had been characterised by idealistic portraits of gallant officers in splendid dress uniforms.¹¹⁹ Many highlighted the sufferings of the common soldier, others on such heroic acts as the ‘thin red streak’, and after the war a series of Victoria Cross paintings by Louis Desanges focused on those soldiers of lower ranks who had won the award. The *Illustrated London News* recommended the works not as an artistic achievement but, ‘to all those who have a wholesome patriotic regard for the character and renown of our brave army’.¹²⁰ Others focussed on the reaction of the lower classes to the war and its effect on them, such as E.N. Downard’s, *Good News of the War* (1856).¹²¹ As Martin argued, the press can often be the best source of opinion but in ‘times of excitement’, such as a war, a rash of popular media appear as further symptoms of public opinion and as evidence of the success of the original propaganda message.¹²² In this way, it is possible to surmise that the patriotic and Russophobic ideas that were propagated in this period had a significant impact on the British public.

What then was the importance of such patriotic propaganda and activity? Why did propagandists want such patriotic ideas propagated and who were the propagandists? The displays of patriotism reveal the mass media in action, the public space being saturated with images, performances, journal pieces, news articles, sermons, hymns, poems and music, all disseminating similar, patriotic ideas. The Crimean War represented a grand spectacle to the audience at home, the representation of the war in the media becoming the British public’s experience of it. As Keller argues, it was an audience ready and willing for mass consumption of spectacular displays and therefore, ‘the Crimean War was processed to fit the given framework.’¹²³ Such propaganda also reveals the power of the media, and of Russell in particular, to shape public opinion, keeping the war popular from 1854-1856 despite the changes in fortune. Perhaps it is here then that the propagandist is revealed, in the *Times*, Delane and Russell. It is certainly possible to perceive the author of *Times* propaganda, the intent to highlight the mismanagement of the war, the content in Russell’s despatches and Delane’s editorials, and the reception as the message filtered down through provincial press and other media to affect public opinion. The press led public opinion, and public opinion could then influence governmental policy during this period from forcing war upon Aberdeen, to demanding the expedition take place in the Crimea (against the opinion of many military officials) and keeping Britain in a war in which she was sustaining enormous losses.¹²⁴ Undoubtedly then active propagandists are found outside of the government creating a complex propagandistic environment which was pushing officials to react and consider propaganda of their own. This was especially the

¹¹⁸ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Lalumia, *Realism*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

¹²⁰ *Illustrated London News*, 2 November 1860; Hichberger, *Images*, p. 64.

¹²¹ Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 104.

¹²² Martin, *The Triumph*, p. 101.

¹²³ Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle*, p. 70.

¹²⁴ *The History of The Times*, p. 174.

case with the campaign against the mismanagement of the war and the appalling condition of the British army, the second strand of propaganda in the *Times*.

J.T. Delane was at the centre of the power of the *Times* in this period, arguably the first ever ‘press baron’, inaugurating a distinguished lineage that was to include Lords Northcliffe and Beaverbrook. As such, he ‘charged the paper with an invisible efflux of personal power.’¹²⁵ His success was perhaps all the more impressive given his middle class background, as he enjoyed the company of the highest social and political elites. His social circle read like a register for both Houses, and Brendon argues that Delane, ‘was always hobnobbing in Rotten Row with peers and ministers of state... He revelled in house parties at which he was “the only specimen of the British commoner” present.’¹²⁶ Earl Clarendon kept up a correspondence with Delane and was a close personal friend of the *Times* chief leader writer, Henry Reeve, an intimate connection which aggrieved Lord John Russell amongst others.¹²⁷ Similarly, Aberdeen complained bitterly to Clarendon, ‘At a time when I was protesting in the House of Lords against revealing the intentions of the Government, our most secret decisions are made public!... It can only be from the Foreign Office that this information is obtained; and it seems to me very essential that the practice should be entirely discontinued.’¹²⁸ Despite such complaints, Delane was given greater access to Government information than any other editor as long as the Government received the support of the *Times* in return. However, even this deal was tempered, as Martin argued, ‘[Delane] accepted this position but greatly increased his independence by making friends with members of all political parties.’¹²⁹ Aberdeen himself was in contact with Delane, and the two men stood resolutely against the war until the events at Sinope.¹³⁰ When the MP A.H. Layard, who had been given a place on the committee of inquiry into the Crimean War, returned from the Crimea several newspapers in Britain argued that he had proceeded to the region as, ‘the organised agent of the *Times*’.¹³¹ After Delane himself went out to the front, Greville records that the editor met several times with the Secretary of State for War, Newcastle, to discuss the problems of missing winter provisions.¹³²

As Doob has noted, it is often difficult to distinguish the identity of the propagandist in a newspaper, as the news they present has been filtered through so many lenses from the source of information and the journalists, who themselves may be anonymous, to position and style applied to the article and the censoring or embellishing hand of the editor.¹³³ However, contemporaries

¹²⁵ Piers Brendon, *The Life and Death of the Press Barons* (London, 1982), p. 49.

¹²⁶ Brendon, *The Life*, pp. 43, 45.

¹²⁷ Hankinson, *Man*, p. 44; Benson, *The Letters*, p. 289.

¹²⁸ Aberdeen to Clarendon, 28 February 1854, Aberdeen Papers, Add Ms 43188, ff. 412-3, BL.

¹²⁹ Martin, *The Triumph*, p. 87.

¹³⁰ Correspondence of Aberdeen and Delane, 14 October 1853 to 13 March 1854, Aberdeen Papers, Add MS 43251-2, BL.

¹³¹ Delane to A.H. Layard, 3 May 1855, Layard Papers, Add Ms 38983, ff.331-2, BL.

¹³² Greville, *Greville's Memoirs*, p. 202.

¹³³ Doob, *Public Opinion*, p. 430.

clearly saw Delane as the force behind the *Times*. Even before the Crimean War, Charles Blake complained to Palmerston that Delane had a tyrannous control over England's most powerful newspaper, including its proprietor, John Walter.¹³⁴ It was a position not widely admired in political circles, as Delane's ability to influence both the public and Westminster was perceived to imbue the *Times* with too much influence. In the midst of the political upheavals of February 1855, Greville laid the blame squarely on Delane and the *Times*, as, 'The intolerable nonsense and the abominable falsehoods it [the *Times*] flings out day after day are none the less dangerous because they are nonsense and falsehoods, and, backed up as they are by all the regular Radical press, they diffuse through the country in a mass of inflammatory matter.' Later that year he again wrote of his disdain for the *Times* for, 'practising upon the popular credulity' of the public.¹³⁵ Greville realised the implications of the *Times*' domination and influence over and penetration of the British public. However, he also highlighted the fact that the *Times* was taken as an authoritative source, seen by many both in Britain and in the international community as a 'semi-official' organ, a factor that only added to the potential for the success of its campaigns. Therefore, when the *Times* and Delane made the unprecedented step to cover the Crimean War with a correspondent at the front, they could be sure that whatever reports were sent back would reach a large and influential audience, and if those reports contained controversial material then the implications would be far greater than in previous decades or with any other newspaper.

The appalling conditions in which the Crimean War was fought are well documented by contemporaries. The diaries of medical professionals such as Sir William Linton, Inspector General of Hospitals in the Crimea, and Dr. Alexander McGrigor, an army surgeon, contain full accounts of the disease and deprivation suffered by the British troops.¹³⁶ McGrigor wrote in his journal as early as August 1854 that his men were, 'all but dead from fever and dysentery... at one time 50 and 60 men were dying in 24 hours...', and of Scutari, 'none but an eyewitness can convey any idea of the terrible state of our once fine army.'¹³⁷ Many soldiers commented directly on the reports of the *Times*, most applauding Russell's work in highlighting such disasters. G. Buchanan, an officer of the Scots Greys, wrote to his mother, 'Read the leading article of the *Times* of 23rd December – it is quite true, every word of it. It is written by Russell, *Times* correspondent. Here he is furious at the way things are managed, and he declares he will show them all up. I only hope he will stick to his word.'¹³⁸ Similarly Lieutenant Temple Godman of 5th Dragoon Guards stated, 'I wish I could see Russell, I would get him to put it all in the *Times*.'¹³⁹ Henry Clifford, Brevet Major with the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade recorded the hardships suffered by the men, bitterly comparing them with the recent publication of Dickens' *Hard Times*, and offered further testimony both during and after

¹³⁴ Blake to Palmerston, 22 June 1850, Palmerston Papers, PRE/A/13/1-2, SUSC.

¹³⁵ Greville, *Greville's Memoirs*, pp. 243, 309.

¹³⁶ Diary of Sir William Linton, Add Ms 74761, BL; Chronicles of Dr Alexander McGrigor, Add Ms 61992, BL.

¹³⁷ Chronicles of Dr Alexander McGrigor, August 1854 and 20 November 1854, Add Ms 61992, BL.

¹³⁸ 'Letters from an Officer of the Scots Greys, to his Mother During the Crimean War', 17 January 1855, Add MS 1570/5342, BL.

¹³⁹ Hankinson, *Man*, p. 102.

the war years of the chronic mismanagement.¹⁴⁰ Thus the *Times* was given absolute credibility in the eyes of the families and friends in Britain that received such correspondence from the Crimea, and with no censorship system in place such comments suffered no restrictions. This also offers an early indication that the press was seen as an organ of change and protest by the military, increasing the power of that media and placing greater emphasis on the importance of a military-media bond. The potency of this in propagandistic terms is highlighted by Qualter who argues that propaganda effect arises from the interaction of a communication and an audience, and in ‘a creative transaction in which the persuadee takes active part in constructing meaningful responses to the symbols of the persuader’s appeal.’¹⁴¹ Thus the reflection of, and replies to, the propaganda of the *Times* enhanced its impact by creating a dialogue between propagandist and propagandee.

Perhaps the most damning indictment of the government’s management of the war was the fact that many of the problems had been predicted even before the initiation of hostilities. An official at the Foreign Office wrote early in 1854, ‘The right sanitary conduct of our campaign in Turkey may ensure its victory by saving our troops from excessive mortality... The grand points are to secure our men from cold and damp, from marsh miasm... and from the epidemic influence of bad water.’¹⁴² However, as has been said, there was nothing novel in either the deprivations of the troops or the mismanagement by the officers. There had been chronically mismanaged wars during the Napoleonic campaigns and only a decade before the Crimean War the British force in Kabul had been annihilated by the Afghans. However, new circumstances in which British public opinion demanded information had emerged and therefore, ‘To exclude reporters from the field of action would certainly have led, in the 1850s, to public outcry and great trouble and embarrassment in the corridors of power.’¹⁴³ Without this, there would have been little need or possibility to send reporters, and resultantly popular pressure could not have been exerted on the government in terms of foreign policy.

It was against this backdrop that Delane, with characteristic audacity, made the unprecedented decision to hire a professional war correspondent. That correspondent, William Howard Russell, would have the weight of the *Times* behind him, but more importantly the support and protection of Delane and his connections. However, there is some debate as to Delane’s intent in sending Russell and especially in orchestrating such a vigorous propaganda campaign against the government. Clearly there was a business rationale, as satiating a greatly augmented public desire for news from the front would increase sales of the *Times* and, whatever their political allegiances, newspapers are in the end businesses and will print news that will sell.¹⁴⁴ However, many contemporaries believed that there was a deeper motive behind the attraction to a sensational story, even beyond the desire to reflect or create public opinion. The Duke of Rutland wrote to Delane in

¹⁴⁰ General Sir Bernard Paget (ed.), *Henry Clifford V.C.: his letters and sketches from the Crimea* (London, 1956), pp. 124-7 (taken from a letter to his family, 16 December 1854).

¹⁴¹ Terence Qualter, *Opinion Control in the Democracies* (London, 1985), p. 110.

¹⁴² Mr. Ward (Foreign Office) to War Office, Horse Guards and Colonial Office, 26 February 1854, HO 45/5462, NA.

¹⁴³ Hankinson, *Man*, p. 55.

¹⁴⁴ Doob, *Public Opinion*, p. 428.

the midst of the *Times* campaign complaining that too much of it centred on the ineptitude of the aristocracy.¹⁴⁵ This particular strand of propaganda will be revisited, but Delane's attacks on the mismanagement of the war fit into a more general attempt by the middle classes in Britain to take their place as part of the ruling elite by highlighting the rule of aristocratic privilege over ability. Either way, both Delane and Russell had to ride a storm of aristocratic condemnation, as the stream of damning reports forced the public to reconsider the methods and men who were orchestrating Britain's foreign policy. These challenges were to have implications for relations between politicians, the media and military that would leave a vital propagandistic legacy, and which originated in the nineteenth century.

The crisis highlighted by Russell in the Crimea was threefold. Firstly, the lack of proper shelters, food, clothing and other supplies meant the troops suffered when winter arrived in 1854. Secondly, medical provisions were scant, with insufficient medical supplies, surgeons and doctors, and inadequate hospital accommodation. Thirdly, and arguably the cause of all these problems, was the chronic mismanagement of the war by both the military officers and the Aberdeen government. Russell inevitably felt pangs of patriotism and honour preventing him from informing the public of all he saw. However, as soon as he arrived in the Crimea he described the Allied base at Balaclava: 'words could not describe its filth, its horror, its hospitals, its burials, its dead... All the pictures ever drawn of plague and pestilence...fall short of individual "bits" of disease and death... in Balaclava.'¹⁴⁶ By November 1854, he reported, 'our men have not either warm or waterproof clothing... they are played into the inevitable misery of a winter campaign... these are hard truths, but the people of England must hear them...'¹⁴⁷ Here then it is possible to see the first of Russell's motives in starting this campaign to disclose the disasters he found in the Crimea, that of a sense of duty. Such a sense was reiterated by Delane to his correspondent throughout the war, stating in January 1855, 'continue as you have done to tell the truth, and as much of it as you can, and leave such comment as may be dangerous to us, who are out of danger.'¹⁴⁸ 'Such comment' alluded to Russell's attacks on the military commanders and British government as at fault for the chronic mismanagement of the war. Initially Delane only circulated such reports about Lord Raglan and his subordinates privately to the Secretary of State for War, the Duke of Newcastle.¹⁴⁹ However, in a dramatic initial invective against both the government and Raglan himself, Delane printed, 'The noblest army ever sent from these shores has been sacrificed to the grossest mismanagement. Incompetence, lethargy, aristocratic 'hauteur', official indifference, favour, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel and riot in the camp... no one sees or hears anything of the Commander-in Chief.'¹⁵⁰ Delane's participation in the more general campaign on behalf of the middle classes against the aristocratic control of all major offices irrespective of ability reinforces the idea that this

¹⁴⁵ 6th Duke Rutland to Delane, 16 February 1855, Correspondence of Delane, volume 6, f.15, NIA.

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Grey, *The Noise of Drums and Trumpets: W.H. Russell Reports from the Crimea* (London, 1971), pp. 151-2.

¹⁴⁷ Russell's dispatch, 25 January 1854; Hankinson, *Man*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁸ Delane to Russell 4 January 1855; *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁴⁹ Knightley, *The First*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ *Times*, 23 December 1854.

was a primary motivation in the propaganda. It was the intended effect of campaigns such as this that mark out Delane as a propagandist, and the organisation, mass constituency being aimed at and reached that demonstrate the modern nature of the propaganda.

Delane pursued an active line of self-ratification in his editorial and comment pages allowing soldiers in the Crimea and the disgruntled British public as a whole to use his columns to complain about the situation. On Christmas Day 1854, an extract of a letter was printed from a private in the 20th Regiment which contained passages such as, ‘We are poisoned with vermin and dirt; the men are dying with cold and exposure... Our worst misfortunes are a want of necessaries for the wounded... Our courage is unflinching – ready amid every privation to our utmost for old England’s honour.’¹⁵¹ The inclusion of this letter was not only important for the sake of its obvious propagandistic content, but also because of the author. In previous wars, the British public would not have cared for, or known about, the sufferings of a private, such men being commonly regarded as a ‘criminal element’.¹⁵² However, the Crimean revelations caused the common soldier to become a stoic hero, courageous and steadfast in the face of appalling conditions. The patriotic propaganda of the heroism of the common soldier fighting bravely for ‘old England’s honour’, and the propaganda concerning the chronic mismanagement of the war were inherently bound.¹⁵³ It was a battle the *Times* demanded must be fought, and defended itself against the inevitable cries of treason and unpatriotic behaviour that issued particularly from the ruling elite and especially Albert, who declared, ‘the pen and ink of one miserable scribbler is despoiling the country of all the advantages which the heart’s blood of twenty thousand of its noblest sons should have earned!!!’¹⁵⁴ In reply, Delane printed a leading article that began with the question, ‘Are we, or are we not, to publish the letters that pour in from the Crimea?’ The article continued to defend the ideal of truth over biased patriotism, stating that the maltreated soldiers’ voices must be heard through the mouthpiece of the *Times*.¹⁵⁵

Delane therefore saw his propaganda in the educative sense highlighted in the etymology chapter, pursuing and uncovering the truth for the edification of the public. Such a policy was augmented by the ratification of such ideas through other reports that flooded into the *Times*, much of which took its cue from Russell. Thomas Chenery, also a journalist for the *Times*, surveyed the tragic situation at the military hospital of Scutari from his vantage point at Constantinople. A typically acrid report ran, ‘It is with feelings of surprise and anger that the public will learn... that there is not even linen to make bandages for the wounded. The greatest commiseration prevails for the sufferings of the unhappy inmates of Scutari...’¹⁵⁶ It was the opening up of foreign policy and the Crimean War to the public, the skill of Delane and Russell to orchestrate a propaganda campaign to ensure a particular version of events was kept perpetually in the public mind, and the direct involvement of

¹⁵¹ *Times*, 25 December 1854.

¹⁵² Spiers, *The Army*, p. 117.

¹⁵³ Hichberger, *Images*, pp. 63-67.

¹⁵⁴ Hankinson, *Man*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁵ *Times*, 30 December 1854.

¹⁵⁶ *Times*, 12 October 1854.

that public in the propaganda that forced the Government to take note of the mismanagement as well as of the efficacy of the *Times* propaganda.

A Parliamentary Commission was eventually sent to investigate the crisis in the Crimea and establish any culpability, after the MP for Sheffield, John Roebuck, demanded its creation, his bill passing with a majority of 157 in January 1855.¹⁵⁷ The commission interviewed hundreds of officers, surgeons and officials, and the results were far more damning than the government had hoped. The hospitals were shown to be in a poor condition and lacking all manner of supplies, and without private aid would have been even worse. The men were shown to be ill-equipped and neglected throughout the winter, the results being starvation, disease and hypothermia.¹⁵⁸ The figures of casualties were perhaps the most telling facts of the crisis in the Crimea. Between January and February 1855, the British lost the equivalent of a Regiment every week through disease alone and, by January 1855, 11,000 British soldiers were able to shoulder arms out of the original strength of 55,000. Before the work of Florence Nightingale took effect, the mortality rate in the Crimean hospitals was near fifty percent. Perhaps the most chilling figure of all is the parade of the 63rd Regiment on 1 January 1855 when they could muster one officer, one corporal and seven privates. The regiment had left England in April 1854 with a full complement of 1,080 officers and men.¹⁵⁹

Such facts, figures and arguments were inevitably reiterated and reinforced in a variety of other media. In the play *The Fall of Sebastopol*, first performed on 10 October 1855, one of the characters informs the audience, ‘There’s not a pig sty in the United Kingdom that wouldn’t be clean compared with Balaclava.’¹⁶⁰ Most of the national and provincial press also printed letters from soldiers and the embittered population again opening up channels of communication with the public to further enhance the efficacy of the propaganda campaigns. The *Guardian* printed one from a private in Scutari hospital again ratifying everything Chenery had written.¹⁶¹ The *London Daily News*’ chief correspondent, Edwin Godkin, prophesied the disasters in supplies even before Russell reported them, highlighting the British management’s, ‘folly..., ignorance..., mistakes..., blunders..., oversights.’¹⁶² Whilst maintaining its Russophobic attitude and patriotism for the war, *Punch* also represented the feelings of the nation through several cartoons aimed at the ‘infamous mismanagement’.¹⁶³ The *Illustrated London News* printed their artists’ engravings of the hardships suffered by the troops, such as E.A. Goodhall’s *Carrying the Frostbitten to Balaclava*.¹⁶⁴ In the world of fine art, paintings such as T.P. Rossiter’s *Such is Life* showed the human misery surrounding the

¹⁵⁷ Royle, *Crimea*, p. 327.

¹⁵⁸ The documents are reviewed in, Tim Coates (ed.), *Florence Nightingale and the Crimea, 1854-55* (London, 2000), pp. 27-161.

¹⁵⁹ Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 47.

¹⁶⁰ Bratton, ‘Theatre’, p. 134.

¹⁶¹ David Ayerst, *The Guardian Omnibus, 1821-1971: An anthology of 150 years of Guardian writing* (London, 1973), pp. 103-5.

¹⁶² Knightley, *The First*, p. 6.

¹⁶³ See for example, ‘The General Fast (Asleep). Humiliating – Very!’ (21 March 1855); ‘The Queen Visiting the imbeciles of the Crimea’ (14 April 1855); ‘The Witness that ought to be Examined’ (3 April 1856). *Mr. Punch*, pp. 201, 203, 232.

¹⁶⁴ *Illustrated London News*, 3 March 1855; Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 61.

troops' return, a placard showing the death toll at 50,000 and calling the war a 'crime'.¹⁶⁵ The popular desire for realism in art had led artists to chart the sufferings and realities of war instead of its traditional glossy veneer.¹⁶⁶

Thus the public became saturated with another strand of propaganda aimed at the mismanagement of the war. The effect was inevitably increased because of this saturation, daily news enabling the repetition of particular propagandistic ideas that were then far more likely to embed themselves in the minds of an audience under constant bombardment.¹⁶⁷ However, how far is it possible to establish the success of the campaign against the mismanagement of the war? Greville gives one embittered answer that, 'We have never seen such symptoms that are now visible... People are furious at the untoward events in the Crimea.'¹⁶⁸ Delane had aimed to mould rather than mirror public opinion through the *Times*, making himself a potent force in politics and society.¹⁶⁹ This had in part been achieved by the editor's adept management of the material that flooded into his newspapers each day and by personally authenticating the reports from Chenery and Russell with thundering Editorials. One of these Editorials, which accompanied Chenery's invective against the management of Scutari, led to a further *Times* campaign for private aid and funds for the, 'poor fellows going through innumerable hardships.'¹⁷⁰ The emotive appeal caught the hearts of the British public, and through the winter of 1854-1855 over £20,000 was sent into the *Times*' fund which went onto finance vital aid to the troops of the Crimea and help Florence Nightingale's work at Scutari. Nightingale's departure itself had been a consequence of the *Times* campaign, and she became acquainted with John MacDonald who had been sent out to administer the *Times* fund.¹⁷¹ The success of the *Times* fund and its close association with Nightingale, the new heroine of the British public, served to further augment the prestige of the *Times* campaign and weaken the government.¹⁷²

The success of the *Times* campaign can also be judged by Newcastle's famous comment to Russell after the war, 'It was you who turned out the government, Mr. Russell.'¹⁷³ When the new government was formed, Gladstone wrote in his diary that it was a dire political crisis after the fall of Aberdeen, as few in the Parliament desired Palmerston in the highest office, proven by his difficulty in gathering together a coalition cabinet, but public opinion and the press forced the government and monarch to allow it.¹⁷⁴ When Clarendon assessed the political position at the end of 1854, he stated, 'Never in living memory had Parliament met under such depressing conditions – a nation angry and distrustful – a press vociferously invective, the *Times* raging against Raglan – all

¹⁶⁵ *Such is Life: The Return to London After the Crimean War* (1855); Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 106.

¹⁶⁶ Hichberger, *Images*, pp. 56-8.

¹⁶⁷ Doob, *Public Opinion*, p. 443.

¹⁶⁸ Greville, *Greville's Journal*, pp. 243-4.

¹⁶⁹ Brendon, *The Life*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁰ Grey, *The Noise*, p. 103.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp.104-5; *The History*, pp. 176-7.

¹⁷² *The History*, p. 179.

¹⁷³ Koss, *The Rise*, p. 106.

¹⁷⁴ Entry, 4 February 1855; Matthew, *Gladstone*, pp. 14-15.

the old mischief... but aggravated by an enterprising correspondent and electric telegraphy.¹⁷⁵ Previously he had stated that, ‘three pitched battles gained would not repair the mischief done by Mr. Russell and the articles upon his letters.’¹⁷⁶

Thus the public outcry, the veneration of Florence Nightingale, the popularity of the *Times* fund, the troubles the government had in containing the storm, and its subsequent collapse all point to the success of the *Times* campaign against mismanagement. This success in turn demonstrated the efficacy of propaganda in the novel circumstances of the mid-nineteenth century and therefore encouraged more propagandists and propaganda to develop. Superficially one might imagine that both the patriotic and mismanagement campaigns were orchestrated and supported because of an innate sense of duty in the Victorian mind as, ‘newspaper men believed in the ability, and indeed obligation, of the “fourth estate” to fulfil a social duty.’¹⁷⁷ Asa Briggs wrote that Victorian values demanded that those in a position to help the less fortunate had an obligation to do so.¹⁷⁸ In this light, the actions of Delane and Russell might have transpired because of such idealistic values, believing themselves in a position to keep popular patriotism alive and simultaneously to inform the public of the chronic problems in the war. However, at least some of the information disseminated was exaggerated and sensationalised for a purpose. Florence Nightingale herself admitted that the *Times* reports about the state of Scutari were exaggerated in places, and Dr. Andrew Smith, Director-General of the Army Medicine Department, referred to a press report of 1,500 wounded men being crammed on board the ship ‘Kangaroo’ on the way to Scutari with no doctors on board, the journey resulting in near fifty percent mortality. The true facts were 450 men on board with three doctors in attendance and just twenty-two died. Many soldiers also pointed out various errors in the *Times* reports, some refuting all that was said, others vilifying Russell personally for his spurious attacks on the honour of the army.¹⁷⁹

It is therefore necessary to revisit other motives. Christopher Hibbert argued that Russell was so maltreated by Raglan throughout his time in the Crimea, being ignored and denied all aid and rations, that he used his position in the Crimea and the power of the *Times* to discredit the efforts of the military establishment.¹⁸⁰ However, this cause was undoubtedly popular with one section of the population and the *Times*’ principal readership, the middle classes. They represented an increasingly powerful body of opinion, and yet were essentially prohibited from high office or military command by the aristocracy. By the time of the Crimean War, the *Times* was acting as the ‘megaphone of the middle classes’, perhaps due to the social origins of its editor and correspondents, but also in part due to the obvious and ready market of opinion within the middle

¹⁷⁵ Clarendon’s journal, 12 December 1854; Maxwell, *The Life*, p. 53.

¹⁷⁶ Clarendon to Henry Reeve, 3 October 1855; Maxwell, *The Life*, p. 100.

¹⁷⁷ Brown, ‘Compelling’, p. 43.

¹⁷⁸ Asa Briggs, ‘Victorian Values’, in Eric M. Sigsworth (ed.), *In Search of Victorian Values: Aspects of nineteenth-century thought and society* (Manchester, 1988), p. 11

¹⁷⁹ Hew Strachan, *Wellington’s Legacy: The Reform of the British Army, 1830-54* (Manchester, 1984), pp. 2-3; Hankinson, *Man*, p. 101.

¹⁸⁰ Hankinson, *Man of Wars*, p. 99.

classes.¹⁸¹ The Crimean War was certainly the perfect opportunity to promote the middle class campaign against aristocratic control of high office. It has been argued that the war gave ‘a vast impulse towards democracy’ because it exposed the incompetence of Britain’s established rulers.¹⁸² This middle class movement had its origins before the Crimean War, especially in the popular celebration of ‘common’ heroes. For instance, the heroes of Henry Yule’s ‘The Birkenhead’ (February 1852) had been, ‘Ordinary men... weavers from the stocking frame... But steeped in honour and in discipline... these undegenerate souls who sank.’¹⁸³ Such eulogies had traditionally been reserved for the gallant officer class, but they now poured into literature, art, music and theatre, representing a distinct social shift.

The *Times*, already the most powerful press organ in Britain by the 1850s, was an ideal champion of the middle class cause against the, ‘cold shade of the aristocracy’.¹⁸⁴ But what exactly were the middle class complaints? Principally they desired a more prominent role in politics and the military representative of their social and financial potency, and thus fought against aristocratic privilege in the forms of patronage, purchase of promotions and sole tenancy of Cabinet office positions. One series of letters in Sir George Grey’s papers concerned the so-called ‘Civil Service Question’ which was heavily debated throughout 1855, as it was observed that the quality of civil servants was dropping and that patronage was to blame for obstructing more able candidates from succeeding.¹⁸⁵ The *Times* was quick to pick up on such inequalities and particularly the need for rank in the armed forces by merit rather than birth and privilege. Incredible reports poured into the *Times* columns about all the noble officers sent to the Crimea treating the war as a social occasion bringing with them wine, dogs and even French chefs.¹⁸⁶ The *Times* proceeded to attack all the young gentlemen and aristocratic officers who cared little for the sufferings of the men in their charge. One thunderous leader ran, ‘The Commander-In-Chief and his staff survive alone on the heights of Sebastopol, decorated, ennobled... and ready to return home to enjoy pensions and honours, amid the bones of fifty-thousand British soldiers... people assume... that energy and skill are of no importance in the conduct of an army, which in war, as in peace, is only a Government organ for the advancement of the aristocracy and the support of the Ministry.’¹⁸⁷ The fury the *Times* could whip up concerning a particular case in the middle class cause is represented by the articles promoting Lieutenant Perry of the 46th Regiment. Perry was not an officer of noble birth, and was victimised by his fellow officers for refusing to indulge in the ostentatious living typical of the aristocratic officer class in this period. He was even brought to court-martial twice by his regiment on very dubious grounds. When the story broke in the *Times*, the public were outraged and a fund, orchestrated by the *Times*, was created to help pay for Perry’s defence and to buy him a promotion

¹⁸¹ Brendon, *The Life*, p. 46.

¹⁸² Jordan, *Alfred Tennyson*, p. 156.

¹⁸³ Paris, *Warrior*, p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ *Times*, 14 February 1855.

¹⁸⁵ September to December 1855, Papers of 3rd Earl Grey, GRE/B/152/51, DUSC.

¹⁸⁶ Knightley, *The First*, p. 5.

¹⁸⁷ *Times*, 30 December 1854.

which would have otherwise been refused. Civilians were even reported to have clashed with troops in Windsor where the 46th Regiment was stationed.¹⁸⁸

The problem of promotions and inexperienced or inept commanders was made obvious by the Crimean War. Lord Raglan, born in 1788, was nearing seventy when he was dispatched as commander of the British forces in the Crimea, his principal experience being military secretary to Wellington during the Battle of Waterloo. Similarly Lords Lucan and Cardigan, infamous for their roles in the disastrous charge of the Light Brigade, had both purchased their regiments for a staggering £30,000 each, and yet neither had any experience of war.¹⁸⁹ Such problems were well recognised within the establishment as the ‘Report of Commissioners on modes of promotion and retirement in the army’ on 12 June 1854 reveals. This commission highlighted the problem of seniority being the sole factor as to who gained the highest ranks, the report concluding that the aim of the inquiry was to, ‘ensure the presence in all ranks, of men to whose unimpaired energy and vigour may be entrusted the safety of the country.’¹⁹⁰ However, such commissions and reports were not enough for the British media and public opinion. Throughout the war, the campaign continued to demand, ‘the infusion into the government of the ability, energy, honesty and administrative capacity to be found in the ranks of the people.’¹⁹¹ *Punch* contributor Tom Taylor added,

If aristocracy’s cold shadow fall
Across the soldier’s path, to you (the electorate)
Is given
The might to rend away that ancient peril.¹⁹²

The media was making the new electorate aware of its ability to alter the present status quo of aristocratic rule. The *Times*, as ever, was the progenitor of such cries against aristocratic misrule, attacking the government early in 1855, ‘If the government... choose to sell themselves to the aristocracy, and through the aristocracy to their enemies, it is their own affair; we wipe our hands of the national suicide. All that we can do is to protest, and to warn, and that we will not cease to do.’¹⁹³ The effect was obvious even in patriotic theatrical productions such as *The Fall of Sebastopol* in which a British ‘other rank’ complains of the impossibility of promotion congratulating his Russian enemy, ‘for being in an army where he had been promoted on merit.’ He continued, ‘If you had been in some countries I could name, you would have continued a Subaltern unless an old aunt had died and left you a few hundred – family interests and old age are the grand qualifications on the

¹⁸⁸ Spiers, *The Army*, p. 100. Full coverage of the case and the *Times* campaign; *Times*, 14 July 1854 to 14 October 1854.

¹⁸⁹ Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁰ 12 June 1854, Papers of 3rd Earl Grey, GRE/B136/D11, DUSC.

¹⁹¹ Extract from the *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 February 1854; Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 95.

¹⁹² ‘Balaclava’, 17 February 1855. This poem was juxtaposed with the emotive cartoon ‘Well, Jack!’, *Punch*, Volume 28 (1855), pp. 64, 67.

¹⁹³ *Times*, 25 January 1855.

other side.¹⁹⁴ Replacing this traditional officer hero, railway navvies, Florence Nightingale and the common soldiers who had won the ‘Soldier’s Battle’ of Inkerman became the new focal points of popular eulogies.¹⁹⁵

Such media campaigns absorbed the likes of Sir Joseph Paxton and Austen Layard MP, both men from the middle classes who used their positions in the world of business and politics to advocate political and military reforms. Paxton organised a group of navvies to go out to the Crimea to help construct a much-needed transport network, and Layard had been so appalled by what he saw in the Crimea he had created the Administrative Reform Association to promote the case of administrative and military reform.¹⁹⁶ This association became such a potent force, absorbing middle class support, that Disraeli saw it as vital to take the lead of this institution to absorb some of its popularity.¹⁹⁷ Others were less adaptable and less successful, Aberdeen’s failure to adapt to the groundswell of opinion and the growing crisis sealing his fate. The numerous campaigns against the government, its army, and the aristocracy in general throughout the Crimean War were unprecedented in scale, and demanded a reaction from the government. The next section will explore the nature of this reaction, how successful it was and how important it is in the history of British propaganda.

The initial reaction was far from inspired. As with Raglan’s response to William Howard Russell, many politicians in Britain ignored or denied the existence of a problem. As late as March 1855, Stratford wrote to Clarendon, ‘The time if I mistake not, is coming when the evils of hospital administration will be found to have been greatly exaggerated and the benevolences of Mr MacDonald applied in great measure to the detriment and not to the advantage of the soldiers health.’¹⁹⁸ However, this incredulous veneer belied the increasingly frantic letters that Newcastle wrote to Raglan, desperate to verify or disprove the accusations being made almost daily in the columns of the *Times* and repeated throughout the country. Even when Panmure had taken over from Newcastle early in 1855, the pleading letters continued, the Government no more informed as to the situation in the Crimea than they had been before.¹⁹⁹ It is perhaps unsurprising that news from the war front may have been at times slow and sketchy given the immense distance involved and the scale of the invasion. However, the technological advances, particularly in steam and telegraphy, enabled a rapid flow of information for both official and unofficial news to flow from the Crimea, and more importantly, the public expected this constant stream. The key problem for the Government was its inability to keep on top of that information, allowing a press organ like the

¹⁹⁴ Bratton, ‘Theatre’, p. 124.

¹⁹⁵ The phrase was used by both Disraeli and Sidney Herbert in Parliamentary debates; Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 46.

¹⁹⁶ ‘Spades are Trumps’, 13 January 1855; *Mr. Punch*, p. 196; Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 50.

¹⁹⁷ Disraeli to Lord Stanley, 18 December 1855; Wiebe, *Benjamin Disraeli*, p. 460.

¹⁹⁸ Stratford to Clarendon, 26 March 1855, FO 352/42/B/5, NA.

¹⁹⁹ Sir George Douglas & Sir George Dalhousie (eds.), *The Panmure Papers*, volume I (London, 1908), pp. 103-6.

Times to become the primary source of reference for both officials and the public. Letters from the front reveal how soldiers were often kept informed of the situation through their reading of the *Times* columns and advised their counterparts in Britain to do likewise.²⁰⁰ Without the relevant knowledge, the Government was left without information to counter the *Times* propaganda, a fact that only compounded the common perception that the *Times* itself was the official mouthpiece for Britain.

Adding to this failure to understand the new scale and speed of information flow were the backward views of many of the central figures in the Government as to the use of the new media environment for the Government's own advantage. The Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, complained in the build up to the war, 'An English Minister must please the newspaper and the newspapers are always bawling for interference. They are bullies, and they make the Government bully.'²⁰¹ As seen, Aberdeen had been reasonably close to Delane in the years before the war, but as the *Times* absorbed the belligerent tenor of the nation they drifted apart. Indeed, Henry Reeve argued at the time that the virulence of the *Times*' attacks on Aberdeen's Government had only increased due to the Premier's being, 'cowardly and ungrateful' after concurring in Parliamentary assaults on the *Times* without acknowledging, 'those independent services which a Government does not disdain to receive from a newspaper.'²⁰² In short, Aberdeen was not playing by the rules of the press-political bond. This was confirmed by a letter written to Delane by Aberdeen's son, Sir Arthur Gordon, which pleaded Delane to include in the next *Times* an extract of his own writing which partly defends his father in the turmoil of the Roebuck motion, and thereby aid the government: 'I am afraid that my father's government having unfortunately lost your confidence cannot look for help from you...' He added that he was writing because Aberdeen himself refused to try and illicit extra-government publicity to help them and state their case, or highlight their proposed reshuffle of the cabinet despite its popularity probably saving them.²⁰³ Despite his connection to the *Times*, even in the build up to war Aberdeen had refused to offer any information to Delane and instructed his cabinet to follow suit.²⁰⁴ This latter command was especially directed at Palmerston, and particularly his connection with the *Morning Post*. The importance of Palmerston as entirely opposed in his views towards the use of the press will be revisited.

However, Aberdeen's reticence did not mean that there was no propagandistic reaction from the government during the Crimean War. As the pressure on the government and military high command mounted, there was an inevitable response. As Knightley explains, 'At this stage, someone in the establishment, possibly Prince Albert, realised that to restore public confidence in the conduct of the war some form of counter propaganda was necessary, and what better form could there be than the newly discovered medium that never lied – the camera.'²⁰⁵ The actual

²⁰⁰ E.g. Chronicles of Dr Alexander McGrigor, Add MS 61992, BL.

²⁰¹ Henderson, 'The Pacifists', p. 327.

²⁰² Brown, 'Compelling', p. 44.

²⁰³ Sir Arthur Gordon to Delane, 28 January 1855, Correspondence of Delane, volume 6, f.9, NIA.

²⁰⁴ Koss, *The Rise*, p. 103

²⁰⁵ Knightley, *The First*, p. 13.

circumstances in which Roger Fenton was sent, who initiated hiring him and indeed what their intent was is unclear. It is variously thought that Newcastle, Aberdeen or Prince Albert, himself a keen photographer who shared a darkroom in Buckingham Palace with Fenton, had inquired as to a suitable candidate for such a venture to the Manchester based 'Agnew and Sons', who replied with the words 'I know just the man for you'.²⁰⁶ Fenton's mission was clearly in part a commercial enterprise, Agnew seizing on the new public desire for 'real' images from the front.²⁰⁷ Indeed, Baldwin argues that it is unlikely that a 'discreet, foreign prince' or the Prime Minister would have had anything to do with such a propaganda exercise, it more likely being orchestrated by the business minds of Agnew and the railway magnate, Sir Morton Peto.²⁰⁸ Indeed, Fenton himself mentions that Newcastle and Sir Morton Peto MP secured his passage to the Crimea and ensured his reception by Raglan and his staff.²⁰⁹ However, Aberdeen, Newcastle and Albert were undoubtedly in constant contact concerning the problems in the Crimea, and Albert was especially vocal in proffering ideas for reversing the situation.²¹⁰ In fact, as Hannavy suggests, the Government had sent several photographers to the front before Fenton. The War Office first asked the New Bond Street Studio to send Richard Nicklin as an official war photographer in June 1854, but, after taking numerous calotypes, he and his work were lost in the freak hurricane of November 1854. Early in 1855, Brandon and Dawson were sent to take over the role, but their photographs were of such poor quality that none were produced.²¹¹

Clearly therefore there was official interest in using photographers to document the Crimean War, and it is possible to see similar official involvement in Fenton's instructions and treatment in the Crimea. Fenton was sent to the Crimea in February 1855 under strict instructions from the War Office to disprove Russell's accounts as to the poor state of the army and ensure the inclusion of, 'No dead bodies'.²¹² Fenton was undoubtedly moved by what he saw in the Crimea. He had written to his wife of emotive images of, 'skeletons, half buried, one lying as if he had raised himself upon his elbow, the bare skull sticking up.'²¹³ These skeletons were the remains of the heroic Light Brigade, graphically captured by Henry Crealock's painting 'All that was Left of them, Left of 600'.²¹⁴ Despite seeing such images, Fenton failed even to unpack his camera at the scene of the massacre because, as he explained, 'I see and hear many things here which I should never have known... Fortunately I know how to forget things which it would be mischievous to repeat.'²¹⁵

²⁰⁶ Lalumia, *Realism*, p.117.

²⁰⁷ Peter Turner, *History of Photography* (London, 1987), p. 113.

²⁰⁸ Baldwin et al. (eds.), *All the Mighty World*, pp. 19-21.

²⁰⁹ Fenton, Roger, 'Narrative of a Photographic Trip to the Seat of the War in the Crimea', *Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, 2 (21 January 1856), p.286.

²¹⁰ For example the debate on hiring of foreign mercenaries and reorganisations in the army, Prince Albert to Aberdeen, 11 November 1854, Add MS 43050, BL; also the resultant memorandum sent to all cabinet officials, 14 January 1855, Palmerston Papers, RC/J/1, SUSC. Stanley Weintraub, *Albert: Uncrowned King* (London, 1997), pp. 313, 318.

²¹¹ Hannavy, *The Camera*, pp. 8-11.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 14.

²¹³ Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War: A history of war photography from 1848 to the present day* (London, 1978), pp. 39-40.

²¹⁴ Lalumia, *Realism*, pp. 120, 217.

²¹⁵ Fenton to his family, 6 May 1855; Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 118.

Fenton's camera therefore lied by omission, as the portfolio he created by the end of the war was filled with carefully choreographed pictures of contented troops and officers, which the *Observer* criticised as unsatisfactory for failing to correlate with the 'real' war Russell was describing.²¹⁶ Compared with the exhilarating accounts of Russell's Crimean despatches and the popular illustrated press, the dull portraits of, *Cooking House of the 8th Hussars* (1855) or *Lt. Col. Hallenwell, his days' work over* (1855) could never have inspired a widespread propagandistic reaction against the *Times*. As a result, the general reception of the photographs was poor, the portfolio selling very slowly, denied a mass audience by its prohibitive price. If the intention of the War Office, Albert or Peto had been to turn public opinion against the *Times*, even if Fenton's photographs had contained a potent propagandistic message, their low circulation prevented any mass reaction. Nevertheless, the importance of Fenton's work is twofold. Firstly, it marked a precedent in the history of photographic reportage, to be followed and augmented by the work of Matthew Brady in the American Civil War. Secondly, that it was a 'politically significant' mission revealed that the British government were willing and able to manipulate the media for their own propagandistic ends, if inexpertly and unsuccessfully.²¹⁷

Fenton's mission to the Crimea does, however, reveal another facet of government propagandistic activity: censorship. Fenton himself was under strict instructions as to what he should document, and his links to Albert, Newcastle and Peto ensured a level of self-censorship once in the Crimea. Dining and socialising with the highest military officials also guaranteed allegiance, portraying the Crimea that they wished to be seen. Although Russell admitted a sense of loyalty to the troops and officers that he was reporting on, his treatment at the hands of the military high command and the disdain shown for his profession as well as his own journalistic instinct prevented a similar self-imposed censorship. The problem for the government then was that there was no official censorship system in place to fill this gap, much due to the fact that Russell's presence was unprecedented and there had been little need for such a system in previous wars. The initial reaction in terms of censorship was uncertain and half-hearted, bearing the marks of an attempt to censor the publication of material in an ostensibly democratic nation with a celebrated free press. Raglan initially wrote to Newcastle requesting that an agent, 'endeavour to see the different correspondents of the newspapers, and quietly point out to them the public inconvenience of their writings and the necessity of greater prudence.' He also went on to suggest that editors be asked to examine all the letters they receive carefully, expunging any potentially damaging information; that is to self-censor. Newcastle himself wrote a circular in December 1854 to various members of the press stating, 'Many complaints have reached me from the army of the advantages conferred upon the enemy by the publication of intelligence from the seat of war... I feel assured that I have only to appeal to your patriotism to ensure a rigid supervision of all letters, and an

²¹⁶ Turner, *History*, p. 114.

²¹⁷ Helmut Gersheim and Alison Gersheim, *Roger Fenton: Photographer of the Crimean War* (London, 1954), pp. 13-14.

endeavour to prevent the mischief of which Lord Raglan so reasonably complains.²¹⁸ Even after the change in government, the incoming Secretary of State for War, Lord Panmure, suggested the same remedy: ‘put it to their patriotism and honour whether they would endanger the success of the army by premature and improper publication.’²¹⁹

Clearly the principal concern of the government and military was that sensitive information, useful to the enemy, may be circulated by the newspapers. This was not an unfounded complaint, as the new telegraphic system allowed information to pass from the Crimea to England and back again quickly enough to be of military use. Sir William Molesworth wrote to Delane on this point in November 1854,

‘In today’s *Times* under the head “Black Sea Fleet” Russia is informed that Eupatoria is very feebly garrisoned, that therein are our great supplies of fresh meat, and that the Russians are idiots not to stop them. Now by means of the telegraph this information may reach the Crimea from London in ten days: and suggest to the Russians the expediency of attacking Eupatoria... Now such information is of little value to the British public, but may be of great value to the Russian army. I therefore cannot help suggesting the propriety of exercising a little censorship over the letters of the correspondents, and of omitting passages of the description in question.’²²⁰

Similarly the 2nd Duke of Wellington wrote the following year, ‘a censorship by the government would among its effects make the war unpopular. But far greater discretion might be practised in publishing – of course the overexcited correspondent writes what he sees and is probably hurried, but discretion might be practised at home.’²²¹ General Codrington finally took the major step on 25 February 1856 when he wrote a General Order appealing to the ‘common sense’ of the English people who, ‘do not want to see the interests of the Army betrayed by the thoughtless activity of a Correspondent’ and forbade any publication of details that might aid the enemy, and threatened the ejection of any correspondent failing to adhere to the rules setting a vital precedent for media, military relations and censorship.²²² It is significant that Codrington felt the need to appeal to the English public, perhaps anticipating an adverse reaction to any form of censorship in the new social and political context. It is also the greatest indictment of the tardiness of the government reaction to the new circumstances in which they were waging war that, by the time the censorship order had reached Britain, the war was over and Russell had been home for two months.

However, there were other official propagandistic efforts. Florence Nightingale provided the government with the opportunity to promote their cause, especially as she was the close friend of Mrs Sidney Herbert, wife of the Secretary for War. Clarendon, therefore, wished to set up

²¹⁸ Coates (ed.), *Florence Nightingale*, pp. 3-4.

²¹⁹ Knightley, *The First*, p. 15.

²²⁰ Sir William Molesworth to Delane, 25 November 1854, correspondence of Delane, volume 5, f.120, NIA.

²²¹ 2nd Duke Wellington to Delane, June 1855, correspondence of Delane, volume 6, f.44, NIA.

²²² General Orders, 25 February 1856, WO 28/131, NA.

Nightingale in opposition to the *Times* by proving that the hospitals were not nearly as bad as the reports of Russell and Chenery made out. When Nightingale instead used the *Times* fund to help restore efficiency and cleanliness to Scutari, Clarendon was naturally irritated but persisted and demanded from Lord Stratford, ‘a friendly hint from Lady S. to her [Nightingale] that her *obiter dicta* are converted into political capital & that her wants shd. be made known to you & to the War Dept. at home.’²²³ Nightingale was by this time a popular heroine, and the attempted requisition of her services by the government shows another forward step in their battle against the *Times* campaigns and towards organised propaganda.

A further populist move was made by Queen Victoria in conjunction with Lord Panmure in the creation of an abundance of Crimean medals for all ranks.²²⁴ This began with the Crimean campaign medal, with clasps for separate battles, and ended with the creation of the Victoria Cross.²²⁵ Myerley recognises such creations as attempts to satisfy the common soldiers who felt unappreciated for their efforts and give a boost to particular units or corps.²²⁶ However, it should also be seen in the context of the 1850s when the media and people were beginning to see the common soldier in a new light as heroic, stoical Christian soldiers who had borne the brunt of aristocratic misrule and deserved to be honoured. Similarly, Victoria and Albert’s commissioning of Cundall and Howlett to photograph a series of common soldiers with Russian prizes as ‘Crimean Heroes and Trophies’ in April 1856 can be viewed in a similar light. Such decisions were an attempt to, ‘capitalise on the public’s desire to find some redeeming aspects of the Crimean invasion at the end of the war’ and reflected the shift in the basis of patriotic feeling from the war in general to the common soldiery.²²⁷

Public opinion was perceived as a potent force, and the government responded accordingly by creating methods of tracking this opinion in order to react to it and understand it. The Metropolitan Police force, founded by Robert Peel in 1829, had undergone many improvements and changes even in the twenty-five years before the Crimean War. A national police force had been mooted and debated in Parliament since 1832 culminating in the 1856 County and Borough Police Act, the aim of which was to allow the central government far more control over provincial policing.²²⁸ This move towards nationalisation was unpopular with the public who believed, ‘that a police force under the control of the central government had more in common with the gendarmerie of the Continental despotisms than with traditional constables of the English shires.’²²⁹ The British public were fearful that their Domestic Secretary would begin to take on a similar role to the French Minister of the Interior whose job it was to ascertain and use public opinion. Their

²²³ *The History of the Times*, p. 178.

²²⁴ Dated 30 November 1854; Benson, *The Letters*, p. 72.

²²⁵ For the huge series of letters between Victoria, Panmure and many others concerning the Crimean campaign medal see, WO 32/7567, NA. For a similar series of letters and recommendations concerning the Victoria Cross see, WO 98/2, NA.

²²⁶ Myerley, *British*, pp. 94-5.

²²⁷ Lalumia, *Realism*, p. 126.

²²⁸ David Taylor, *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England: Crime, conflict and control* (Manchester, 1997), pp.36-8.

²²⁹ Wetzel, *The Crimean*, p.144.

fears were proven correct on numerous occasions as stories of plain-clothed policemen following members of the public broke in the press.²³⁰ Palmerston was also able to gather reports on public opinion through the police concerning the actions of individuals or groups acting against the government. One such report from S-Division of the Metropolitan Police details a public speech made, its length, its content, the key speakers, those attending, and how peacefully the meeting passed off.²³¹ These reports were utilised all over the country, as one of the first debates held by the Evening Debating Society in Birmingham attacked the incompetence of the Generals conducting the war, was reported on by spies of the Birmingham police and one of the key speakers was arrested and latterly imprisoned.²³² The competency of this informant police system is revealed even before the Crimean War, as the commissioners decided one of the easiest methods of ascertaining public opinion was through the media and so requested to be supplied weekly with a list of twenty-three British and European newspapers.²³³ By the time of the Crimean War, the government was aware of the capability of the police to act as a public opinion information source, and the Crimean War offered an opportunity to utilise this resource and demonstrate its necessity. Much of the information available was probably not used to its full potential, but the precedent of accessing and studying public opinion had been set.

However, the government was still incapable of imposing any form of overt control on the press, especially outside the remit of protecting the military from the release of sensitive information. It was more generally left to the patriotism of editors and journalists, the bonds between politicians and proprietors ensuring that they would not attack or damage the government or army unnecessarily. The problem obviously came when the media became more powerful and felt able to operate outside of these bonds, or when circumstances demanded a reaction from the press against a perceptibly inept government or military. However, the relationship between the media and politics remained central to official propaganda in this period, as politicians were forced to initiate and augment their relationship with newspapers and the media more generally in order to access public opinion. There had always been some interaction between the two spheres, but the Crimean War reinforced this process, demonstrating that manipulation of public opinion through the media had become a necessity. As has been demonstrated, this was not the case with the *Times* which remained a propagandist in its own right, courtesy of an unrivalled readership, but which nevertheless demonstrated the importance of the development of a stronger, if subtler, bond between the media and politics.

In keeping with the general belief of the mid-nineteenth century that the press should improve and instruct public opinion, the idea of governments and politicians using the media to manipulate the public was not seen as a destructive form of social control. Social control in this period was complex with numerous political and extra-Parliamentary groups vying to use the press to attract

²³⁰ Ridley, *Lord*, pp. 411-2.

²³¹ 6 July 1854, HO 45/5462, NA.

²³² Jones, *Powers*, pp. 195-6.

²³³ John May to H. Waddington, 3 April 1851, HO 45/3756, NA.

public support.²³⁴ Indeed, Earl Clarendon wrote to Henry Reeve at the *Times* concerning, ‘the expediency of rousing public opinion and informing the people of England that they are not the powerless effete community which foreign powers delight in thinking them... This, although difficult, might be possible if the Govt and the Press acted together.’²³⁵ Thus the government’s use of the press became of public benefit. However, this should not detract from the fact that this process was propagandistic, but rather highlights the differing conceptions of propaganda and education in this period.

Nor was the relationship of politicians and newspapers one of direct management but rather, as Palmerston himself put it, ‘compelling but not controlling.’²³⁶ By the time of the Crimean War, the bonds were based more on social interaction and subtle pressures, but, as the career of Palmerston before and during the war reveals, the system was no less propagandistically potent. Palmerston was clearly ahead of his contemporaries in terms of utilising the ‘labyrinthine networks’ between politicians and the press for his own benefit. His archives epitomise these networks on a local, national and even international level. One correspondent wrote to his private secretary that he had information about the creation of a newspaper in Tiverton (Palmerston’s constituency) which would place itself at the disposal of the minister.²³⁷ Another in Newcastle informed Palmerston that his rival David Urquhart had been, ‘agitating the public mind on Eastern affairs’ in that area and that his own newspaper would be willing to put Palmerston’s case across.²³⁸ One correspondent even wrote from Germany that a Bavarian newspaper, the *Augsburg Gazette*, was open to advocating British policy and would accept articles to put in its columns. Palmerston has noted at the side of this letter, ‘Might not some use be made of this man’s Pen?’²³⁹ With such forthcoming support, Palmerston found it easy to build up a formidable base of allies in the press willing to advocate his policy and promote his person.

Although many politicians of this period were beginning to understand the power of media backing, few were as adept as Palmerston who, ‘needed to make sure of newspaper alliances in order to win support beyond Westminster as a means of helping to sustain him in the face of almost perpetual challenges to his Parliamentary position.’²⁴⁰ Palmerston understood the actual and perceived power of public opinion and the importance attached to the press as a barometer of public opinion and so utilised his influence over certain newspapers as supposed evidence of popular approbation of his policies. Evidence of his ‘compelling’ hand on editors and journalists throughout the period before the Crimean War, can be traced to the 1840s in memos such as to the editor of the *Globe*: ‘Send for Blackburn of *Globe* and tell [‘ask’ here is deleted] him that though the rest of this article about the Caroline is well written, the parts underlined are calculated to do

²³⁴ Brian Harrison, ‘Press and Pressure Groups in Modern Britain’, in Shattock & Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian*, p. 262.

²³⁵ Clarendon to Henry Reeve, 1 April 1847, Clarendon Deposit, Ms Clar. Dep.c.534, ff.43-6, BLMC.

²³⁶ Brown, ‘Compelling’, pp. 41-2.

²³⁷ F. Price to Spencer Cowper, 9 April 1838, Palmerston Papers, PRE/A/5, SUSC.

²³⁸ Mr. Chapman to Palmerston, 17 November 1838, Palmerston Papers, PRE/A/7, SUSC.

²³⁹ Mr. Congreve Laudly to Palmerston, 11 October 1838, Palmerston Papers, PRE/A/6, SUSC.

²⁴⁰ Brown, ‘Compelling’, p. 44.

mischief.' Palmerston then proceeded to outline exactly what should be written on this subject in the next edition of the newspaper.²⁴¹ Often these instructions took the form of actual articles, penned by Palmerston and intended to be published verbatim in the columns of the newspaper, but without his name attached.²⁴² One, intended for the *Globe*, even carried the instruction, 'Copy this out and hand it immediately to Wilson of the *Globe* merely saying he is requested to insert it in the *Globe* of tomorrow, but without mentioning my name but signing your own and dating FO.'²⁴³ Thus newspapers became legitimising and deflecting sources, advocating his policy and disseminating his propaganda without reference to his name.²⁴⁴

This fact became especially important when Palmerston was vying to become the next Prime Minister as Aberdeen faltered against a belligerent public opinion. Gladstone noted early in 1854 that Palmerston was aiming to, 'drive Lord John out of the field by means of his war popularity.'²⁴⁵ This status was generated through Palmerston's media and was invariably made to seem spontaneous. Praise for Palmerston chorused from the *Morning Chronicle*, *Morning Post* and *Globe*, the latter leading with the conclusion that, 'Out of doors there is not a part of the country that has not contributed spontaneous expressions of the wish for Lord Palmerston to undertake [sic] the chief conduct of affairs.'²⁴⁶ This generation of spontaneity was supplemented by a keen sense of opportunism. When he resigned from cabinet late in 1853, there was wide speculation that it had been due to his opposition to domestic reform, and as a result he wrote to Borthwick at the *Morning Post*, 'The *Times* of today asserts that I have left the Government because I am opposed to all measures of Parliamentary reform. I wish you would say in the *Post* that this is untrue, that, on the contrary, I have been ready to agree to a very considerable measure of reform... state this, not from authority, but as what you have good reason to believe.' In fact, the events at Sinope offered Palmerston and the *Post* with a perfect alternative motive, and the following day the press ran that he had resigned over the Eastern Question and his desire for war with Russia.²⁴⁷

This support offered by the press was not unreciprocated. Palmerston's desires were generally expressed as requests rather than commands, and the flow of information was very much two ways. For example, he wrote to Doyle at the *Morning Chronicle*, 'Those who manage the Chronicle must of course be supposed to be the best judges of the way in which they can best execute their own intentions, and it may appear intrusive on my part to make any suggestions on the subject... If the Chronicle differs from the Government about measures which the Govt is proposing or supporting, nothing can be fitter than that it should freely and fully state its grounds of difference.'²⁴⁸ More than this, however, Palmerston actively cultivated relationships with journalists and editors. He rescheduled his speeches so that journalists were able to be there to cover them,

²⁴¹ Memo, 15 March 1841, Palmerston Papers, PRE/B/125, SUSC.

²⁴² E.g. Palmerston to Spencer Cowper, 26 November 1848, Palmerston Papers, PRE/B/137, SUSC.

²⁴³ Memo, 24 December 1848, Palmerston Papers, PRE/B/138, SUSC.

²⁴⁴ Jowett & O'Donnell, *Propaganda*, pp. 20-1.

²⁴⁵ Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries*, p. 596.

²⁴⁶ *The Globe*, 5 February 1855.

²⁴⁷ Martin, *The Triumph*, p. 198.

²⁴⁸ Palmerston to Doyle 18 March 1847, Palmerston Papers, GC/DO/82/1-2, SUSC.

giving him the circulation he desired and giving the journalists the story they needed.²⁴⁹ In more material terms, Palmerston helped Borthwick into a seat in the Commons and Easthope to a baronetcy.²⁵⁰ Editors and journalists were frequently invited to social events, especially Lady Palmerston's famous soirées.²⁵¹

Most importantly though he seems to have understood public opinion and the political power it could generate, as well as understanding the forces that could mobilise it. His maiden speech in the Commons, a quarter century before the Crimean War, argued, 'There is no nature, no moving power but mind... all else is passive and inert; in human affairs this power is opinion; in political affairs it is public opinion; and he who can grasp this power, with it will subdue the fleshy arm of physical strength, and compel it to work out his purpose.'²⁵² In this Palmerston followed Canning, but throughout his career expanded on to a much greater extent, actively cultivating middle class support, and, some argue, even working class support.²⁵³ Palmerston understood that in the novel context of the mid-nineteenth century it was possible to reign supreme with an almost wholly popular support base especially by cultivating the image of the 'man-of-the-people' and the 'most English minister'.²⁵⁴ He even understood that most successful methods of appealing to that popular support was through emotion over reason. He wrote to John Russell after the Crimean War that, 'nations in which the masses influence or direct the destinies of a country are swayed more by passion than by interest.'²⁵⁵ There are clear and significant parallels here between later theories of propaganda that emphasised the reliance of propaganda on emotional appeals. Palmerston's skill was to realise and play on this by highlighting his foreign policy credentials, and rousing the British public to match his apparent patriotism.

Palmerston's archives certainly offer a plethora of evidence that his policies and position were immensely popular in Britain in this period. Endless petitions, letters of support and articles echo similar sentiments, requesting Palmerston to take command of Eastern Question, and indeed the country, attacking the reticence and cowardice of Aberdeen cabinet, praising his stance.²⁵⁶ Although the historian should be wary of the fact that such evidence was collated for a purpose, it nevertheless offers a coherent and detailed tale of the general reaction to Palmerston. There is also corroborating evidence in other media. Charles Dickens, far from an advocate of Palmerston or his foreign policy, satirised Palmerston in *Little Dorrit*, published in serial 1855-1857, as Lord Decimus Tite Barnacle, leading the xenophobic masses of the Bleeding Hearts, 'with colours flying and the tune of Rule Britannia playing.'²⁵⁷ The result of such general popularity was that by the time peace had been declared Greville was able to comment that Palmerston was the most popular man in

²⁴⁹ Martin, *The Triumph*, p. 56.

²⁵⁰ Algernon Borthwick to Palmerston, 6 July 1855, Palmerston Papers, GC/BO/2, SUSC; Brown, 'Compelling', p. 54.

²⁵¹ Brown, 'Compelling', p. 47.

²⁵² *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 2nd series 21, c.1668, 1 June 1829.

²⁵³ Brown, *Palmerston*, pp. 4, 13.

²⁵⁴ Brown, *Compelling*, p. 61.

²⁵⁵ Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War* (Suffolk, 2003), p. 71.

²⁵⁶ E.g. Palmerston Papers, PRE/C/87, PRE/C/95, GMC/47/1-4, MPC/1523, MPC/1561, SUSC.

²⁵⁷ Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (Oxford, 1982), p. 254.

England and the opposition was in a shambles.²⁵⁸ He, in his own words to his brother William, had become 'inevitable'.²⁵⁹ Whereas the efforts of the *Times* during the Crimean War demonstrated the power of the media in orchestrating propaganda campaigns and organising public opinion, Palmerston demonstrated that officials could utilise that media to their own, and the government's, ends whether in war or in peacetime. The circumstances of the Crimean War, and the context in which it was fought, served to emphasise both the need and opportunity for these bonds to form and for propaganda to develop as a result.

The concurrent and conterminous rise of the power of both public opinion and the media were principal factors in making the Crimean War the first war of the modern era.²⁶⁰ The fact that it was reported on the spot in both words and pictures and rapidly transmitted to the British public was new to warfare. Despite the fact that there was nothing novel in the disastrous state of the army in the Crimea, the military command and government had to approach these problems in a radically different way and in changed circumstances.²⁶¹ The results are numerous and clear; a government fell, a commander-in-chief was recalled, inquiries into the state of the British army as an institution were made and the ruling elite was openly chastised for their inept management of the war. In this way, the Crimean War was an ideal breeding ground for propaganda, as it was popular in aim, but unpopular in execution. The press, and certain politicians, were able to whip the public into a state of Russophobic fury and patriotism, and yet simultaneously attack the prosecution of the war as the casualties mounted and Russell's reports poured in. Both these propaganda campaigns also served the common purpose of highlighting the new potency of the middle class and their desire to have a greater input into contemporary politics.

The initial, bitter attacks on Russell and Delane for their 'treasonous' reporting are indicative of the uncertainty with which the government and military reacted to their foreign policy being in the public eye. However, as has been seen, their reaction was not limited to recriminations. Through a series of pragmatic, spontaneous responses to the new context of the war, the military enforced a censorship system that was to forge a new relationship between the military and the media and act as a basis for wartime censorship to this day. They attempted to use the new medium of photography as a source of counter-propaganda, marking perhaps one of the first direct propagandistic actions of a British government in wartime. There is also evidence that the government was responding to the popular demand for the constant supply of news: one memo from the War Department, printed in the *London Gazette*, stated, 'The Duke of Newcastle feels it is his duty, in publishing a telegraphic despatch, to caution the public against expecting any details for

²⁵⁸ Entry 14 May 1856; Greville, *The Greville*, p. 45.

²⁵⁹ 15 February 1855; Ridley, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 436.

²⁶⁰ Lalumia, *Realism*, p. xx.

²⁶¹ Hankinson, *Man*, p. 83.

several days. Everything which is received by the Government will be published immediately.²⁶² The *Illustrated London News* carried an article and sketches of new mobile telegraphic apparatus purchased by the Government and their intention to use it to improve the speed of communications.²⁶³ Such actions were to fail during the Crimean War, as institutional propaganda could not effectively combat the media-led public outcry against the war on a spontaneous and unplanned basis, but the precedent had been set for future wars. The Crimean War had shown that the government must win the battles for public opinion as well as in the field in order to prosecute a war successfully. As Palmerston himself wrote, the reason for the problems in the Crimea was that, 'the people of England has not yet pronounced its will until now.'²⁶⁴ It was a lesson that did not necessarily destroy the ruling elite's control of political and military institutions, but it did result in a spate of reforms.

Therefore the Crimean War was 'Janus-like', being a shocking demonstration of a Napoleonic army thrust into a modern war in a modern context.²⁶⁵ Militarily the government had learned very little from the Crimean experience, as the 'echo from the Crimea' in Gallipoli sixty years later revealed. However, the Crimean War had taught both the British people and government other lessons. The British public found a new respect for common soldiery and campaigned for the improvement of their position. The middle classes found that their voices could be heard through the media and they could have an impact on British policy which might even win them their place in charge of British institutions. As a result of these realisations, the British government was forced to recognise the necessity of propaganda, utilisation of the media and manipulation of public opinion, especially during a war.

Indicative of the new approach to the press was the figure of Lord Palmerston. He cultivated his press connections to great effect during the Crimean War. This is perfectly evident in the complex social networks between Palmerston and editors such as Delane, and even certain journalists.²⁶⁶ Owing to his heavy media involvement and influence with public opinion, Palmerston has been seen as the first in a long line of political manipulators, or propagandists.²⁶⁷ Many other such threads begin in the Crimean War, with Delane as the first press baron, Russell as the first war correspondent and Fenton as the first war photographer. These threads tie the propaganda of the nineteenth century inexorably to that of the twentieth, making the Crimean War a watershed in communications history.

This chapter has shown, therefore, that propaganda, both official and private, did exist and develop during the Crimea War. However, both were in a nascent state. The context of the war, and the circumstances in which it was fought, provided a fillip to the emergence and development of more modern forms of propaganda. In keeping with the definition of modern propaganda given

²⁶² *London Gazette*, 30 September 1854.

²⁶³ *Illustrated London News*, 11 November 1854.

²⁶⁴ Brown, *Palmerston*, p. 198.

²⁶⁵ Royle, *Crimea*, p. 514.

²⁶⁶ Brown, 'Compelling', p. 61.

²⁶⁷ Koss, *The Rise*, p. 4.

at the beginning of this thesis, the context by the time of the Crimean War had provided a mass audience, mass media, and technological developments in communications resulting in a constant and permanent flow of information. Even the *Times* stated in 1854 that, ‘The present position of England has scarcely a precedent in her own or in any other history.’ Now Britain was *expected* to provide lines of communication, via telegraph, letter and steamship, between the troops and ‘every post-office in these isles’.²⁶⁸ Such a link was unprecedented both in possibility and necessity before 1854, and it was such novel circumstances that made propaganda itself both necessary and possible. An article entitled ‘Lessons from the War’ in *Blackwood’s*, pointed to the possibility that the greatest lesson in the war had been to augment the army so that it might never again be ‘caught asleep’.²⁶⁹ The government too learnt that they should not be caught asleep in their management of public opinion and the media during a war. The tools and circumstances were now in place to mount a modern propaganda campaign and the government had been shown how successful such a campaign could be. The next chapter will explore how these developments were put into practice in the years between the Crimean War and Boer War, how the propaganda of public bodies came to assimilate that of private bodies and how the rise of mass political parties, additional media and the emergence of popular imperialism acted as further catalysts in the development of modern propaganda in Britain.

²⁶⁸ *Times*, 29 May 1854.

²⁶⁹ ‘Lessons of the War’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 79, No.484 (February, 1856), p. 242.

Chapter 3: Propaganda Between the Wars: Transitions 1856-1899

Twenty years after the fateful winter of 1854-55 in the Crimea, the subject of the war, condensed into its emblematic incidents, could still meet with intense public interest because it lay at the heart of a seismic social shift within Victorian society of the mid-century.¹

The previous chapter revealed how the Crimean War, both by its own nature and due to the fact that it was fought in a period of social and technological change, opened the door to propagandistic development as well as a raft of other reforms and changes. Although Asa Briggs has argued that the immediate aftermath of the war left, ‘only lingering memories’ and gave way to a docile ‘age of Palmerston’ free from the social fervour and political upheavals of the 1830s and 1840s, it is clear that the Crimean War survived in both political and popular memories.² Works of art such as Lady Butler’s *The Roll Call* captured the bedraggled army of the 1854-55 winter rekindling memories of military mismanagement and aristocratic incompetence. New fears of a war over the resurgent ‘Eastern Question’ in the 1870s inevitably sparked a series of journal articles and debates that paid close attention to the events of the 1850s, and the threat of a new Crimean War in 1877 was, ‘confronted by an effective Russophobe opposition of jingoists, who advanced their own form of populist, music-hall demagogy.’³ Such productions also continued to refer to the Crimean War itself, simultaneously complaining of the nation’s ingratitude to its heroic veterans and raising a patriotic cry for similar acts of bravery.⁴ The key political upheavals and events of the war were constantly referred to in the press and journal articles. For example, one *Times* article commented in reference to the upcoming election of 1892 that the Crimean War was a ‘prominent political landmark’, paying especial reference to the decline of liberalism in Manchester after Bright’s vocal opposition to the war.⁵ Generally, the impressive literary output that started during the war continued well into the twentieth century in journals, newspapers and personal memoirs.⁶

These were clear symptoms of the lasting impact of the Crimean War itself on later Victorian politics and society. However, the aim of this chapter is to consider how the context changed in the period 1856-1899 leading to a fulfilment of the criteria for the definition of modern propaganda: a mass audience; a mass media; the ubiquity and permanent presence of propaganda; an organised and sophisticated approach to its use; an increasing number and variety of propagandists; and the theorisation and understanding of the word and idea. This was a period of great upheaval and progress, and this chapter will therefore firstly consider political and educational reforms, exploring how public opinion developed as a force in British politics, and whether it was creating a truly mass

¹ Tim Wilcox, ‘Painting and public, print and profit: Lady Butler’s painting ‘Balaclava’ and its dissemination’, in Popple & Toulmin (eds.), *Visual Delights*, p. 127.

² Briggs, *Victorian*, p. 96.

³ Eitan bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799-1917* (Oxford, 2005), p. 204.

⁴ Senelick, ‘Politics’, pp. 173-4.

⁵ *Times*, 25 December 1891.

⁶ For example, Douglas Arthur Reid, *Memories of the Crimean War* (London, 1911).

audience capable of and willing to participate in the political process. This section will consider how technological advances created further possibilities for the public to access information quickly, for the information flow to be manipulated and controlled, and for groups or individuals to access the public through that process. Such advances have implications for the development of a context in which the manipulation of opinion was made more possible, necessary and desirable. The chapter will then turn to developments in the media, analysing the impact of the advance of the popular press as well as the arrival of new media forms such as film. This section will analyse how and why the various media developed in this period, how far elements of the media continued to act as propagandists in their own right (as had been the case with Deane and the *Times*), and how far the media was utilised by groups and individuals, especially centrally, for their own propagandistic ends. The impact of the growth of the media on the development of the press, political and military-media bonds, and the relationship of those bonds to the development of propaganda will also be explored. Key stakeholders in these changes were the political parties, themselves affected by the changing context and circumstances of the later nineteenth century. This chapter will therefore go on to analyse the mutation of political parties into a perceptibly more modern form, and consider whether there was a concurrent, increased recognition and adoption of propaganda by those parties. Finally, the chapter will highlight the importance of imperialism throughout this period, both generally and in terms of the growth of modern propaganda. It is important to note, however, that this chapter is not intended to be a history of British political culture or imperialism, but rather its focus is on the impact of propaganda on British politics and imperialism and of politics and imperialism on propaganda.

This was, therefore, a key period of transition and change between the two ‘framing’ case studies of the Crimean and Boer Wars, and will demonstrate the lasting impact of the former in catalysing the development of propaganda, and reveal how the propagandistically charged environment of the latter was reached. As will be seen, the development of both the context and of propaganda was neither smooth nor linear, and reflects the complex and uneven etymology and understanding of the word itself. Changes in contextual circumstances did, however, tend to run concurrently with developments in propaganda and this was often because the circumstances that were pushing Britain towards democracy were not only creating opportunities for the use of propaganda and necessitating that use, but were also posing increasingly difficult questions as to how such a force might operate in democracy.

Although it was argued in the previous chapter that Palmerston was a skilled political manipulator, ahead of his times in terms of appealing to a mass public opinion through the media, Briggs has contended that it was only after his death in 1865 that British politics, ‘took a new turn’

and began to modernise and shake off its *laissez faire* attitude.⁷ The Reform Act of 1867 was bound to have an impact on British politics and society, as its implementation meant creating an additional one million voters, nearly doubling the pre-1867 electorate. Electoral rolls such as Blackburn grew from 2,000 to 10,000, incorporating for the first time working class voters.⁸ There was also far greater intensity in electoral activity after 1867, since the number of uncontested constituencies dropped from nearly half in the years 1832-1865 to less than a quarter between 1867 and 1885, as well as encouraging a vast increase in the number of candidates standing at any one general election. The result was that more people were becoming involved in politics and more of the public needed to be canvassed.⁹

This was particularly controversial, not least within the ranks of the Conservative Party itself. Lord Derby famously termed it Disraeli's 'leap in the dark', and to many within his own party it was not at all apparent that the Conservative leader's newly enfranchised working classes would support their party.¹⁰ However, perhaps as important was the rejection of this leap by members on the other side of the House as well as by contemporary commentators and theorists who all feared the implications of such a change. Coventry Patmore called it, 'The year of the great crime', and Carlyle railed against Disraeli's debasement of British politics, 'grasping at votes, even from the rabble.'¹¹ Walter Bagehot wrote in the *English Constitution* that, 'a political combination of the lower classes, as such and for their own objects, is an evil of the first magnitude... and their supremacy, in the state they now are, means the supremacy of ignorance over instruction and of numbers over knowledge.'¹² More Radical thinkers feared the implications of such an increase in the franchise, Mill seeing it only as a boost to the tyranny of, 'a governing majority of manual labourers' muting individual thought and action, while even Bright equivocated when he foresaw the enfranchisement of a dependent class.¹³ As chapter one demonstrated, it was theorists such as Mill and Bagehot who were the first to highlight the potential dangers in terms of political manipulation of a large, uneducated, enfranchised mass, and it is significant that they stood firmly against the Act in 1867 that introduced both a larger franchise, necessitating and resulting in a greater emphasis on manipulation of the public.

What many of these authors feared was the enfranchisement of a deferential class. *Reynold's Newspaper* attacked the Reform Bill in the early stages of debate as an attempt to enfranchise, 'working men who are most under the control of the middle classes', bemoaning the idea of, 'admitting another batch of dependent voters.'¹⁴ Certainly this fear was not unfounded. Pugh's research into Conservative voting trends has revealed that even as electorates such as Blackburn

⁷ Briggs, *Victorian*, p. 99.

⁸ Martin Pugh, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain: Continuity and Change, 1880-1987', *The Journal of British Studies*, 27, No.3 (1988), pp. 271-2.

⁹ Angus Hawkins, 'British Party Alignment and the Indian Issue, 1857-1858', *Journal of British Studies*, 23, No.2 (1984), pp. 665-6.

¹⁰ Pugh, 'Popular', p. 258.

¹¹ Thomas Carlyle, 'Shooting Niagara: and After?', *MacMillan's Magazine* (August, 1867), p. 11.

¹² Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (London, 1872), p. 20.

¹³ Briggs, *Victorian*, pp. 306-7; John K. Walton, *The Second Reform Act* (London, 1987), p. 18.

¹⁴ *Reynold's Newspaper*, 28 January 1866; see, Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp. 171-2.

incorporated a working class majority after 1867 they continued to return Tory members. Indeed, by the 1890s, many areas of England, such as Birmingham and Merseyside, were dominated by the Tory party, based for the most part on working class support.¹⁵ It was perhaps partly this deference that Disraeli had relied on when taking his leap but, as Freda Harcourt has argued, it was also performed with the safety net of foreign diversion. The public interest and backing of the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny had shown that foreign wars and adventures could be utilised to shore up support of the government and distract the newly enfranchised masses from domestic social problems.¹⁶ Disraeli therefore turned towards foreign policy and, most significantly, a form of ‘new imperialism’ that could attract his emerging electorate, binding the wave of patriotic fervour to Toryism. The need to generate and disseminate the materials to encourage such popular imperialism created and developed an important genre of propaganda that was to take a central role in the propaganda of the Boer War, the subject of the final chapter.

Such a change in approach and context also required a transformation of the style, content and scale of party propaganda. As will be seen, this transformation was to be an important stage in the development of propaganda more generally, as it demonstrated the acknowledgment and adoption of propaganda on a greater scale by central organisation and a growing interaction with the media. A clear indication of such a shift in direction was the staging of the first Conservative Party conference in 1867, where John Gorst opened the proceedings as chairman underlining that its new purpose was consider how the Conservative party might best approach a mass constituency.¹⁷ This new ethos was certainly reflected in the propagandistic output of the Conservative Party after 1867 as their pamphlets and leaflets became more tailored towards a larger, and more predominantly working class audience. The traditional stolid, verbose and high-minded appeals of the previous output were rapidly replaced with shorter, stylised and simplified arguments. Their content was also clearly aimed at the new voters, one pamphlet from early in 1868 declaring in bold type, ‘The Tory Reform Act: What it must we do with it? Register! Register! Register!’¹⁸ The style and tone of the majority of these pamphlets and leaflets suggest that at least a portion of their intended audience was the working classes, but several make it explicitly clear that they were targeting a particular class, demonstrating the perceived presence and potency of an increasingly mass audience.

More generally, 1867 led to the advent of mass parties and mass organisations capable of producing and orchestrating propaganda on the scale required to approach the new electorate. As a greater proportion of the public became politically empowered, as more elections became contested and more politicians sought to contest those elections, there was inevitably a greater need to manipulate the public. This in turn led to a growth of extra-parliamentary organisation across the parties, as well as the emergence of political parties themselves as, ‘autonomous institutions enjoying mass membership, centralised bureaucracies and an aspiration to ideological

¹⁵ Pugh, ‘Popular’, pp. 271-2

¹⁶ Freda Harcourt, ‘Disraeli’s Imperialism, 1866-68’, *Historical Journal*, 23, No.1 (1980); John M. Mackenzie, ‘Introduction’, John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), p.2.

¹⁷ Richard Kelly, ‘The Party Conferences’ in Seldon and Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century*, p. 225.

¹⁸ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party. Series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1868/8, DUL.

homogeneity.¹⁹ The Act of 1867, as well as the subsequent Secret Ballot Act of 1872 and Corrupt Practices Act of 1883, led to a great expansion in permanent party organisation, becoming increasingly expert in the methods of mass mobilisation.²⁰ These changes will be dealt with in more detail later in the chapter but importantly 1867 had catalysed a need for larger, centrally orchestrated parties which in turn gave the ability to disseminate more propaganda to a greater number of people.

The Reform Act of 1884 did much to augment this process with nearly two thirds of the adult male population now voting, including for the first time coal miners and agricultural labourers. This meant a rise from 2.53 million voters in 1871 to 5.68 million in 1884. Such an addition confirmed to many the need to extend the reach of the political party into society, canvassing more individuals and groups than ever before. After another extension of the franchise and then a further Liberal victory in 1886, this change can particularly be seen in the Conservative Party. After 1886, as Pugh notes, ‘Every constituency was to be required to set up a Conservative association affiliated to the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations (NUCCA), which was itself to stimulate local organisation, spread propaganda, and hold annual conferences.’ In addition, various popular organisations, affiliated with but not directly run by the party, capable of, ‘embedding the Conservative cause into the routine social life of many communities’ were established.²¹ At the same time, the events of 1884, as well as the Corrupt Practices Act, prompted both parties to move towards the creation of professional party workers capable of carrying out the vastly increased workload. Indeed, Green has argued that, ‘with the Third Reform Act, the age of professionalised politics had arrived.’²² A boom in political communication was the inevitable result of such changes, owing both to its necessity and possibility. The ‘advice to voters’ series seen in 1867 was repeated with renewed vigour after 1884. Titles such as, *A Few Words to the New Voters* (1885) and *How to Vote: To the Newly Enfranchised Electors* (1885) were printed by the newly centralising Conservative Party. The reform acts, therefore, led to an increasing ubiquity not only of politics in British society but of political communication.

The simple demographic changes in Britain by the turn of the century are also worthy of note. Migration meant that seventy-seven per cent of Britons were described as ‘urban’ in the 1901 census. London’s population had grown from two million in 1841 to nearly six million by 1901, and the overall population of the United Kingdom had reached thirty-nine million. As Fraser acknowledges, ‘The substantial demographic changes of the fifty years before the First World War irrevocably changed society, and undoubtedly influenced demand for goods and services.’²³ A mass market had been created and had to be catered for by the media, businesses and the state. Millions of people had been uprooted from the micro-groupings of the past – their churches, villages and

¹⁹ Hawkins, ‘British Party’, pp. 665-6.

²⁰ Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp. 163, 178.

²¹ Pugh, ‘Popular’, p. 259.

²² E.H.H. Green, ‘An Age of transition: an introductory essay’, in E.H.H. Green (ed.), *An Age of Transition: British Politics 1880-1914* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 11.

²³ Fraser, *The Coming*, pp. 7-12.

families – and placed within a mass of individuals. This new mass was also becoming increasingly politically active and aware due to the other major reforms that characterised the period before the First World War. In 1833 the Education budget for Britain was £20,000 per annum, with an Education Department not even created until 1839. Reforms under Palmerston had pushed the budget up to £451,000 by 1856, but it was not until the Education Acts of 1870 and 1880 that schooling became compulsory at an elementary level. Salisbury's Act of 1891 which ensured that elementary education was free resulted in a doubling of the number of children in education between 1891 and 1896. Further Education Acts in 1899 and 1902 were to make schooling compulsory up to the age of twelve and vastly improved the scope and efficiency of elementary, secondary and technical education. By the turn of the century, an entire generation of Britons had grown up under a system of compulsory education and, by its conclusion, were sending all of their children to school for free to at least the age of twelve. In terms of propaganda, the key result of these reforms and advances was the creation of a far more literate public able to absorb more from the similarly advancing mass media.

Equally significant in creating the conditions for the necessary development of propaganda were the technological advances made over this period. Harding and Popple argue that, 'since the first great wave of industrialisation Britain was increasingly engulfed in a mass of changes which were to alter the very nature of society irrevocably.'²⁴ Society had been given access to the world around it through developments in politics and education, but, as the Crimean War had revealed, it was a modern communications network that made global events a matter of general concern. The advent of steamships, an extensive railway network and the laying of telegraphic cables brought communities, and indeed the world, closer together. T.H.S. Escott, looking back over the span of the Victorian Age just before the outbreak of the Boer War, stated, 'From those who represent royalty to those who represent manual labour for daily bread, an impatient restlessness is socially a note of the period which has perfected steam locomotion by sea or land, and the electric telegraph has almost annihilated time....'²⁵ Kennedy Jones similarly reviewed his involvement in the late Victorian and Edwardian press and concluded that, 'Propaganda on this scale had never been dreamt of before, and would have been impossible but for wireless telegraphy.'²⁶ Escott too highlighted the growth of the railway network from 2400 miles in 1845 to 20,000 in 1897 as one of the major factors in improving general prosperity in England and its equal distribution across the class divide.²⁷ The propaganda theorist Jacques Ellul has argued that, 'Propaganda is called upon to solve problems created by technology, to play on maladjustments, and to integrate the individual into a technological world.'²⁸ However, the stresses, strains and novelties of technological advances created the need for propaganda, and at the same time complicated and increased the flow of information, in turn necessitating both more propaganda and more censorship. This necessity was

²⁴ Colin Harding & Simon Popple, *In the Kingdom of Shadows: A Companion to Early Cinema* (London, 1996), p. 2.

²⁵ Escott, *Social Transformations*, p. 194.

²⁶ Kennedy Jones, *Fleet Street and Downing Street* (London, 1919), p. 332.

²⁷ Escott, *Social Transformations*, pp. 27-34.

²⁸ Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. xvii.

felt keenly by both governments as a method of control and by individuals as a route to involvement and integration outside of their traditional groupings. Technology therefore created the possibility of reaching more people via more varied media in a more organised fashion, helping to embed some of the key characteristics of modern propaganda outlined at the beginning of the chapter.

The impact and significance of technological advances of the nineteenth century, especially electric telegraphy, have also been the subject of Daniel Headrick's research.²⁹ Headrick argues that technologies cannot just be seen as fortuitous 'externalities', but as arising from a social, cultural and economic context of their own. Further, 'Not only does every technology exist in a social context, all events and all social situations occur in a technological context.'³⁰ As a result, technology can be seen not just as offering a means to an end but also as a motive force itself. Headrick applies this logic to the advance of European imperialism in the nineteenth century, as innovations in steamships, quinine and modern weaponry prompted a far greater imperial vision and drive.³¹ However, this could equally be applied to propaganda, as technological inventions and advances both created the need for propaganda as well as stimulating the development of more modern modes of propaganda. As revealed in the Crimean War, the addition of electric telegraphy to the communications network provided a means by which the media and politicians could maintain a constant stream of information to the public on a war raging over two thousand miles away. In that nascent phase, many voiced fears of the problems that such a rapid and unreliable system of communication would bring. However, circumstance continued to give impetus to the extension and belief in the benefits of a telegraphic system as they had in 1854-56.

At a local level, commercial enterprises such as Thomas Allan's United Kingdom Electric Telegraph Company, established in 1860, responded to a growing business and private market for fast and affordable transactions around Britain. By 1865, 15,000 kilometres of cable had been laid linking all the major cities in the United Kingdom.³² On a grander scale, international events and foreign policy prompted and then provoked the government to create lines of communication with their possessions around the world. As Headrick argues, 'The Indian Rebellion of 1857 turned a strong interest in communications between Britain and India into something approaching panic.' Although the result of this panic was a system set up in haste, without waiting for the relevant technological advances, the efforts of the Indian Government, 'hastened the evolution of telegraphic technology and led directly to the British dominance of that field for the next half-century.'³³ William Howard Russell, who was despatched to India by his editor John Delane to cover the Indian Mutiny, was one of many who saw the transformation of telegraph policy into

²⁹ For instance, Headrick, *The Invisible*; Headrick, *The Tentacles*; Headrick, 'The Tools'; Headrick, *When Information*.

³⁰ Headrick, *The Tentacles*, p. 5.

³¹ Headrick, 'The Tools', pp. 238-59.

³² K.G. Beauchamp, *History of Telegraphy: Its Technology and Application* (London, 2001), pp. 78-9.

³³ Headrick, *The Tentacles*, p. 99.

practice, commenting early in 1858, ‘As we advance so does the telegraph wire.’³⁴ As the system expanded, the expectations of its ability to help British policy in both war and peace grew. A *Punch* poem from 1857 staged a conversation between Steam and Electricity and especially linked their benefits to the current crisis in India,

“Well, well,” said Steam, with a whistle and a scream,
 “Herein we help morality;
 That means we make to overtake
 Rebellion and Rascality.”
 “Sure enough that’s true and so we do,”
 Electricity responded.
 “Through us have been caught, and to justice brought,
 Many scoundrels who had absconded.”
 Said Steam, “I hope we shall get the rope
 Round the necks of the Sepoy savages,
 In double quick time to avenge their crime,
 And arrest their murders and ravages.”³⁵

Outside the military sphere, the telegraph was similarly eulogised as a tool to bring peace and unity between nations. When the Atlantic cable was laid in 1858, President Buchanan wrote to Queen Victoria with the hope that, ‘the Atlantic telegraph... prove to be a bond of perpetual peace and friendship between kindred nations, and an instrument destined by Divine Providence to diffuse religion, liberty, and law throughout the world.’³⁶

This belief in the unifying power of a modernised communications network extended in particular to the Empire in the eyes of the British Government. By the later nineteenth century an exchange of views between London and the colonies could take place in a day rather than weeks or months, offering a solution to, ‘the British government’s problem of wishing to present a united imperial front in world affairs.’³⁷ This ability to disseminate propaganda at speed in a more organised fashion and on a larger scale resulted in an increased necessity to do so as the public and Empire grew and in turn contributed to the development of modern propaganda. Such progress was certainly clear in terms of India, as before the 1840s a letter took five to eight months to travel between Britain and the colony. With the invention of steamships, this was reduced to six weeks, but it was the opening of the first telegraph lines linking Britain to her ‘imperial jewel’ that produced the most obvious effect. In 1870 they were finally joined together by a British owned and controlled cable enabling messages to be transmitted and received within a day, and as a result,

³⁴ William Howard Russell’s Diary, 28 February 1858, NIA.

³⁵ *Punch*, 23 September 1857; ‘Newspaper Cuttings 1854-58’, 111/8, RMA.

³⁶ P.M. Kennedy, ‘Imperial Cable Communications and Strategy, 1870-1914’, *The English Historical Review*, 86, No. 341 (1971), p. 730.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 750.

'Britain now had what politicians and publicists had long demanded: rapid, safe, secret communications with India... It was the spinal cord of the British Empire.'³⁸

This requirement had first been demonstrated during the Indian Mutiny (1857-1858) which offers a useful vantage point from which to view the immediate impact of the Crimean War on Government and media reaction to another war in the public eye. It is significant that the Mutiny, although equally mismanaged and disastrous for the British Government in many ways, did not evoke the wrath of either the *Times*, media more generally, or therefore the public. Indeed, the propaganda that is noticeable in the media was directed towards highlighting the Sepoy atrocities and against Governor General Canning for his policy of clemency to the enemy.³⁹ William Howard Russell's diaries from India also demonstrate a greater degree of collaboration between the media, military and officials in India than there had been with Raglan and Aberdeen.⁴⁰ Political and military officials had thus begun to appreciate the necessity and benefits of cooperation with the media. It was also this context of foreign crises that drove the British government's desire for similar networks stretching around the Empire. The Ashanti War of 1873-4 and the annexation of the South African Republic in 1877, for example, led to lobbying from within the War Office to complete telegraphic connections from London to the Gold Coast and South Africa. Such crises also led the British government to develop 'a virtual fetish' for 'all-red' routes, linking all parts of the Empire without ever touching foreign soil. An Inter-Departmental Committee on Cable Communications was established and had achieved their impressive goal by 1902.⁴¹

Importance was placed on cable coverage and protection by the Colonial Defence Committee, the inevitable result of which was an overwhelming dominance of the international cable network by both British companies and government. In 1887 seventy percent of the 214,217 kilometres of cable laid around the world was British owned, and by 1901 the figure was still holding at sixty-three percent.⁴² The military benefits of such dominance were made clear at various intervals throughout this period, but perhaps most notably during the Fashoda crisis of 1898, when Kitchener was able to outmanoeuvre Marchand by being kept in constant contact with Britain whilst his rival was cut off from France. Indeed, by the turn of the century, a telegraph bill drafted by the French government was able to argue that, 'England owes her influence in the world perhaps more to her cable communications than to her navy. She controls the news, and makes it

³⁸ Headrick, *The Tentacles*, pp. 97-101.

³⁹ There is an extensive literature on the media reaction to the Indian Mutiny. For example, John Salmond, 'The Frantic Roars of the London Times', *Bengal Past and Present*, 82 (1963); Brian Allen, 'The Indian Mutiny and British Painting', *Apollo*, 132, No.343 (1990); Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge, 2005). *Punch* also produced a plethora of cartoons on the subject such as 'Too Civil By Half', attacking Canning for his clemency proclamation, and *Justice*, underlining the necessity to subdue a barbarous enemy. Such a theme continued throughout the Mutiny. *Punch*, volume 33 (London, 1857), pp. 109, 191.

⁴⁰ For instance, on 29 January 1858, Russell records that he was met by Governor General Canning who, 'received me cordially and asked what he could do for me', and frequently refers to conversations with and the helpfulness of military officials on his subsequent tour of India. Diary of William Howard Russell, 1858, NIA.

⁴¹ Kennedy, 'Imperial', p. 731; Headrick, *The Tentacles*, pp. 106-9.

⁴² Headrick, *The Tentacles*, p. 106.

serve her policy and commerce in marvellous manner.⁴³ It was this control of the news that provided both the means and motive to further enhance a modernised form of British propaganda, as well as propaganda's 'inseparable and inextricable' Siamese twin, censorship.⁴⁴

As has been seen, military censorship in Britain had been established as a reaction to the novel media presence during the Crimean War and had become the basis of an uncomfortable relationship between the military and media as a whole. With the continued development of the media, and its emergent ability to supply a ready public with information about government foreign policy, this General Order of February 1856 necessarily, if uneasily, progressed into a system of censorship. Much was still based on censorship in time of war and as a military rather than a civilian, domestic issue. Lord Wolseley was one of the first Generals after the Crimean War to mount further attacks on the position and freedom of correspondents at the seat of war. His *Soldier's Pocket-Book for Field Service*, first published in 1869, started by emphasising that, 'Travelling gentlemen, newspaper Correspondents and all that race of drones are an encumbrance to the army.' Significantly, Wolseley pointed to the inevitability of the media's presence in wars because, 'as long as the British public's craze for sensational news remains as it is now, the English General must accept the position.'⁴⁵ However, this novel situation was leading to the formulation of a more comprehensive system of censorship, ostensibly still based on the grounds first established by Codrington, that information supplied by correspondents to newspapers in Britain could be useful to enemy spies.

Owing to the number of 'little' wars being fought and the increasing number of press representatives, there was a perceived need to control the flow of information that was developing from that media presence and its access to fast modes of communication. In a continuation of the reaction to the events of the Crimean War that had been set in motion by Codrington in 1856, on 1 June 1889 the War Office drafted the 'Rules for Newspaper Correspondents at the Seat of War' which began to put in place procedures to limit the number and type of correspondents allowed to stay with the army by using a licensing system. This included open sections which gave suitable scope to reject any newspaper or correspondent deemed a threat. Paragraph three, for instance, read, 'Licenses will not be granted to those whom it is considered undesirable to have as correspondents in the Field.' In addition it created the position for Staff Officer who was to supervise all press matters, and to whom each correspondent had to submit a copy of every issue of their newspaper. Importantly, as this latter rule may be easily avoided, the Intelligence Department at home would peruse each newspaper on a daily basis to ensure nothing was being leaked.⁴⁶ These rules were constantly revised and reconsidered, often in direct reaction to the contextual developments of the period. In March 1899, Sir Evelyn Wood wrote to Wolseley that there had been numerous examples of the press helping the enemy and that, 'The possibility of so reaping advantage has been greatly enhanced in modern times by the multiplication and acceleration of the

⁴³ Kennedy, 'Imperial', p. 748; Headrick, *The Tentacles*, pp. 110-7.

⁴⁴ Taylor, *The Projection*, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Viscount Garnet Wolseley, *Soldier's Pocket-Book for Field Service* (London, 1869).

⁴⁶ 'Rules for Newspaper Correspondents at the Seat of War', 1 June 1889, WO 32/7138, NA.

means of communication and the feverish competition of modern journalism to obtain news, which will interest the enormous reading public, for which it caters.⁴⁷

Such censorship had clearly been applied in military circumstances throughout the period after the release of Wolseley's 'Pocket Book', as the memoirs of a correspondent during the Egyptian campaign of 1882 illustrate. Mr Edward Vizetelly reported that he took a telegram destined for the *Daily News* to Lord Methuen, Press Censor of Wolseley's army, 'wherein it stated that soldiers mortally wounded were dying in most atrocious agony, because there was not a drop of morphia among the medical stores that had been landed wherewith to alleviate their suffering.' After being hauled in front of the Chief of Staff, Sir John Adye, the correspondent, was scolded and told, 'We can't have statements like this sent home ... A telegram of that description would cause endless trouble and annoyance.' After much debate, the telegram was permitted but with all reference to lack of supplies or wounded soldiers removed.⁴⁸ The difference between such a system and that which existed in the Crimea before Codrington's Order is stark. According to Russell himself, after his initial rebuff from the General Staff, he offered to send all his letters directly to Lord Raglan before posting but the offer was declined.⁴⁹ The refusal to interact in any way with the new presence of the media characterised the military during much of the Crimean War, but clearly dissipated as the presence got greater and the control of the flow of information became more complex. Military personnel were forced to acknowledge and operate within the novel context of the late nineteenth century in part by utilising the media that now increasingly engulfed them as will be seen in the following chapter.

Nevertheless, just as the role of the war correspondents that followed Russell was changing in line with the advance of censorship, a media-military dynamic expanded and shifted. In 1898 Michael MacDonagh was able to highlight the reason for a system of self-censorship that has been a notable aspect of war correspondence since the Crimea, and indeed was first experienced by Russell himself: 'Even if no Press Censorship existed, a journalist with an army in the field is bound by the necessities of his position to exercise the greatest caution in what he writes... He shares alike in the perils and victories of the army he accompanies. He can hardly help sympathising with its cause. It certainly is as much his interest as if he carries a sword or gun in the ranks, that it should win.'⁵⁰ Indeed, great faith was expressed, even in military circles, in the responsibility of at least correspondents for 'the leading journals', which augmented the natural hesitation to interfere with the proud heritage of a free press. In April 1899, J.C. Ardagh had advised Wolseley that, 'The Secretary of State is entirely justified in his confidence in the leading representatives of the Press' would act honourably and sensibly in times of war, but that rules and censorship are required for the 'small fry' who had been shown to cause mischief in the past.⁵¹ Only a month before, Evelyn

⁴⁷ 'Control of Press in Time of War', 1 March 1899, WO 32/6381, NA.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Michael MacDonagh, 'Can we rely on our wars news?', *The Fortnightly Review*, (January-June, 1898), p. 617.

⁴⁹ Roger Hudson (ed.), *William Russell: Special Correspondent of 'The Times'* (London, 1995), p. 25.

⁵⁰ MacDonagh, 'Can we rely', p. 620.

⁵¹ J.C. Ardagh to Wolseley, 20 April 1899, WO 32/6381, NA.

Wood had written that, although some control over the publication of military information must be accepted on the grounds of national security, it must be achieved, 'without in the least diminishing or impacting on the right of the Press to criticise without constraint the Government administration.'⁵² Even in the military sphere, there was uneasiness with the harsher forms of censorship.

This was made apparent at Cabinet level when the Colonial Defence Committee was considering the control of submarine communications by censorship in time of war. No legislative approval was ever sought for the decision since it would be, 'disadvantageous from a military point of view as calling attention to arrangements which it is desirable to keep secret.' The reason for such diligence and concern was that although the censorship was to prevent the publication in Britain and the empire of, 'true or false information which might exercise a prejudicial effect on their civilian population', such an action was, 'antagonistic to the Anglo-Saxon spirit'.⁵³ Indeed, it was made clear in a subsequent Cabinet memorandum that censorship of this kind would only ever be imposed in times of war.⁵⁴ When the possibility of imposing some sort of censorship on the domestic front during war had been raised by Sir Evelyn Wood, it was immediately dismissed: 'the difficulties of carrying out a press censorship in a country such as England are insuperable and no workable machinery for the purpose could be devised.'⁵⁵ This reluctance was echoed in purely domestic issues of censorship, especially in terms of other media. Despite the general private outcry against the rise in number and perceived indecency of poster advertising, little was done by the government to curtail its growth until a Censorship Committee was proposed in 1890, and even then the committee achieved little.⁵⁶ Despite similar popular distaste with many of the increasing number of films being shown in the early twentieth century, cinema went uncensored until the Cinematograph Act of 1913.⁵⁷ Although the slow progress of the application of censorship may demonstrate that officials failed to see the importance of censorship, this is not borne out by the correspondence of military and political personnel seen above. Rather the slow progress on both the domestic and war fronts is indicative of the discomfort felt by British politicians and echoes the difficulty many felt with the idea and application of propaganda throughout this period. This development was therefore neither linear nor smooth and often relied more on necessity than the desire for its application. However, it is also clear that contextual changes were increasingly forcing this issue to the fore whilst proving the utility of both propaganda and censorship.

⁵² Control of Press in Time of War', Evelyn Wood to Wolsley, 1 March 1899, WO 32/6381, NA.

⁵³ Committee of Imperial Defence, Report 22 October 1898, CAB 18/16/4, NA.

⁵⁴ 'Cable and Wireless Communication and Censorship', n.d., CAB 17/92, NA.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ John Hewitt, 'Poster Nasties: Censorship and the Victorian Theatre Poster', in Popple & Toulmin (eds.), *Visual Delights*, pp. 155, 164-5.

⁵⁷ Harding & Popple, *In the Kingdom*, pp. 3, 88, 43-5, 133.

Caught in the middle of the problematic advance towards a more standardised system of censorship were the various media of the period. The Crimean War had demonstrated the growing power of the media, and in particular the press, to influence public opinion and act as both a barrier and a vehicle for politicians, groups and individuals to advance their cause. After 1856, as Thompson notes, 'Increased literacy, rising real incomes and greater leisure time significantly enlarged the market for print.' This in turn led to the pervasiveness of print politics, as political organisations seized on the opportunity to target voters through the media.⁵⁸ One of the prerequisites for modern propaganda established at the start of this thesis was the permanence and ubiquity of the propaganda, and it was the period after the Crimean War that was to offer the possibility for an increased level of saturation as technological developments combined with heightened demand. Moreover the Crimean War highlighted the complex, emergent relationships between the media as a propagandist in its own right, as well as the emergent press-political bond. As late as 1880, William Howard Russell was still facing critics of the propaganda campaign waged by his editor John Delane on the back of the evidence he was supplying. He wrote to T.H.S. Escott, 'No one suffered more than John from that policy as an indiscriminating public and the powerful friends of those whom the *Times* attacked laid at my door all the violence and ... the injustice which characterised some of the attacks on the Government and the Generals.'⁵⁹ This thesis has so far aimed to demonstrate the effect of context on the development of propaganda, and one of the key shifts, as seen in the previous chapter, was the advance of the media which necessarily altered the relationship between the media, politics and the military. In this light, whatever the truth of Russell's comments, the *Times*' campaign clearly had a significant impact on the public and politicians, and this chapter will now assess how advances in the media affected these complex relationships and the development of propaganda more generally.

Probably the most obvious change in this period was the advance of what became known, often pejoratively, as the 'new journalism'. In 1772 Edmund Burke pointed to the press gallery in the House of Commons and, after enumerating the relative powers of the three Estates of the Realm, stated, 'Yonder sits the Fourth Estate, more powerful than them all.'⁶⁰ The power of the press was debated throughout the Victorian era, but never so much as with the arrival of the popular press when the publicity given to politics and foreign affairs grew exponentially. It was seen as a medium that could both enlighten the newly literate masses and corrupt them, echoing the divergent contemporary understanding of propaganda in this period. Either way, as Escott wrote shortly before the Boer War, 'The cheap press, with its ubiquitous correspondents and historians of all contemporary ranks and occurrences in the body politic, has transformed the severely domesticated Briton of both sexes, of all ages, who belonged to a bygone generation, into an eager, actively enquiring, socially omniscient citizen of the world...'⁶¹ As has been seen, it was becoming

⁵⁸ James Thompson, 'Pictorial Lies?' – Posters and Politics in Britain c.1880-1914', *Past and Present*, no.197 (November, 2007), pp. 190-1.

⁵⁹ William Howard Russell to T.H.S. Escott, 11 November 1880, Escott Papers, Add Ms 58791, BL.

⁶⁰ Jones, *Fleet Street*, p. 36.

⁶¹ Escott, *Social Transformations*, p. 194.

impossible for popular politicians and those wishing to control opinion to ignore ‘the great engines of publicity and propaganda’: the progress of public opinion and of the popular press were inexorably linked in contemporary discourse.⁶² Indeed, shortly before the turn of the nineteenth century, Frank Taylor stressed that, ‘Whenever the history of the origin and growth of public opinion shall be written, the history of the newspaper will be found to constitute its most important chapter.’⁶³

However, not all contemporaries were so effusive about the beneficent qualities of the popular press, and indeed the phrase ‘new journalism’ was coined by Matthew Arnold as a term of reproach.⁶⁴ There was considerable concern that this new era of the press would nullify the effect of the educational ideal so diligently constructed and cherished in the mid-Victorian period.⁶⁵ What was the nature of this ‘new journalism’ that made it so potent and so despised in some Liberal quarters? The aim of the popular press was to gain as wide a circulation as possible by approaching the new mass public on their terms. This meant a complete overhaul in style, content, language, character and pricing. This thesis has sought to demonstrate that the characteristics associated with modern propaganda, especially a modernised media, existed in the half-century before the turn of the century. Importantly therefore in terms of this chapter, Joel Wiener has argued that the ‘new journalism’ was not an entirely novel phenomenon by the time of the Boer War and had precedents reaching back into the 1860s. A new style of writing, characterised by speed, clarity, brightness and human interest had been pioneered by G.A. Sala of the *Daily Telegraph* in the 1860s.⁶⁶ W.T. Stead initiated the idea of campaigning and investigative journalism both as the provincial editor of the *Northern Echo* and the editor of the prestigious metropolitan *Pall Mall Gazette*, arguing that the new press must speak the language of the people and must, ‘palpitate with actuality – it must be a mirror reflecting all the currents and phases of life in the locality.’⁶⁷ A feast of foreign news, personalities, society gossip, sport journalism and murders replaced the stolid political diet of the traditional Victorian broadsheet. More specific tastes were catered for with women’s pages, children’s features, serialised novels and even comic strips.⁶⁸ Bolder headlines, shorter columns and more graphics became typical features of the popular press, and it was also characteristically sensationalist, a feature that drew the fire of Liberal critics damning these newspapers as appealing to emotion and triviality rather than reason and debate.

However, despite these concerns, the popular press grew exponentially in this period. Some historians argue the case for an established national press in Britain by the 1880s. Lucy Brown, for example, contends that the combination of improved systems of telegraphy, a larger audience,

⁶² The phrase is Hale’s: Oron James Hale, *Publicity and Diplomacy with Special Reference to England and Germany, 1890-1914* (Gloucester, 1964), p. 40.

⁶³ Taylor, ‘The Newspaper Press’, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Taylor includes a useful Annex on the popular press and Liberalism, charting the former’s impact on the latter; Miles Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-60* (Oxford, 1995), Annex II.

⁶⁵ Hampton, *Visions*, pp. 48-71.

⁶⁶ Joel H. Wiener, ‘How New was the New Journalism?’, in Joel H. Wiener (ed.), *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s-1914* (London, 1988), p. 53.

⁶⁷ Ray Boston, ‘W.T. Stead and Democracy by Journalism’, in Wiener (ed.), *Papers*, pp. 93-6.

⁶⁸ Wiener, ‘How New’, pp. 54-6.

popular style and the work of the new international news agencies meant that when news of events, such as Gordon's stand at Khartoum, reached Britain the nation held its breath in its wait for more information.⁶⁹ It also led to the far wider reach of the new journalism as styles, names and themes were copied around the British Empire as the exchange of information especially with the Dominions improved through the news agencies.⁷⁰ The Press Association and Reuters, for example, were to cement the power of the press further and highlight the importance of control over the flow of information which was increasingly fast and international. By the mid-1860s, Charles Dickens was able to, 'imagine all sorts and conditions of men dying to know the shipping news, the commercial news, the legal news, the criminal news, the foreign news and domestic news' at a speech at the Newsvendors' Benevolent Association. By the 1870s, Julius Reuter's agency was to establish itself as 'the semi-official organ of the British Empire', supplying news to and from all corners of the rapidly expanding number of colonies and possessions.⁷¹ Such was the power of Reuters in this respect that in an article of *The Monetary Gazette* dated 17 March 1877 the author could claim of Reuter, 'Present everywhere by his agents, he has acquired that attribute of ubiquity which has so greatly distinguished modern journalism; has become a help to the newspapers – ever at hand, and now almost indispensable.'⁷² The ubiquity of news and information was perceived by contemporaries as novel and increasingly a part of modern life. Ubiquity was highlighted as one of the prerequisites of the modern form of propaganda and the mass media of this period was undoubtedly pervasive in this way. With such a ready and fast supply of information, there was inevitably more scope for its manipulation for the purposes of propaganda. This created both a problem and opportunity for any political propagandist, utilising a media that was advanced and able to provide access to a mass audience, but also increasingly complex and difficult to control.

These bonds between the media, politicians and the military were more generally affected throughout this period as a legacy of those forged before and during the Crimean War. Key contributors continued beyond 1856, especially with regards to Palmerston and Delane. Despite earlier antagonism, the first cordial letters in Delane's papers appear in 1856 and reveal a regular exchange of information and opinions on matters of foreign affairs, domestic politics and the press.⁷³ Similarly, Palmerston's correspondence reveals a developing relationship in which the two men would use each other to glean useful information, but also gained a mutual respect. For example, one letter from Delane in 1859 read,

I did not trouble you with a reply to the very conclusive letter with which you furnished me on the Suez Canal but published the substance of it in an article which will I hope answer the object of your letter.

⁶⁹ Lucy Brown, 'The Growth of a National Press', in Brake, Jones & Madden (eds.), *Investigating*, p. 131.

⁷⁰ Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 24-5.

⁷¹ Read, *The Power*, pp. 48-9.

⁷² Quoted in, LN 1004; 1/014319, RIA.

⁷³ Papers of J.T. Delane, Volumes 7-9 (1856-9), NIA.

My excuse for intruding upon you now is the almost incredible fact that the Dialogue which we publish tomorrow as between an Englishman and a Frenchman is the work of the Emperor himself!... When you next make a speech on the Press you may relate how the great Emperor of the French condescended to contribute to an English newspaper – a change indeed since the times of his uncle...⁷⁴

It was not only of course such information which helped Palmerston, but the friendship with Delane gave him the positive coverage he needed in the press and therefore in full view of public opinion. His electoral victories were based on extra-Parliamentary support, which itself was the result of complimentary coverage in the media.⁷⁵

Similarly Delane's ability to utilise his position as editor of the *Times* to influence public opinion and forge bonds with politicians only grew after the Crimean War. He continued to move in elevated social and political circles, being in frequent contact with the likes of Lord Clarendon, A.H. Layard and Lord Carnarvon. A typical letter to Layard emphasises the nature of the bond as well as Delane's own belief in the power of the press in moulding public opinion, in this case to translate into electoral victory.

Pray accept my sincere congratulations upon your victory for Southwark – a happy result to which I flatter myself that the reports of your speeches in no slight degree contributed; for though there was much in them with which I could not agree, they were admirably adapted to the tastes of your constituency. Now that you are returned, however, I hope you will remember that you have sufficiently proved your abilities as a demagogue but have yet to display the qualities required in official life and which I believe you to possess.⁷⁶

This relationship was vital to the development of propaganda, but represents a key dilemma. Here was an opportunity for a central propagandist to forge relations with an increasingly powerful media; but therein lay danger, since powerful media could become able propagandists in their own right. As a result, officials and other individuals increasingly depended on the subtle 'compelling' of Palmerston and other informal bonds far more than on overt control. Despite increasing informality, the strength and efficacy of this bond is further demonstrated by the series of letters between Cobden and Delane which the former published in 1864. In the introduction, Cobden reasons that the correspondence should be aired as it involves an important question of, 'the surreptitious relations which a journal, professedly anonymous and independent, maintains with the Government', especially, 'the illicit, because secret, connection which has existed between the writers and conductors of the *Times*, and the dispensers of Government patronage.'⁷⁷ Throughout

⁷⁴ Delane to Palmerston, 23 December 1859, Palmerston Papers, PP/GC/DE/49, SUSC.

⁷⁵ Chamberlain, *Lord Palmerston*, pp. 103-19.

⁷⁶ Delane to Layard, 12 December 1860, Layard Papers, Add Ms 38987 f.3-4, BL.

⁷⁷ Richard Cobden, *Mr. Cobden and 'The Times': Correspondence Between Mr Cobden M.P. and Mr. Delane, Editor of 'The Times'* (Manchester, 1864), p. iii.

the correspondence, Cobden points to the power of the *Times* as being derived from its servility to the Government which happily dispensed its patronage in return for favourable coverage. However, despite Delane's continued success in manipulating the bond for his own ends, this type of relationship could not survive the significant changes outlined earlier in the chapter. Indeed, Briggs argued that by the 1870s, 'not a brick of Palmerston's house was left standing', and his mid-Victorian *laissez-faire* and 'dullness' had given way to the era of constitutional upheaval.⁷⁸ The bonds forged during and after the Crimean War demonstrated the benefits of the manipulation of the media by politicians and pressmen, but it was the changing context and development of the mass media that went further in necessitating the advance of modern propaganda. The dominance of individual politicians and traditional newspapers inevitably gave way to an emergent mass media and mass politics.

The relationship between the media and politics began to change substantially over this period, especially with the emergence of the press barons, arguably wielding far more influence than even Delane's *Times*. Indeed, those previously powerful press organs that refused to adapt to the changing circumstances were soon left behind in terms of circulation and influence.⁷⁹ Although Wiener is correct to draw attention to the precedents of the new journalism, the most important surge in its development is nevertheless signified by the creation of Alfred Harmsworth's *Daily Mail* in 1896. No less than 2396 newspapers in Britain greeted Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, but none was as large or successful as the *Daily Mail*. As more expensive or traditional newspapers began to decline, Harmsworth's flagship launched on 4 May 1896 with sales of over 300,000 copies. Harmsworth's aim was to capture the 'man in the street', with the *Daily Mail*'s first issue carrying the tag 'The Busy Man's Daily Journal', and was priced at half a penny. It also made its position and tenor abundantly clear: Pearson wrote in the same issue, 'Our policy is patriotic our faith is the British Empire.'⁸⁰ This indicates another feature of the new journalism - that it was ostensibly apolitical as far as parties were concerned. Harmsworth certainly supported individuals and parties through the *Daily Mail*, but generally on his terms and when they coincided with his own imperial beliefs or at least with popular sentiment. Newspapers in this period were increasingly freed of the shackles of patronage which made it even more necessary for politicians to forge bonds with the press barons and journalists, but the lower prices and higher circulations also meant they were constrained by a new force: the commercial market. Politicians and officials flocked to congratulate the powerful press baron on his new achievement in May 1896, including the Prime Minister A.J. Balfour, who wrote to Harmsworth:

Perhaps you will allow me privately to express my high appreciation of your new undertaking. That, if it succeeds, it will greatly conduce to the wide dissemination of sound political principles, I feel assured, and I cannot doubt that it will succeed, knowing the skill,

⁷⁸ Briggs, *Victorian*, pp. 107-8.

⁷⁹ A.J. Gurr, 'Macmillan's Magazine', *Review of English Literature*, 6 (1965), p. 42.

⁸⁰ *Daily Mail*, 4 May 1896.

the energy, the resource, with which it is conducted. You have taken the lead in the newspaper enterprise, and both you and the Party are to be heartily congratulated.⁸¹

Such relationships blossomed as the Harmsworth empire grew, with its circulation and the bonds forged between the political and press spheres mutated and strengthened.

Another symptom of the developing press-political bond was that more political figures became increasingly involved in such relationships, which operated more socially and informally than Palmerston's strategy of 'compelling and controlling.' Two such individuals were to be central in the manipulation of the media during the Boer War: Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner. As early as the 1870s, Chamberlain was building contacts with press organs as varied as the *English Labourer* to ensure support for his policy of County Franchise,⁸² and his papers from the 1880s reveal constant contacts with editors and journalists from T.H.S. Escott, editor of *Fortnightly Review*, to H.G. Reid of the *Midland News Association* – a body Chamberlain had helped to establish, and W.T. Stead, then editor of *The Northern Echo*.⁸³ It was his accessibility as Colonial Secretary that made him so popular in media circles: 'He broke all precedents in official dealings with the press when he opened wide the doors of the colonial office, provided the reporters with rooms in which they might wait and work, and supplied them with information through his departmental heads and his private secretaries.'⁸⁴ Indeed, it was Chamberlain whom Salisbury requisitioned to rein in the bellicose press in the aftermath of the infamous Kruger telegram, and it was the same newspapers that offered their unerring support to Chamberlain throughout the Jameson crisis itself.⁸⁵ Under Chamberlain's aegis, the Colonial Office augmented this relationship through the creation of the Foreign Press Association, which endeavoured, 'to create through the medium of its members, and therefore through the Journals they represent, a better understanding of British Foreign and Colonial Policy, and British aims and customs generally through... personal intercourse with, the correspondents of the leading Russian, German, French and American newspapers'.⁸⁶ At a local level, Chamberlain was in frequent contact with H.G. Reid of the Midland News Association which intended to cultivate associations with newspapers around the Midlands to form a base of support for Chamberlain in his constituency and surrounding areas.⁸⁷ The press-political bond allowed politicians to access the mass audience through an array of media without fear of the appearance of central orchestration. As has been demonstrated, at least part of the etymology of propaganda in this period reflected its links with revolution, sedition and its authoritarian application under Napoleon. This seems to have impacted on the manner in which politicians and other officials approached propaganda in the later nineteenth century, as an overt, centralised propaganda seemed

⁸¹ A.J. Balfour to Northcliffe, 7 May 1896, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62153, ff.1-2, BL.

⁸² Chamberlain to Mr. Cox, 31 December 1875, Chamberlain Papers, JC/6/4F/2, BUSC.

⁸³ For an overview of the extent of Chamberlain's contacts in the press see, Chamberlain Papers, JC/6/4A-S, BUSC.

⁸⁴ Hale, *Publicity*, p. 124.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-24.

⁸⁶ W.C. Barley to Sir John Bramston, 11 November 1897, Chamberlain Papers, JC/6/4G/1, BUSC.

⁸⁷ H.G. Reid to Chamberlain, 23 February 1884, Chamberlain Papers, JC/6/4J/1, BUSC.

anathema to British traditions. A less obvious bond with the mass media therefore enabled politicians and parties to utilise propaganda through a legitimising or deflecting source.

This reserve still over the overt or covert use of centrally organised propaganda, as demonstrated by Chamberlain's discussion in 1897 with Mr Englander of Reuters. Englander wrote to him on several occasions offering the near subservient support of the company he represented to the Colonial Office by giving Chamberlain prior notice of all relevant telegrams, obtaining special reports on all parts of the Empire and even providing a service, 'for disseminating statements and information in two directions which at present are of particular interest to the Colonial Office, viz:- South Africa and Germany.' He even suggested that, 'the CO should consider £100 a year to Reuters in return for which they would be furnished with copies of all Reuters telegrams relating to Colonial matters before publication – and thus not just have the earliest information but have the opportunity of demurring to the publication of news when considered contrary to the public interest.'⁸⁸ However, Chamberlain's replied that he did not like this proposal: 'The only way in which I think we could enter into special relations with Reuter would be if we wanted fuller Reports of speeches... sent to the Colonies or abroad.'⁸⁹ Why would Chamberlain, clearly adept at and willing to utilise the media to his own advantage on other occasions, miss such an opportunity? There is some evidence that Mr Englander was known as a rather unscrupulous character, and this may have had a bearing on this decision.⁹⁰ However, it is also an example of how this kind of direct government propaganda and censorship, although useful in times of war, was generally still perceived as dishonest and against British principles. Although the rise of the mass society and media provided the opportunity for far greater and more intensive propagandistic activities, and although these opportunities were often seized, many politicians continued to be influenced by a reserve which is a trait that continued to condition politicians into the twentieth century. This demanded at least the appearance of scrupulousness, and a belief that their propaganda was enlightening and edifying, not manipulative or authoritarian.

Alfred Milner was perhaps less scrupulous than Chamberlain about orchestrating press support for his policy, emboldened by his position outside of domestic affairs as High Commissioner in South Africa. A.N. Porter suggested that, 'To Milner's list of attributes should at least be added that of 'propagandist.'⁹¹ He had worked as a journalist at the *Pall Mall Gazette* and forged numerous contacts within the press community.⁹² However, it was his role as High Commissioner in South Africa between 1897 and 1906 that saw his skills as a manipulator of the media and the use of his network of contacts peak. As Chamberlain worked to promote the cause of the Boer War and Empire in Britain, so Milner was in a position to do the same in South Africa. The two men formed a strong bond, and kept each other well informed as to the situation in their respective spheres of

⁸⁸ S. Englander to Chamberlain, 26 May 1897, Chamberlain Papers, JC/6/4M/2, BUSC.

⁸⁹ Chamberlain to Edward Wingfield, 24 November 1897, Chamberlain Papers, JC/6/4M/7, BUSC.

⁹⁰ See Donald Read's notes on Englander, LN 1015, RIA.

⁹¹ Porter, 'Sir Alfred', p. 339.

⁹² For instance, there are various letters between Milner and G.E. Buckle, editor of the *Times* in the 1880s and 1890s which lasted into his tenure as High Commissioner during the Boer War. For example see, Milner Papers, dep. 25 ff.185-6, dep. 29 f.126, dep.177 ff.163-4, dep.211, ff.60-1, BLMC.

influence. Pakenham in fact describes their relationship as a series of ‘nods and winks’, both men actively engaged in ‘working up a crisis’ in South Africa for the benefit of the Empire. During his return to Britain in 1898, Milner was sufficiently ‘winked’ at by Chamberlain to make him understand that, whilst London publicly declared its ‘no-war policy’, Cape Town was free to pursue a more belligerent course. Milner spent several months attempting to, ‘interview all the leading politicians and press-men without seeming to run after them – and to stamp on rose-coloured illusions about S. Africa, is a most exhausting one. I have seen a great many by this time and I hope have sown some seeds.’⁹³ Active courting of support allowed Milner access to the media which could promote his policy and ideas to a mass audience on a mass scale. The significance of such a proactive approach was that politicians clearly now considered it necessary to present themselves and their policies in this way, and indeed were now able to do so on a ubiquitous and permanent basis.

Although Milner’s strategy was for a specific purpose and campaign, there were more direct links between government departments, editors and journalists:

Crowe in the Foreign Office and Willinson chief leader writer on the *Morning Post* made a good team. Spring Rice corresponded regularly with Chirol, Strachey, Maxse, and Garvin, supplying them with material for articles...Sir Arthur Nicholson worked in the closest relationship with MacKenzie Wallace of the *Times*. Chirol was absolutely trusted in the Foreign Office and he doubtless gave as well as received advice and information. Colonel Repington, also of the *Times*, had good connections in Downing Street. Lord Esher...was in close touch with Maxse, Repington, Garvin, Kennedy Jones, Northcliffe, and other writers in this circle.⁹⁴

Such relationships can also even be seen in the traditionally seditious medium of caricature, *Punch* editors and cartoonists being brought into the central social, political networks. The *Punch* dinners evolved into impressive formal occasions under Sambourne who, ‘entertained the statesmen he caricatured.’⁹⁵ The success of *Punch* was met with accolades and awards; the first two editors of the twentieth century (Burnand and Seaman) were knighted, followed by the cartoonist Bernard Partridge. Apart from his knighthood, Tenniel was given a state dinner on his retirement which was attended by the social and political elite of Britain and chaired by Arthur Balfour.⁹⁶ A proprietor of *Punch*, William Agnew, had received a knighthood, a baronetcy and was a highly influential Member of Parliament, and thus acted as a key intermediary between the Houses and the *Punch* table.⁹⁷ Similar connections existed between British and colonial politicians and managers of Reuters. Despite Chamberlain’s repudiation of Englander, the outbreak of the Boer War changed his

⁹³ Milner to Sir George Fiddes, 23 December 1898, Milner Papers, dep.220, f.129, BLMC; Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London, 1992), pp. 31-4.

⁹⁴ Hale, *Publicity*, p. 287.

⁹⁵ Richard Price, *A History of Punch* (London, 1957), p.118.

⁹⁶ *Times*, 13 June 1901.

⁹⁷ Price, *A History*, p.127.

outlook, and Herbert de Reuter himself was even cultivated by the Colonial Office. By 1899, he was receiving payments from them and British colonial officials in South Africa, making his company, 'the self-styled semi-official news agency of the British Empire.'⁹⁸ In his critique of popular imperialism and jingoism, Hobson recognised such media links enabled his identified propagandists to place the required 'information' in the public domain, from there seeping into popular consciousness.⁹⁹ War was, within this context, revealed to be a prime motivator in terms of the development of propaganda, forcing reluctant officials to adopt it as a necessary tool, as was initially seen in the Crimean War and, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, to a far greater degree in the Boer War.

This is also reflected by a military-media dynamic that emerged as the military increasingly took an interest in the use of the media for their own ends in stark contrast to Raglan during the Crimean War.¹⁰⁰ As a result of that conflict, the War Office and other military staff gave attention to censorship. Moreover, it acknowledged, and then formed, a bond with the media, now an inevitable presence in any conflict. War undoubtedly acted as a catalyst, removing the inhibitions of a peacetime democracy to allow for a faster pace for propaganda and censorship. As has already been seen, much of the work in creating a system of censorship had already been done by the War Office and military staff. This represented a general shift in attitudes of many military officials over the course of the forty years between the Crimean and Boer wars, especially in relation to the advance of the military-media dynamic highlighted by Philip Taylor in twentieth century warfare. This is borne out in two reports written by the newly appointed censors Lord Stanley and Colonel Jones, the former arguing that a total change in military mentality towards the media was required by the circumstances of modern warfare, 'Correspondents... have, owing to the very justifiable demand of the public for news, become so nearly necessities that it would be well to recognise the fact that for the future every force in the field will be accompanied by a certain number of correspondents, and an endeavour should be made... to give recognised correspondents an improved status.'¹⁰¹ Similarly, at the end of the nineteenth century, MacDonagh saw that, despite the resistance of many military officials, public clamour for war news had necessitated an acceptance of and alliance with civilian war correspondents. After the Crimean War, the public would no longer, 'tolerate any unreasonable attempt on behalf of the War Office to hamper the enterprise of the War Correspondents on the field of action.'¹⁰² The recognition of these novel circumstances could be observed in a new degree of censorship, but also in the creation of ties between newspapers, editors, journalists and military officials. As was the case in the Crimean War, the general context of the period, augmented by the turbulent influence of a war, created the ideal circumstances in which propaganda and censorship could become visible. Generals that failed to

⁹⁸ Potter, *News*, pp. 87-9.

⁹⁹ Hobson, *Psychology*, p. 117.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Young and Jesser's work on this relationship starts Russell, Raglan and the Crimean War; Peter Young & Peter Jesser, *The Media and the Military: From the Crimea to Desert Strike* (Basingstoke, 1997).

¹⁰¹ Beaumont, 'The British', p. 282.

¹⁰² MacDonagh, 'Can we Rely', pp.622, 625.

adapt to these circumstances failed in the battle for hearts and minds and declined in popular support and power. As Heather Streets has demonstrated, the advance of popular imperialism created a ‘cult of personality’ and the production of heroes, ‘made legendary through the increasingly powerful and influential organs of the media.’¹⁰³ As will be seen in the final chapter, certain Generals were particularly adept at generating this kind of media coverage and added to the growing list of propagandists in this period.

Apart from the new mass press, another medium that gave a fillip to the creation of military heroes and the popularity of imperialism more generally was the music hall, an entertainment phenomenon that flourished in the 1880s to become a truly popular medium. Hundreds of halls existed throughout Britain, many of them owned as part of a chain, such as H.E. Moss’s ‘Empire’ group in Edinburgh. This gave rise to the first true stars of the music halls such as the ‘Great Macdermott’, whose rendering of G.W. Hunt’s ‘We Don’t Want to Fight’ gave the word jingoism to the English language in 1878.¹⁰⁴ The music halls of the 1880s and 1890s drew on this heritage and experienced an increase of militaristic and patriotic songs and acts. As with the press, contemporaries saw both its potential to communicate with the masses but also its corruptive influence. Always presented far more as a medium of entertainment than the press, this offered a greater opportunity for a propagandist to inculcate the audience with a desired idea or message. As with the contemporary etymology of the word propaganda, such an opportunity was variously seen as either a malign attempt to influence the emotions of the mass, or to educate those beginning to participate in political affairs through a popular and escapist medium. Andrew Wilson, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, asked a question similar to that which many liberals had considered earlier in the century in terms of the mass press: ‘The music hall is a power in our midst... It is teaching the masses something or other, as even amusements may do, and the question for thoughtful men and women and for music hall managers is, how shall this form of recreation best teach that which is elevating and refining?’¹⁰⁵ Others doubted the ability of the music hall to fulfil this edifying role, but could not deny its potential to influence public opinion. The Reverend Ritchie commented in 1880 that the music hall was intended to arouse the public, pandering, ‘to the passions and prejudices of the mob. Its words are redolent of claptrap and fury, and are a mischievous element in the formation of public opinion.’¹⁰⁶

Such power was not overlooked by groups and parties hoping to utilise the media to harness public opinions. The mix of patriotism and imperialism that thrived in the halls created a natural base of support for the Unionist Party in the late nineteenth century. The pamphlet and leaflet series of the Unionist Party papers reveals the conservative legacy of the music hall that had invariably supported a Disraeli over a Gladstone. Songs such as ‘Rally Round the Old Flag: A Loyal Song’, ‘The Union Jack’ and ‘God! Country! Queen!’ were sung at political meetings, using the

¹⁰³ Heather Streets, ‘Military Influence in Late Victorian and Edwardian Popular Media: The Case of Frederick Roberts’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 8, No.2 (2003), p. 234.

¹⁰⁴ Fraser, *The Coming*, pp. 217-9.

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Wilson, ‘Music Halls’, *Contemporary Review*, (July-December, 1900), p. 141.

¹⁰⁶ J. Ewing Ritchie, *Days and Nights in London* (London, 1880), p. 84.

tunes and often the words of music hall conservative refrains.¹⁰⁷ ‘Ben Dizzy’s’ enigmatic strategies and imperialist foreign policy appealed to the mass audiences, whereas Gladstone’s domestic policies were shown up as shams and his foreign policy lacking in flair or assertiveness.¹⁰⁸ A G.W. Hunt song entitled ‘The Time is Coming’ (1885) was typical of the Conservative barbing of Liberal foreign policy in the music hall:

The Boers our Flag treat with insult,
And as for Zululand,
It is a glorious muddle which
No man can understand.
Whilst Gladstone’s busy chopping trees
And Granville gently sleeps
The Russian Bear t’wards India
Nearer and nearer creeps.¹⁰⁹

The conservatism of the halls is aptly demonstrated by the fact that Joe Chamberlain was the first Liberal politician to be lauded by the halls, but only after he had joined the Liberal Unionist Party and displayed his imperialist credentials.¹¹⁰ Indeed, the anti-Liberal songs that the Great Macdermott thundered out through the 1890s became so full of invective that some contemporaries began to believe that his efforts were being subsidized by the Conservative Party.¹¹¹

In addition, the power of the music hall song can also be found in the fact that they were sung outside of the halls, being reinforced and disseminated through the press, at political meetings, in pubs, on the troop ships and even as they were whistled down the street.¹¹² Such an alliance of music and the press is reiterated in a letter sent to Harmsworth by Rudyard Kipling, two men closely associated with popular imperialism:

I am sending with this a set of verses on strictly music-hall lines which may be of some use when the lists are opened for subscription for wives of regular and reserve troops now on service. The verses are practically an extension of the last lines of your Saturday’s leader though of course I had them on the stocks for some time. I do not know in what manner you can make them most useful – whether by using them in your paper; or letting them run

¹⁰⁷ The archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party. Series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets. No.s 1889/59, 1895/25(1) and 1885/59, DUL.

¹⁰⁸ Senelick ‘Politics’, pp. 160-1.

¹⁰⁹ Harold Scott, *English Song Book* (New York, 1926), pp.126-7. This song was performed by Walter Munroe made up to look like Randolph Churchill.

¹¹⁰ Senelick, ‘Politics’, p. 164.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 176-7.

loose in the provinces generally, or turning them over to the Halls or by a combination of these things. But, such as they are, they are at you service.¹¹³

Here it is possible to see how the imperialist message began to saturate the public space, being disseminated and mutually reinforced through a variety of popular media. Entertaining media such as music hall could also easily be employed to impart a message to the masses, however, it was unclear as to who would use it and what the message would be. Sponsors of imperialism seized on this medium, emboldened by its clearly patriotic bias, to inculcate support for Empire and demonstrate wider support for imperial policy in Britain. Such possibilities were not lost on contemporaries who sought to manipulate public opinion. Macdermott recounted a story of how Disraeli, as Prime Minister, had come to see one of his performances concerning the Eastern crisis and had placed his private secretary, Monti Corry, in the wings to gauge the temper of the audience.¹¹⁴ Hobson, remarked that the music halls were, ‘a more potent educator than the church, the school, the political meeting, or even the press’ and ‘a very serviceable engine for generating military passion.’¹¹⁵ This might be interpreted as an extension of Ellul’s theory of the mass and the individual, since an individual could receive a message at the hall on an individual basis, but then have those views reinforced and accentuated by the audience, reassuring the viewer that they were part of a broader community. Music halls were ideal for such a process as, ‘The politics absorbed by audiences under the influence of camaraderie, chorus singing and spirits, both high and alcoholic, was no doubt superficial, but continued over the course of decades to grow into a creed.’¹¹⁶ Music halls were generally boisterous, noisy affairs with a emphasis on audience participation and acclamation. Thus the imperial messages emphasised by music hall songs and spectacles reached individual audience members on their own level, but were transformed and amplified by the effect of the crowd around them singing the same lines and cheering the same characters.

The heritage of the music halls fed into the fledgling cinema which advanced dramatically from an ephemeral craze into a predominant form of entertainment at the end of the nineteenth century. Initial responses to film were mixed, from the perception of a powerful educative tool to a destructive and degenerate medium that could only further corrupt a troubled society. However, ‘what above all characterises these responses to the first sight of the cinema, whether favourable or not, is a sense that something irrevocable has come to pass,’ paralleling the experience of propaganda more generally.¹¹⁷ The success of the music hall and the smooth transfer of its atmosphere and style to cinemas undoubtedly helped to consolidate their popularity. However, the most important factor for most early audiences was the feel of reality of the images on the screen. From the beginning, cinema was promoted as ‘life as I know it’, presenting the ‘reality’ of

¹¹³ Rudyard Kipling to Alfred Harmsworth, 22 October 1899, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62292 A ff.40-41, BL.

¹¹⁴ Senelick, ‘Politics’, p. 170.

¹¹⁵ Hobson, *The Psychology*, p.3.

¹¹⁶ Senelick, ‘Politics’, p. 155.

¹¹⁷ Harding & Popple, *In the Kingdom*, p. 3.

photography that had been so important in the era of the Crimean War. Now it was reinforced by motion. Newspapers and journals at the end of the nineteenth century focussed on the mimetic quality of the cinematograph as its most revolutionary feature. The *Times* review of Lumière's invention hailed its ability to capture the movements of people with, 'lifelike fidelity'.¹¹⁸ A contributor to *Black and White* felt that, 'the charm of the cinematographe to me is that it showed me life as I know it.'¹¹⁹ Similarly, a correspondent for a Scottish newspaper wrote on their first visit that the images were, 'so animated and real that one sat spellbound. The views were very clear and the action represented so realistic that in several cases the audience could scarce contain their wonder.'¹²⁰

The potential to captivate audiences and create a sense of reality on the screen could not fail to attract commercial and other interests. Indeed, despite its novelty, the cinema was still impressively established, there being nine principal cinematograph companies in operation during the period 1896-1902, including a British branch of the famous Gaumont and Co.. In addition, Charles Urban came from America in 1897 to form a British subsidiary of Edison's biograph company, but soon formed his own 'Warwick Trading Company' which, by the end of 1902, was generating 600 films per annum.¹²¹ This success was partly due to there being so many potential applications of the cinematograph. V.E. Johnson hoped that its early alliance with the music halls would not prevent people from seeing its potential to aid scientific study and instruction.¹²² Mrs J.E. Whitby furthered Johnson's belief by suggesting, in 'The Future of the Cinematograph', that the invention, 'would to a great extent revolutionise the world of teaching... bringing scenes of national importance and stirring interest before spectators prevented from seeing the actual occurrences, and with a promptitude which made the representation more valuable.'¹²³ The emphasis on speed was reinforced by R.H. Mere, who took the example of its impact on representing sport, it being possible for the Derby to run at three o'clock and for audiences in London to watch every detail at a ten o'clock showing.¹²⁴ As Low and Manvell concluded, 'Once the people realised that the cinema could undertake the regular recording of events it became recognised as an indispensable part of the public service, although in a sense disguised always as entertainment. Only thousands could participate in the big national events: but by means of the living representations of the camera millions could now feel nearer to them.'¹²⁵

A medium that was capable of quickly delivering representations of events, perceived as factual, to an eager national audience in an entertaining format could not escape the attention of official circles for long, and importantly it was the military that was quick to show a willingness to adapt film to their own uses. Private enterprise led some newspapers and individuals to use the camera to

¹¹⁸ *Times*, 22 February 1896.

¹¹⁹ *Black and White*, 4 April 1896; Harding & Popple, *In the Kingdom*, p. 11.

¹²⁰ Low & Manvell, *The History*, p. 37.

¹²¹ Low & Manvell, *The History*, pp. 15-27.

¹²² Harding & Popple, *In the Kingdom*, p. 25.

¹²³ *Chambers's Journal*, 19 May 1900.

¹²⁴ *Pearson's Magazine*, February 1899.

¹²⁵ Low & Manvell, *The History*, p. 61.

document wars, Frederic Villiers claiming to be the first by recording the Greco-Turkish war in Crete as early as 1897, modestly stating that, 'I had ingeniously thought that cinema pictures of the fighting would delight and astonish the public'.¹²⁶ From that point onwards, film became embedded in the reportage of most wars including the Spanish-American (1898), Boer (1899-1902) and Russo-Japanese (1903-1905) wars, over which period it evolved from an individual enterprise into a recognised tool of war reportage, a rapid adoption reflecting the speed with which the craze of film more generally took hold.¹²⁷ As will be seen in the following chapter, the government, and particularly the War Office, also saw the potential of film to reach a mass audience, prompted by the events of the Boer War in particular.

The popularity of film, as well as its potential to manipulate the perception of representing reality, was seized upon by advertisers. The progress of the mass media as well as technological advances such as the mechanisation of chromolithography, political acts such as the repeal of the tax on paper, and contextual developments such as the emergence of a mass market for consumer goods, allowed advertising to become a burgeoning industry in its own right. Political and social advances, and especially the 1870 Education Act, created a social revolution, which had itself triggered the emergence of a mass, and far more varied, market.¹²⁸ As Robert Fitzgerald argues, this required a new level of sophistication in many businesses in order to expand and survive in a new economic and social climate: 'To discover the preferences of mass markets, they must invest in market research, and they require extensive nationwide distribution systems. The providers of consumer products and services survive by their ability to understand and persuade a mass market, and the complications of that task required the development of special organisational capabilities.'¹²⁹ This commercial tool grew from the wall posters and billboards of the mid-nineteenth century to a mass industry with its own agents, companies and scientific techniques. As well as the billposter companies and newspaper agents, music halls and theatres began to offer their screens for giant projections of adverts utilising magic lantern techniques. Schools such as the Page Davis School of Advertising and events such as S.H. Benson's 'Exhibition of Advertising' became increasingly common by the 1890s as advertising became recognised as a potent, and scientific, industry.¹³⁰

Advertising was inevitably absorbed and adopted by various other organisations outside of the business sphere. However, as has been noted throughout this period, there was often a clash between that which was felt to be informative and educative and that which was perceived to corrupt and debase an organisation and its audience. One group which displayed all the symptoms of an organisation realising the necessity of advertising and propaganda, but struggling with the morality of adopting its modern techniques, was the Co-operative Movement. J.T.W. Mitchell, an influential Co-operative official, had dismissed advertising in the late nineteenth century as, 'the

¹²⁶ Frederic Villiers, *Villiers: His Five Decades of Adventure* (London, 1921), p. 181.

¹²⁷ Harding & Popple, *In the Kingdom*, p. 119.

¹²⁸ Fraser, *The Coming*, p. 142.

¹²⁹ Robert Fitzgerald, *Rowntree and the Marketing Revolution, 1862-1969* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 12.

¹³⁰ Hewitt, 'Poster Nasties', p. 157; Alan Burton, "'To gain the whole world and lose our soul'", Visual spectacle and the politics of working-class consumption before 1914', in Popple and Toulmin (eds.), *Visual Delights*, p. 28; Fraser, *The Coming*, p. 138.

Barnum wickedness of the competitive world'.¹³¹ However, by the turn of the century, an article in the *Co-operative News* raised the possibility that, 'we might, *without banging the drum too loudly*, give ourselves a lift... by judiciously keeping in front of the public the advantages of co-operation.' This debate continued throughout the early twentieth century as modern advertising presented an opportunity to reach a large working class audience that would otherwise never hear of the Co-operative Movement.¹³² The dichotomy between an uneasiness with the excesses and potency of modern advertising but an increasing acknowledgement of its utility was echoed in many other organisations, demonstrating a clear link with the perception and adoption of propaganda. Propaganda itself was only adopted uneasily because of its negative connotations within a developing democracy, but increasingly many were coming to see it as a necessity within the novel context of the later nineteenth century. In this way, 'Information, propaganda, publicity and advertising became imperatives of an increasingly 'modern' society, and the techniques of persuasion were adopted and deployed more extensively than ever before.'¹³³ Despite any misgiving about the possibility of manipulation or corruption, organisations could not fail but see the advantages of advertising and propaganda in the context in which they were now operating.

Significantly in terms of the development of propaganda, ideas around advertising were also emerging from the work being done in the late nineteenth century on psychology and the manipulation of the media. Echoes of theorists from Bagehot to Wallas can be found in the appeals to emotion, use of popular associations, fears and irrationality that characterised the methods behind the new advertising schools and companies.¹³⁴ *An Advertiser's Guide to Publicity*, published in 1887, argued that, 'The usefulness and value of most things depends, not so much on their own nature as upon the nature of people who can be persuaded to desire and use them.'¹³⁵ Both Wallas and the American political scientist A.L. Lowell agreed that advertising was becoming a science based heavily in psychology but also that it was becoming closely associated in method with party politics. Lowell increasingly saw the replacement of political pamphlets with, 'posters with short appeals to prejudice, selfishness or humour, exhibited on walls, in shop windows, on grass plots, wherever ingenuity can suggest and good nature permit'.¹³⁶ Wallas himself argued that, 'advertisement and party politics are becoming more and more closely assimilated in method. The political poster is placed side by side with the trade or theatrical poster on the hoarding, it is drawn by the same artist and follows the same empirical rules of art.'¹³⁷ Whilst the commercial world was quick to seize on new techniques and styles of advertising created by the novel context of the later nineteenth century, politicians and political parties were equally adopting these techniques to entice and manipulate public opinion for their own ends. It is possible then to see a fusion of commercial and political purposes, both able and needing to attract a mass audience, both drawing on one

¹³¹ Burton, "To gain", p. 26.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹³⁴ Fraser, *The Coming*, p. 136.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹³⁶ A.L. Lowell, *The Government of England, Volume I* (New York, 1908), p. 61.

¹³⁷ Wallas, *Human Nature*, p. 87;

another, and both utilising an increasing understanding of propaganda. The assimilation of modern techniques of advertising, publicity and propaganda was therefore vital to the development of modern political parties as it enabled them to approach a mass electorate in a manner that would attract support, and it is to this development that this chapter will now turn.

During the period after the Crimean War, the connection between politicians and the media extended to an organisational level. Political parties were forced to realise that in order to survive and maintain a hold over public opinion they needed to control, or at least access, the ever-increasing flow of information through the media. The result was a boom in political communication in the later nineteenth century and the development of propaganda as an integral part of this process of communication. These contextual developments and new media available undoubtedly had a tangible effect on the evolution of modern political parties, especially in relation to how modern propaganda was both the means and the end of this progress. Modern propaganda was a tool that enabled parties to grow and increase membership as well as votes, but, once augmented, then themselves promoted the development of propaganda by utilising it in an increasingly sophisticated and organised fashion. Several key questions about the growth of political parties in relation to modern propaganda will be addressed; what were the key events and circumstances that prompted the change in approach and scale of political communication in the later nineteenth century?; who were the key individuals in the Conservative and Liberal parties and governments in advocating this transformation?; what form did the modern political party take, and how did this structure accommodate and catalyse the development of modern propaganda?; and finally, did a particular party emerge as dominant in this period as a result of a more carefully orchestrated and successful adoption of political propaganda? The latter, although difficult to establish, can reveal the impact propaganda had on political results as opposed to other circumstances. In this case, contemporary perception of the efficacy of propaganda is often as significant as the reality since the perception of success was often a prime motivator behind its further progress.

As highlighted earlier in the chapter, the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 were of great importance in forcing political parties to modernise their organisational structure as well as their ethos. The extension of suffrage created a far larger audience resulting in the need for more extensive administration, mechanisms and a tendency towards centralisation. A fear of the power of more Radical and populist political groups undoubtedly contributed to the desire of the main political parties to increase their visibility amongst working class groups through extra-Parliamentary groups. The NUCCA and the National Liberal Federation (NLF) grew as subsidiary bodies to the central party, and were further augmented by social and popular organisations such as the Primrose League. Conservative Party literature was quick to follow up on Gorst's famous appeal to 'make Conservative principles effective among the masses' by emphasising Conservatism's traditional

links with the working classes. One pamphlet from 1892 used the legitimising source of a Labour newspaper to reinforce this point: ‘The affinity between true Conservatism and the programme of the Labour Party is much closer than the superficial observer of party politics imagines...’¹³⁸ This race to engage with the new electorate resulted in Parliamentary parties rapidly becoming national parties, and an increasing saturation of the public space with political information from the party machinery and from the growing number of extra-Parliamentary and regional organisations. As Hawkins summarises, ‘After the 1860s the Conservative and Liberal parties emerged as autonomous institutions enjoying mass membership, centralised bureaucracies and an aspiration to ideological homogeneity.’¹³⁹ The appearance of such large, centralised and increasingly sophisticated party organisations and the growing necessity to engage with the public then inevitably led to a ‘propaganda arms race’ between the parties, occurring on a significant scale for the first time due to the novel circumstances of the later nineteenth century.¹⁴⁰

This race was the development of centralised bodies and systems for creating, publishing and disseminating party propaganda. Although this thesis has argued that a centralised propaganda ‘ministry’ is not a prerequisite of modern propaganda, the development of organisations, both Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary, specifically for the purpose of organising propaganda in a more sophisticated manner, fulfils more of the criteria of the definition outlined in the introduction. They also offer clear precedents for the creation of the more obvious twentieth century central agencies. The Conservative Central Office (CCO) was founded by John Eldon Gorst in 1870 as, ‘a direct consequence of the expansion of the franchise towards a mass electorate.’¹⁴¹ His success as ‘principal agent’ of the party from April 1870 to February 1874 was marked by a nurturing of local Conservative associations. These grew in number from 289 in 1871 to 474 early in 1874, and importantly 150 of these had been converted from working men’s associations.¹⁴² Gorst was even involved in the collation of information concerning public opinion, and a polling system had been developed into, ‘spreading a network of full time agents to collect detailed information on the constituencies, the candidates, the rival parties and the state of the electoral register.’¹⁴³ He also kept in close touch with Disraeli in his early years as principal agent and their correspondence reveals a genuine commitment to demonstrating the working class credentials of the Conservative party. In one letter Gorst highlights that Rochester needed some attention since it had no agent, no ‘employers of labour’ were conservatives, and no key officials were conservative. The suggestion of Mr C. Fox to fill at least the first of these gaps drew Disraeli’s attention to a new association of working men to be formed in support of the conservative cause, Gorst concluding that, ‘It is hoped

¹³⁸ The archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party. Series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1892/51, DUL.

¹³⁹ Hawkins, “‘Parliamentary’”, pp. 665-6; It was also this tendency to the two, larger-party system that Miles Taylor highlights as one of the key developments that led to the decline of British Radicalism, Taylor, *The Decline*.

¹⁴⁰ Thompson, ‘Pictorial Lies?’, p. 193.

¹⁴¹ N.J. Crowson, *The Longman Companion to the Conservative Party since 1830* (London, 2001), pp. 131.

¹⁴² Archie Hunter, *A Life of Sir John Eldon Gorst, Disraeli’s Awkward Disciple* (London, 2001), pp. 83-6.

¹⁴³ Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Mass Conservatism: the Conservatives and the Public since the 1880s* (London, 2002), p. 26.

by this means to get a hold upon the lower class of voters.’¹⁴⁴ He continued to update Disraeli on the success of the CCO, informing him in 1873 that, ‘during the past year no less than 69 new Conservative Associations, exclusive of branches, have been formed in England and Wales... There are at the present moment 420 Associations, the great majority of which are in good working order, and most of which have largely increased in their number of members since last year.’¹⁴⁵

The level of centralisation in the Conservative party can also be seen in the correspondence Gorst and Disraeli concerning individual campaigns and even specific pamphlets, Gorst ensuring that each met Disraeli’s approval before being disseminated as a national party line. When Disraeli requested a campaign be organised to highlight the failings of Gladstone’s current administration Gorst replied,

I send you herewith a pamphlet on the session of 1873 which we are just issuing and also a pamphlet in the Gladstone administration issued last year to which this is intended to be a sequel. Will you kindly tell me whether these pamphlets fulfil your wishes on the subject or whether you think that anything further could be now usefully issued? I may mention that as soon as a dissolution takes place I shall have a paper ready something in the style of the ‘Wasted Session of 1873’, which will contain a history of Mr Gladstone’s Parliament from 1868 to its dissolution, and this will be written in such a way, and will enter into such figures and details as may make it a kind of handbook for Conservative candidates at the election.¹⁴⁶

Perhaps most instructive, however, is a document Gorst produced for Disraeli explaining the exact nature of his work at CCO during his second period as principal agent in 1881. It reveals the scale and sophistication of the Conservative party machinery, its efforts to maintain a centralised policy and use of the media to disseminate information to the public. The ‘ordinary’ work of the CCO was listed as including:

Registration. Enquiries are made as to the residence and qualification of the outvoters[?] of all counties in England and Wales. Forms, instructions, and advice are furnished to both Counties and Boroughs.

Elections. Local leaders are assisted in finding suitable candidates. Forms, instructions, and election literature is supplied. County outvoters are canvassed.

Organisation. Formation of new associations is promoted and assisted. Model rules etc are supplied. An annual list of clubs and associations is compiled.

¹⁴⁴ Gorst to Disraeli, 25 July 1870, Disraeli Papers, dep. 129/2, f.234, BLMC.

¹⁴⁵ Gorst to Disraeli, 12 February 1873, Disraeli Papers, dep. 129/2, f.240, BLMC.

¹⁴⁶ Gorst to Disraeli, 11 September 1873, Disraeli Papers, dep. 129/2, f.244, BLMC.

Meetings. The Continual holding of small local meetings is advised and encouraged. Speakers and hints for speeches are provided. Special meetings (as for example on the Irish question) are from time to time recommended and promoted.

Publications. Pamphlets and leaflets on current political topics are issued: important speeches are reprinted and circulated.

Press. A weekly publication, called the Editors Handysheet, is issued to provide materials for political articles to the Conservative Provincial Press. Political telegrams are sent from the lobby to several provincial papers.

Parliamentary. All Bills affecting the interests of the party are circulated amongst the local leaders. Petitions are from time to time promoted.

Statistics. Facts respecting elections Parliamentary and Municipal are collected and tabulated. An Index of political events during the past 10 years is in course of formation.

Correspondence. Enquiries are answered upon such subjects as Finance. Foreign Affairs, Army and Navy Administration, Election statistics and procedure, India, Irish affairs, Licensing, Education, Friendly Societies, etc etc.

Interviews. People of every class call at the office on political business, and every endeavour is made to treat them with courtesy and consideration.

Visits. Constituencies are visited by emissaries from the Central Office of two sorts: -

- (a) Experienced agents to advise on the registration and electoral machinery.
- (b) Gentlemen to stir up dormant constituencies, and recommend local organisation and effort.

Gorst underlined the ‘special’ work of Fitzroy Stewart, the secretary at the CCO since August 1880, which included holding interviews with numerous individuals hoping to establish newspapers and journals in support of the party, ensuring concord amongst the various arms of the party including the National Union, checking reports of the agents on each constituency and finding suitable candidates for those constituencies.¹⁴⁷ As this demonstrates, by the 1880s Gorst had established a formidable system for the propagation of Conservatism and for reaching and appealing to the new electorate. It was the organisation, professionalization and sophistication of this process that marks this period apart in terms of the development of propaganda. By the 1890s, this system had been further honed and professionalized, being dubbed the ‘Middleton Machine’ after the principal agent from July 1885 to July 1903, R.W.E. Middleton. The link between mechanisation and modernity was crucial, especially in the light of recent technological advances, and the use of the word ‘machine’, with connotations of something novel and more efficient, is particularly significant when applied to an individual and organisation whose task was the organisation of political propaganda.

Although the Liberal party underwent modernisation in this period, it was generally ‘patchy, piecemeal, and more dependent on local initiatives’, a national network of local Liberal

¹⁴⁷ Gorst to Disraeli, 24 February 1881, Disraeli Papers, dep. 129/2, f.264, BLMC.

organisations only being brought under the aegis of the central party in 1908 through the work of J.A. Pease.¹⁴⁸ Even the organization of professional agents put in place by the NLF by the early twentieth century was derided by a contemporary political theorist who studied the necessity and flaws in attempting to organise the new electorate as the agents, 'had not enough authority nor leisure to wield any real influence.'¹⁴⁹ The Liberal Party did not, however, completely fail to create the necessary machinery to produce propaganda on a mass scale. The Liberal Publication Department (LPD) was established in 1887 and was already prolific in its production of party propaganda by the 1890s. As a joint venture of the NLF and Liberal Central Association, it did a great deal to push a central party line on potentially divisive issues. The Liberal party also mimicked the Conservatives in appointing central party agents and strategists such as Charles Geake to perform a similar task of enforcing conformity. Indeed, leading Liberals Geake and Bryce became some of the first to debate and highlight the growing importance of centrally produced propaganda in this period.¹⁵⁰ There were therefore efforts on both sides of the House to contend with the novel circumstances of the later nineteenth century by producing and disseminating propaganda on a much greater scale, and with greater efficiency than before. Again this reveals that political parties were seeing propaganda as an increasingly important and necessary part of the political process, essential to the context in which they were operating.

Increased centralisation and nationalisation of politics in Britain, to the detriment of more traditional local politics, has been the subject of intense historiographical debate. Jon Lawrence noted that, 'historians are generally agreed that the late nineteenth century witnessed the triumph of party organisation in British politics, and the integration of popular political forces into the ethos, if not the actual machinery, of the new mass parties in the constituencies.'¹⁵¹ However, Lawrence himself has stressed the survival of popular, localised politics in the face of the rise of centralised parties and forces, a vibrant popular political culture stretching into the twentieth century.¹⁵² Indeed, one consequence of the Corrupt Practices Act had been to prompt parties to rely more on non-party organisations, especially at a local level, to produce electoral propaganda as they were far less restricted than official political parties by the Act.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, popular politics underwent some absorption into the centre during this period, and the evidence derived from Lawrence's case study of Wolverhampton reveals that seemingly spontaneous local politics and propaganda were often at least managed by the centre.¹⁵⁴ It is clear that centralisation and modernisation were a feature of late nineteenth century British politics, but the approach to that process of modernisation has been too teleological, stressing a misleading linear course of development.¹⁵⁵ This underpins the nature of the developments in propaganda in this period, as its own course of modernisation was

¹⁴⁸ Kathryn Rix, 'The Party Agent and English Electoral Culture, 1880-1906', Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge, 2001, pp. 48-9.

¹⁴⁹ Ostrogorski, *Democracy*, I, p. 504.

¹⁵⁰ Bryce to Geake, 29 April 1892; Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp. 206-7.

¹⁵¹ Lawrence, *Speaking*, p. 163.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹⁵³ Thompson, "Pictorial Lies", p. 200.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Lawrence, *Speaking*, p. 94.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

reactive rather than planned, reliant on context and indeed often running concurrently with changes in the political sphere. The modernisation of propaganda was, therefore, far from linear or smooth, reflecting the complex, varied and contested etymology of the word as much as those contextual developments.

Undoubtedly though, the Conservative party in particular utilised popular politics as part of its overall drive to access the working class vote and support, and in order to access popular Toryism, ‘we must pay much more careful attention to the language and practice of those Tory politicians who consciously sought to appeal to a “mass” constituency.’¹⁵⁶ As seen in the first chapter of this thesis, uncovering the sense that the author intended from a particular word, or language generally, can tell us a great deal about both the author and their intended audience. If the original meaning can be unlocked, it offers the opportunity to understand the circumstances around the decision to access the popular vote, and the perceived reaction to and success of that decision. If the language of the Conservative party addressed the working classes, then they themselves had perceived the need to change the approach of their outputs in order to court this constituency in a suitable manner. It was partly a willingness to adapt and adopt new forms of propaganda that propelled its development. Taking the lead from Gorst’s initial indication at the conference in 1867, subsequent party publications began to take a new linguistic turn. Leaflets adopted on the style and vocabulary of the working classes, quoting from *A Working Man*:

Most of us read the newspapers, though perhaps not very regularly, but we think we know pretty fairly what is going on in the Island Home of ours; and we think, too, we are capable of forming our opinions thereon... I love my country more than I ever did my party, and believing that for the country’s good the old Liberals would have acted just as the present Government have done, I wish now to give whatever small support I can to Lord Beaconsfield and his Government.¹⁵⁷

Another leaflet, ‘British Working Men – Read the Facts Below’, based around the debates over trade and commerce put the simple argument of, ‘Radical Governments mean... a LITTLE LOAF... Conservative Governments mean... a BIG LOAF.’¹⁵⁸

Lawrence’s work on Wolverhampton has emphasised this point, with Tory populists in the local area making more explicitly class-based appeals for the working man’s vote in their speeches and literature. ‘Improving’ poorer parts of town, pushing the idea of the ‘fair wage’, contrasting Liberal ‘*laissez-faire*’ with the Tory desire to pass reforming legislation, the defence of ‘the pleasures of the poor’ and their links to a traditional ‘cake and ale’ Tory society, and of course propagating the language of Empire and national assertiveness were all designed to appeal to a new, mass

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁵⁷ The archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, Series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1879, DUL.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1894/28.

audience.¹⁵⁹ The latter was at the heart of the central and local party literature as the Conservatives attempted to utilise the perceived growth in the popularity of Empire with the lower classes. The reality or otherwise of this popular patriotism will be discussed in the following chapter, however, that central and local Conservatives felt the necessity and desire to utilise such language and themes demonstrates a clear shift in approach to politics and in the nature of political communication. This change in language indicated that the target audience for at least some of the party's energies was the working classes and that the party administration was taking on board the message that party had to modernise their communications strategy.

This is reflected in the creation of new extra-Parliamentary groups and schemes, not directly run by the party but nevertheless heavily associated with propagating the party message. The Primrose League, for example, began the process of pushing politics and Conservatism into more aspects of more people's lives. Pugh noted that, 'it seems that Conservatives were providing a form of politics for the *family*' allowing for social occasions and organisation for women and children to become part of the Conservative party machinery, if only semi-officially. By the 1890s, the Primrose League had pioneered the "Primrose Buds" for juvenile members and shortly after the turn of the century the "Junior Imperial and Constitutional League" was to be established. By the turn of the century no less than 48 percent of the membership of the Primrose League was female.¹⁶⁰ Through extra-Parliamentary groups such as the Primrose League, the party began to organise mass social events on a local level to raise the profile of Conservatism amongst a wider cross section of society. Summer festivals, 'meat teas', concerts and fêtes were staged to coincide with or commemorate great national events or royal birthdays, creating a spectacle for the audience whilst linking Conservatism inexorably with the Empire, military and royalty. Local celebrities or events were also absorbed into the party's effort, leading in Wolverhampton to the, 'high-profile manipulation of the [Wolverhampton Wanderers] team (and its players) in the Tory cause at Parliamentary elections.¹⁶¹ The propagandist intended therefore to approach a new audience on their own terms, in a sophisticated manner, propaganda being adapted and tailored for a local audience.

Both major parties also began to adopt the new media as propaganda tools towards the end of the nineteenth century. As party literature began to reflect the style and tone of new journalism in its attempt to appeal to a new, mass audience, 'pictorial and textual propaganda grew together from the 1880s.¹⁶² Party political output began to feature pictures, cartoons and emblems designed to capture the attention of the public and reinforce the message of the elided text. One Liberal agent's journal from 1896 argued that in picture posters, 'there must be sufficient refinement to satisfy the sensibilities of the snob, and enough to rivet the attention of the man in the street.'¹⁶³ Similarly, Conservative Party leaflets made use of the Union Jack or Britannia, sometimes even in colour, alongside patriotic verse (itself often based on popular music hall songs) to ensure that the party

¹⁵⁹ Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp. 106-8.

¹⁶⁰ Pugh, 'Popular', pp. 263-5

¹⁶¹ Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp. 108-11.

¹⁶² Thompson, 'Pictorial Lies?', p. 194.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

was immediately and overtly associated with the most recognisable national emblems without the need for complex text-based arguments. Pictorial propaganda cemented the bond between media and political personnel as well as the closer relationship between politics and advertising, as became evident in the growing trend for political parties to employ cartoonists, in the tradition of Gillray, on a greater and more professional scale. Tom Merry, chief cartoonist of *St Stephen's Review*, supplied the majority of poster designs for the Conservatives in the 1895 election; Bernard Partridge, principal cartoonist at *Punch*, designed posters for the Liberal Party and Lever Brothers; Carruthers Gould, of the *Westminster Gazette*, was responsible for almost all the designs for the Liberal Publication Department's campaigns in 1906, himself being knighted in that year.¹⁶⁴ Although there were connections between such cartoonists and politicians, they were nevertheless employed and directed by the party administration. Nevertheless the fact that both major parties considered it necessary to employ such professionals to improve the impact of their electoral campaigns through pictorial propaganda is significant since it points to the complex balance between the media as propagandists in their own right, and other organisations and individuals seeing the need to cultivate and utilise the media for their own propaganda. In turn this led to an increasingly complex and varied propagandistic environment, with multiple propagandists and 'labyrinthine networks' between the spheres of media and politics.

Graham Wallas also saw a link between advertising and political propaganda, focussing on their mutual dependence on association, repetition and the appeal of the spectacular. This fitted well into his more general concern regarding the growth of novel forms of political communication that were reliant on emotion and irrationality.¹⁶⁵ Wallas, however, agreed with politicians, media representatives and advertisers about the perceived success of pictorial propaganda. The *Daily Mail* echoed Wallas's emphasis on the power of association in assessing political posters of the early twentieth century, and the Liberal Party agents' journal even printed excerpts of *Human Nature in Politics*, 'as a guide to best practice in electioneering.'¹⁶⁶ Not only were political parties utilising novel forms of propaganda, they were also basing their decisions and thinking on the newly developing theories of propaganda. Theorists such as Wallas and advertising experts such as Clarence Moran reminded campaigners that the idea that poster propaganda could, 'catch the eye of those who are too ignorant or too lazy to read', and party propagandists took note.¹⁶⁷ With the technology in place to allow such changes, the context of the late nineteenth century allowed, and ran concurrently with, the development of pictorial propaganda. Whether or not this was a more efficacious method of propaganda is not as significant as the fact that contemporaries saw a need to assess that success. These debates informed the implementation of propaganda in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as an article by W.T. Stead in the *Review of Reviews* concerning pictorial propaganda in the 1895 electoral campaigns made clear. Stead determined, 'one effective picture in glaring colour will bring home a political lesson or point a moral far better than all the oratory of the platform or all

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 188-9.

¹⁶⁵ Wallas, *Human Nature*, pp. 109-10; Thompson, 'Pictorial Lies?', pp. 183, 189.

¹⁶⁶ 'Liberal Agent', (January, 1910), pp. 139, 142, 146; Thompson 'Pictorial Lies?', p. 183.

¹⁶⁷ Clarence Moran, *The Business of Advertising* (London, 1905), p. 10.

the eloquence of the pulpit. Mural literature has a great advantage over all other kinds of propaganda.¹⁶⁸ In his assessment, Stead commented on the use of new technologies in producing large numbers of posters and in colour, but simultaneously emphasised the success of the simple messages imparted. Drawing attention to the Tory party's greater energy in producing more and better posters, Stead raised the possibility of assessing the success of propaganda, pointing to the Tory victory in line with their use of pictorial propaganda. Not only were innovative forms of propaganda being used by political parties in this period on a mass scale, but the success of the campaigns were being debated and studied by contemporary authors, both factors highlighting a systematic approach to propaganda as a whole.

Stead's ideas gained currency within political circles. George Cadbury advised his fellow Liberals that, 'elections are not won by public meetings, but by canvassing and leaving leaflets from house to house, so that the lukewarm electors may be reached',¹⁶⁹ while W.H. Rowe suggested that, 'the object of Election placards should be to bring the claims of the candidate forcibly to the attention of indifferent or ignorant electors, whose sympathies are often secured by some striking phrase or alliterative sentence which catches their fancy, when they remain unaffected by more serious arguments.'¹⁷⁰ This was a reflection and iteration of Wallas's fears and analysis of the new form of political communication and its reliance on irrationality and emotion. Representatives from across the political spectrum understood that, 'there are always a certain number of people who vote for both sides who make the most show' and 'to paint the district red is no bad device when red is the badge of your party allegiance.' One article in the *Liberal Agent* went as far as to argue that the great colourful show of 'window cards' at the Devonport by-election, 'did much to determine the votes of the vacillating.'¹⁷¹ Much of the success of, and indeed comment on, political propaganda was driven by the burgeoning number of political agents whose more official and professional status allowed them to concentrate on issues such as advertising and campaign coordination. Thus a system was being established at the end of the nineteenth century which enabled a modernised form of propaganda to take a central role in national and local politics.

However, can this new wave of propaganda really be assessed in terms of success, and was it linked by contemporaries to the success or otherwise of their political party? There was certainly increasing debate as to what constituted effective propaganda amongst party agents and officials by the end of the nineteenth century and, 'professional opinion varied over the relative merits of public meetings and printed propaganda.' The debate ranged from the efficacy of purely pictorial posters aimed to catch the eye, to the necessity of narrative around the pictures, to 'multi-media' public meetings. This growing debate was reflected in lively exchanges and further editorial comment in the contemporary press.¹⁷² Particular images, captions, sizes and colours were

¹⁶⁸ W.T. Stead, 'The General Election, 1895: The Poster in Politics', *Review of Reviews*, 12 (August, 1895), p. 168.

¹⁶⁹ Rix, 'The Party Agent', pp. 276-7.

¹⁷⁰ W.H. Rowe, *A practical manual on the conduct and management of parliamentary elections* (London, 1905), p. 53.

¹⁷¹ Rix, 'The Party Agent', p. 290.

¹⁷² See Thompson, 'Pictorial Lies?', pp. 204-6.

critiqued by a cross-section of the press, itself reflecting the increased interest in and scale of pictorial and other political propaganda. The debates themselves offer a rich source of information on the developing style of propaganda in this period, but most importantly highlight further the increasing theorisation of propaganda in political and journalistic circles, demonstrating the modernisation of propaganda as a whole. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for this concentration on the efficacy of propaganda was a need to prove its value to a party elite hesitant to expend valuable party resources of novel forms of political communication. Professional party agents and their output were far from accepted as integral to the party machinery even by the 1880s. However, at least in terms of the Tory party, growing success at the ballot from the 1880s was increasingly linked to the overall growth of the political party machinery. This reached the highest level within the party as, 'electoral success after 1885 undoubtedly helped to assuage further the qualms of Salisbury and others about the adoption of professional political organisation.'¹⁷³ Tory success was also partly due to the context of popular imperialism and the subject matter, 'the most obvious way of asserting patriotic appeal by the mid-1880s was an unsentimental defence of British strategic and commercial rights against other powers and other races' and 'these tendencies fitted better with the Conservative than the Liberal conception of Britain's global mission.' It was an argument that the Liberals were not used to making.¹⁷⁴

Although it is problematic for the historian to make a direct link between increased propagandistic output and electoral success, it is tempting on the basis of scale alone. Generally, 'during elections constituencies were often awash with propaganda of the crudest form.'¹⁷⁵ The growth in scale of the dissemination was exponential on both sides of the House. In 1892 the NUCCA supplied 16,000,000 leaflets and 14,000 posters, and the NLF 12,500,000 leaflets. During the 1900 election campaign the NUCCA supplied 19,000,000 leaflets and 250,000 posters, and the NLF 20,000,000 leaflets and 175,000 posters along with 'flag cards'.¹⁷⁶ When taken in conjunction with the dissemination work of the extra-Parliamentary and semi-official political groups, this demonstrates political communication on an unprecedented scale. After the successful Liberal campaign of 1892, the NLF annual report recorded that, 'no attempt has ever been made before to cover the country with political literature during an Election.'¹⁷⁷ Undoubtedly it was partly this increased production of electoral propaganda that prompted so many British Radicals to write about the shifting political context and increasingly corruptive forms of political communication. These authors saw the power of non-rational appeals of propaganda to the masses, especially those orchestrated by the Tory party. Apart from the obvious popularity of the 'spectacles' arranged by the Primrose League, there are other indications that the propaganda aimed to associate Toryism with the hard-working and patriotic working classes enjoyed some success. Working men's

¹⁷³ Rix, 'The Party Agent', p. 60.

¹⁷⁴ Jonathan Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 398.

¹⁷⁵ Lawrence, *Speaking*, pp. 182-3.

¹⁷⁶ Rix, 'The Party Agent', pp. 278-9.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

Conservative clubs began to be established across the country, Lawrence noting that by 1886 in Wolverhampton, there were four in the Western districts alone.¹⁷⁸ Although often social in nature, these clubs offered both a focal point for the working classes as well as being used as physical proof of popular support for Conservatism. The capacity of the Conservative Party to maintain a popular constituency in the face of major changes and reforms in British Society suggests the success of their popular propaganda. Indeed, despite a decline in middle class support and more traditional, deferential support for the party, the Conservatives possessed an, ‘infinite capacity to absorb changes and make adjustments in the face of social and political change.’¹⁷⁹ This adaptability found expression in the creation of a centralised party structure able to cope with the advancing democracy and the required modern form of political communication established and maintained a hold over that expanding electorate.

The Liberal Party was equally adept by the turn of the century in the centralised provision of electoral materials, guidance and personnel, pointing to, ‘the development of a more uniform national election campaign’ based around the LPD and NLF.¹⁸⁰ However, the adaptability of the Conservative Party was not always found in their Liberal counterparts. Despite an increase in the orchestration and scale of propaganda from the 1880s, both the tone and style of the Liberal output was far less suitable for the new audience. As has been seen, although there was a rapid transformation in the style and content of Tory propaganda from the landmark conference of 1867, there still appears to have been a gulf between the ideals and aspirations of the Liberal Party, as laid out in its propaganda, and popular feeling. Lawrence has revealed how important the language of propaganda was and how often Liberal communications, whilst attempting to approach a wider audience, nevertheless betrayed a distrust of the people. That distrust, although still present in Tory circles, ‘did not translate itself into the adversarial world of party propaganda.’¹⁸¹ Liberals were often in no doubt that the political future of Liberalism depended on closing the perceived gap between their agenda and realities for the masses, and their output often reflected this. Some leaflets published as late as 1894 aimed to outline ‘things to be done’ and yet almost wholly neglected labour issues with no concessions in content or language to working class support for better wages, hours or social welfare. The language and style of such leaflets only seemed to demonstrate the Liberal Party’s lack of understanding of how to approach the masses on their own terms through popular propaganda.¹⁸²

Significantly, however, this reveals that both parties, although with differing success, had realised that a greater scale and different form of propaganda was necessary to achieve and maintain of power in politics. Whilst more Radical commentators such as Hobson and Wallas called on politicians and the media more generally to mould and educate the electorate, Liberal politicians were learning that they, ‘must address electors as they are, not as they would like them to be. They

¹⁷⁸ Lawrence, *Speaking*, p. 111.

¹⁷⁹ Pugh, ‘Popular’, pp.255, 282.

¹⁸⁰ Rix, ‘The Party Agent’, p. 279.

¹⁸¹ Lawrence, *Speaking*, p. 197.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 209.

must highlight the issues calculated to inflict most damage on their political opponents.¹⁸³ Although the ‘Chinese slavery’ issue and free trade gave the Liberals a natural boost against their opponents, it is still tempting to link their clear electoral success in 1906 to this realisation and the resultant aggressive presentation of their propaganda.¹⁸⁴ However, as Rix reminds us, ‘whilst statistics regarding central supply of election literature are impressive, they give little indication of how this material was received by the constituencies.’¹⁸⁵ Lawrence agrees noting that, ‘propaganda of this sort cannot give us a window onto popular mentalities’, but goes on to state that, ‘it may tell us much about how political activists perceived the popular mind.’¹⁸⁶ As has been argued previously in this chapter, contemporary perception is of great importance since it often influenced the form and scale of the propaganda, and indeed the fact that the propaganda was being targeted at a mass, working class audience is in itself important in terms of the development of modern propaganda. Politicians increasingly felt the necessity to attract the ‘popular mind’ by novel methods of political communication, based both on their own assessment of the best approach and on the growing number of theories of propaganda that were emerging in this period, central to the concept of modern propaganda.

This chapter has revealed how context contributed to the development of propaganda, as well as being affected by that propaganda. It is perhaps easy for participants of a digital age to regard the late nineteenth century as an inchoate media environment, but the alliance of a new socio-political mobility, a modernised communications system, and a mass media involving a vastly augmented press, music hall and cinema represented a powerful and novel force in nineteenth century politics that both necessitated and facilitated the advance of modern propaganda. There was a correlation between broader socio-political changes and the modernisation of propaganda as they impacted upon one another. As a result the mid- to late-nineteenth century fulfils several of the criteria of the definition of modern propaganda established earlier in this thesis. A mass media was emerging from technological and social advances with the creation of a popular, national press, international news agencies, music hall and cinema; a mass audience had been created by a series of political and social reforms which enabled an increased mobility amongst the population; and through those reforms channels of communication were opened up to a new audience with the potential of saturating the information space using increasingly sophisticated technology. The emergence of large political party organisations is also significant. Party organisations were increasingly capable and willing to orchestrate propaganda on a far greater scale and with a greater level of sophistication, a

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 224.

¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Parry argues that by 1906 the Liberal Party had re-discovered how to ‘project a cross-class appeal’ and therefore re-established their predominant position in British politics, lost in the early 1880s. Parry, *The Politics*, p. 399.

¹⁸⁵ Rix, ‘The Party Agent’, p. 280.

¹⁸⁶ Lawrence, *Speaking*, p. 207.

sophistication which came from a clear engagement with the idea of propaganda both on their own terms and through the work of an increasing number of theorists considering the implications of the context in which new forms of political communication were operating.

However, just as Lawrence has warned against a teleological approach to popular politics in Britain and the assumption of a linear process of modernisation, so the development and modernisation of propaganda in this period was far from uncomplicated or linear. It was characterised by competing ideas, ideologies, styles and success, reflecting the uneven and competing etymology of the word itself. There was also a resistance and awkwardness with the idea and application of propaganda both amongst those theorising it and those becoming involved in its application. Undoubtedly this clash was a primary cause of the lack of direct and clear progression of the modernisation of propaganda, preventing politicians and parties considering the next obvious step of creating a centralised body to create and disseminate propaganda, characteristic of the twentieth century. However, some sort of engagement with propaganda was becoming increasingly difficult to avoid as circumstances forced even the most reticent parties and individuals to accept the inevitability and benefit of utilising modern forms of propaganda. This was especially the case in times of war, where many felt both more at ease with controlling the flow of information, and were also prompted to do so by the concurrent development of the media's involvement in foreign policy and warfare. This occurred even at the highest levels, especially as cable technology offered the opportunity for British dominance of the flow of information around the world, the political, diplomatic and military advantages of which were obvious to the British Government.¹⁸⁷ This period then was a transitional phase of propaganda between the Crimea and the Boer war, highlighting the advanced nature of the discussions over its use in war and peace, and the uneasy relationship between democracy and propaganda. The evolving mass society was catalysing the development of propaganda and democracy, and this revealed inherent tensions: democracy brought with it ethical dilemmas over the use of propaganda as well as increasing its need. This paradox for democratic nations is one familiar to the twentieth century but was clearly being experienced, as well as debated, in the nineteenth century. In both periods it was war that brought this dilemma into sharp relief, as the context of a national emergency forced the development of propaganda at a more rapid pace than was possible in times of peace. It is partly for this reason that this chapter has been framed by the case studies of the Crimean War, which first revealed the importance of propaganda to a nation fighting a war in the public eye, and the Boer War, which built on the advances of the intervening period and became a great test for the ingenuity for the variety of propaganda and propagandists that had emerged. It is to this latter war that this thesis will now turn.

¹⁸⁷ See, Kennedy, 'Imperial'.

Chapter 4: The Boer War: An Exercise in Modern Propaganda

The Boer War was arguably the zenith of a process of propagandistic development that had been initiated nearly half a century before during the Crimean War. In the past decade there has been an increasing recognition of the Boer War as a pivotal period in terms of the relations between the military and media, censorship and the popular press as the work of Jacqueline Beaumont, Stephen Badsey and John Gooch (amongst others) has demonstrated. However, Badsey himself points out that there is still much to be done: 'In the history of war reporting the Boer War has fallen between two stools, as either a footnote to the nineteenth-century colonial campaigns, or as irrelevant to the issues of twentieth-century war, being dismissed in quite literally less than a sentence by the standard histories of the subject.'¹ Although limiting his comments to a defence of the place of Boer War reportage in historiography, his sentiments could be easily applied more generally to the propaganda of this period.

The Boer War was fought at the end of a series of social, political, economic, technological, military and cultural revolutions and as such was fought within a burgeoning technological society. The Crimean War had revealed that one result of these contextual changes was that an increasing number of people were beginning to be able to participate in politics and were taking advantage of that opportunity and the previous chapter demonstrated how these circumstances continued to evolve over the latter half of the nineteenth century and had an inevitable impact on propaganda. As Ellul argues,

Propaganda is needed in the exercise of power for the simple reason that the masses have come to participate in political affairs... In a sparsely populated country, politics can be made by small groups, separated from one another and from the masses, which will not form a public opinion and are remote from the centres of power... Nowadays the ruler can no longer detach himself from the masses and conduct a more or less secret policy.²

Ellul has presented this in terms of his 'technological society' and relates these developments to the twentieth century. However, it is perhaps easy for participants of the digital age to regard the late nineteenth century as an inchoate media environment, and it has been argued that the alliance of a new socio-political mobility, a modernised communications system, saturated by the new mass media, created a powerful and novel force in nineteenth century politics that both necessitated and facilitated the advance of modern propaganda. The growth in participation in political affairs, the resultant need for politicians and other groups to engage with that mass, and the increased opportunities for them to do so all contributed to the modernisation of propaganda before the period Ellul is concerned with.

¹ Stephen Badsey, 'War Correspondents in the Boer War', in Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War*, p. 187

² Ellul, *Propaganda*, pp. 121-2.

This was especially the case with regards to the growth of popular imperialism in the latter half of the nineteenth century as, ‘the interaction, indeed reciprocity, between empire, nationality and popular media... is precisely the site where... impressive numbers of Britons [made] the step from a passive awareness of nation to energetic participation on its behalf.’³ Undoubtedly, as suggested in the previous chapter, imperialism became a key factor in the growing interaction of the British public with the state after the Crimean War and especially, as Chakravarty argues, as a result of the events of the Indian Mutiny. This chapter will therefore also attempt to study the impact of imperialism on the development of propaganda, but particularly focussing on the Boer War itself as the zenith of popular imperialism and a point of stress and conflict in British politics when public opinion became a premium. Such a study touches on the debate amongst imperial historians as to the nature and efficacy of imperial propaganda and how it relates to questions of audience. An aim of this chapter therefore is to engage with these debates and assess the nature of the audience of imperial propaganda but from the point of view of the success and modernity of nineteenth century propaganda.

This naturally prompts further questions concerning the identity of the propagandists in the Boer War. The motives of the propagandists in the Crimean War were not always easy to discern, especially when considering the relationship between politicians and the media. This chapter will therefore continue to explore the development of the media and other circumstances in order to reveal the effect of the turbulent years of the Boer War on the relationship between the media and other potential propagandists and how the war created such a charged propagandistic environment. The chapter will also address the identity of the propagandists in this period, why they were involved in the propaganda process, and how their involvement represented a distinct break from the traditional bounds of propagandistic activity. This will include a consideration of political parties as well as individuals from the political, media and military spheres and from both sides of the political divide. The relative success of the propaganda disseminated by these groups and individuals will then be analysed as part of the debate concerning working class involvement in the Empire already prominent amongst imperial historians. An analysis of two key propaganda campaigns during the Boer War, justification and vilification, will then be used as an example of how these media, propagandists and the context of the war had resulted in a modern propagandistic environment. Finally, this chapter will demonstrate how such campaigns have many similar characteristics and themes to propaganda of the twentieth century, continuing the much needed propagandistic dialogue between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Such changes must be viewed through contemporary eyes. As has been seen, the works of theorists such as Gustave le Bon and Graham Wallas reveal that contemporary scholars were beginning to make the leap between the advance of public opinion and the advance of propaganda in the period around the Boer War.⁴ This recognition was echoed in the political and press spheres and underlines the desire of contemporaries to understand the processes going on around them

³ Chakravarty, *The Indian*, p. 34.

⁴ Le Bon, *The Crowd*; Wallas, *The Great*.

and, in some cases, to take advantage of them. Ellul was right to identify modern propaganda as a natural and necessary product of a technological, modernised society. However, the chronological framework that has been applied to this phenomenon must include the Boer War. Unfortunately there is very little access to the thoughts and reactions of the newest addition to the political sphere, the working class, except for a few extant diaries and letters such as those found in Jonathan Rose's illuminating work.⁵ However, this is also the reason why contemporary observations are so vital and why this chapter will consider carefully the perception of reactions and effectiveness. It is also for this reason that I intend to view intent, not reception, as the primary factor in defining modern propaganda in this era. Like the Crimean War, the Boer War represents a pivotal stage in the development of propaganda both as the first test for the changes of the past forty years and as prompt to its progress.

The Boer War only served to exacerbate the domination of the popular press, the *Daily Mail* attaining an unprecedented one million sales by 1900.⁶ Harmsworth flew the imperial flag throughout the war and did more than any other to promote the pro-war cause irrespective of obstacles. This included the limitations of censorship as Harmsworth even encouraged his war correspondent Edgar Wallace to flout Kitchener's rules to get the scoop of the signing of the peace in 1902, and, although Wallace was professionally reprimanded, Kitchener found the *Daily Mail* too powerful an institution to be punished, much to his chagrin.⁷ Such clashes served to remind both military and political officials that certain sections of the media had become increasingly powerful organs with increasing autonomy when backed by their constituency of readers. As will be demonstrated later in the chapter, politicians and military officials saw such press autonomy as something that should be controlled by censorship or manipulated through the network of relationships. As the scale of war correspondents operating in the war reached an unprecedented height this became all the more necessary. During the course of the war, 158 correspondents from Britain, the colonies and the United States were registered as receiving the campaign medal. This, of course, does not include the numerous unaccredited journalists who operated in South Africa during the war, suggesting that the total figure was probably as many as 300.⁸ Even the siege towns of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith were covered by more than thirty correspondents.⁹ The events of the Boer War were reported from every possible angle by the British popular press

⁵ Rose, *The Intellectual*.

⁶ A.P. Wadsworth, 'Newspaper Circulations, 1800-1954', *Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society*, Session 1954-1955 (March, 1955), pp. 24-5.

⁷ Beaumont, 'The British', p. 283.

⁸ Badsey, 'War Correspondents', p. 191.

⁹ Jacqueline Beaumont, 'The Times at war, 1899-1902', in Donal Lowry (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester, 2000).

including the few Liberal and pro-Boer¹⁰ organs such as C.P. Scott's *Manchester Guardian* and W.T. Stead's *Review of Reviews*. However, it was the fusion of patriotic impulse and imperialism in the mainstream popular press that was to attract a mass readership, and it is unsurprising to find that jingoistic trend common to many publications of this period.

Drawing on developments in the mid-nineteenth century, music hall flourished in the high imperial period and attracted increasing numbers of flag-waving participants from a cross section of society. However, 'The "War Warble"', as journalists called it, did not really come into its own until the Boer War, when it grew to epidemic proportions; for the struggle in South Africa was the culminating extravaganza of British imperialist policy¹¹ and prompted a new wave of imperialist sentiment and song. This began with the Jameson Raid, Jameson being hailed as a hero in the halls despite the controversy surrounding his actions in British politics. During one rendition of 'An Artist's Model', the audience were said to have cheered every reference to the Queen, Jameson and Chamberlain but booted loudly as soon as Kaiser Wilhelm's name was heard above the din.¹² During the Boer War itself, music halls remained unswervingly patriotic and militaristic, praising both officers and common soldiers alike in songs such as 'Dear Old Bobs' (in honour of Lord Roberts) and 'Bravo C.I.V.s' (in support of the vast surge of volunteers raised from British civilians during the war). They promoted a unity within the Empire, both in terms of Irish solidarity (such as in Leo Dryden's 'Bravo Dublin Fusiliers!', 1899), and in unity with the Dominions (as seen in 'Grand Old British Breed', 1900).¹³ Such an alliance of music and the press is captured in correspondence between Harmsworth by Rudyard Kipling, two men closely associated with popular imperialism, the latter providing verses for use in the former's newspapers.¹⁴ Such combinations of media to pursue a certain theme or campaign are suggestive of a premeditated strategy, as well as an understanding of the uses of the various media available, reinforcing the idea that propagandists were becoming increasingly sophisticated in their approach to propaganda in this period.

Moving pictures of the most notable generals, battles and events were shown throughout the Boer War often within the music halls themselves, and audiences were no less responsive. One showing of a film of the popular hero Baden-Powell resulted in a full half hour of unrestrained cheering from the audience.¹⁵ The vast expansion of the nascent cinema in terms of the scale of production owed much to the fillip given to the film industry by the Boer War. The popular thirst

¹⁰ The term 'pro-Boer' is itself worthy of consideration, especially as I have branded the vast array of oppositional forces with this term in this thesis. 'Pro-Boer' was born as a term of reproach, utilised especially by the Unionists and imperialists more generally as a label for anyone in opposition to the war. Its use covered pacifists, anti-imperialists, Boer sympathisers, imperialists who nevertheless opposed the war and even pro-war imperialists who questioned certain aspects of the prosecution of the war particularly during Kitchener's 'scorched earth' campaign of 1901-1902. As with many terms of reproach, the nominees adopted the term as their own in many cases and for this reason I have chosen to keep the designation.

¹¹ Senelick, 'Politics', p. 174.

¹² MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, p. 53.

¹³ Senelick, 'Politics', pp. 176-7.

¹⁴ For example, Rudyard Kipling to Alfred Harmsworth, 22 October 1899, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62292 A ff.40-41, BL.

¹⁵ Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 10.

for information of any kind concerning the war prompted Charles Urban of the 'Warwick Trading Company' (WTC), as well as other 'film barons' such as R.W. Paul of 'Paul's Animatograph Works Ltd.', to send experienced cameramen to film the action. The first films shot by J.B. Stanford, shown early in 1901 at the Alhambra theatre, caused such popular enthusiasm that Urban sent out another correspondent, Joe Rosenthal, to continue filming as the conflict unfolded. The result was a series of action shots of columns on the move and even skirmishes with Boers.¹⁶ Other biograph enthusiasts such as William Kennedie Laurie Dickson recognised a unique opportunity to demonstrate the power of film, and left for the front in October 1899, capturing everything from the journey with General Buller to the front to the raising of the British flag at Pretoria. His confidence in the popularity of these films was not unfounded since the Palace Variety Theatre in London ran a constant biograph programme alongside the seemingly ubiquitous Mutoscope arcades.¹⁷

The fact that the Boer War erupted in the formative period of the cinema as well as in the heyday of the music hall ensured a union between established entertainment, technology and propaganda.¹⁸ The militarism and patriotism of popular culture fed into films generated between 1899 and 1902. *Return of the City Imperial Volunteers'* (Hepworth and Co., 29/10/1900), *Boer War Cavalry Charge* (WTC, 1900) and *The Australian Mounted Rifles Marching Through Cape Town* (WTC, 22/12/1899) all reinforced the principal theme of imperial unity represented in the popular press and music halls. However, film's power was in its originality. Images that appear stolid and uninspiring would have thrilled frequenters of the Alhambra or Palace who had never seen moving pictures of South Africa or their own troops fighting, let alone a marching column of colonial cavalry. Audiences were transported to the front and thereby 'involved' in the war, just as they had been with W.H. Russell's reports in the *Times* during the Crimean War. This more active participation was exactly what was required by those attempting to maintain support for the Boer War.

As with the perception of Fenton's camera in the Crimea, the rawness was allied with the belief in its representation of reality, of great benefit to emergent propagandists. Film was lauded for its mimetic quality, however, audiences of films such as *Mafeking Despatch Bearer* (WTC, 1900) found that, 'No photograph can boast the realism of the biograph... The biograph will reveal bravery as no despatch may do, and will tell the truth in all things.'¹⁹ Similarly, a Scottish newspaper carried a review of a recent biograph performance stating, 'So animated and real that one sat up spell-bound. The views were very clear and the action represented was so realistic that in several cases the audience could scarce restrain their wonder.'²⁰ This potentially left audiences exposed to the machinations of the film producers and proprietors who manipulated opinion through the medium of film. *Mafeking Despatch Rider* offers an interesting example of the distortion of reality, an entirely

¹⁶ As in the Warwick Trading Company's, *A Skirmish with the Boers near Kimberley by a Troop of Cavalry Scouts Attached to General French's Column* (1901). Low and Manvell (eds.), *The History*, pp. 65-6.

¹⁷ Eckardt, 'Pioneers', p. 642.

¹⁸ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, p. 76.

¹⁹ *Today*, 26 October 1899.

²⁰ Low and Manvell (eds.), *The History*, p. 37.

staged fight of several Boers and despatch runners, one of whom is seen to tackle his enemy bravely and get his message through. The production company considered the heroics of despatch runners important enough to show audiences as information was at a premium, especially during the siege of Mafeking. The public had also become used to the saturation of news and film-makers and producers exploited this desire.

Mafeking Despatch Bearer was filmed in England, not, as the WTC catalogue claimed, on the South African veldt. This practice was far from uncommon. An article entitled ‘Sham War Cinematograph Films’ appeared in *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger* during the Boer War which outlined how to spot the often carefully produced fakes.²¹ Satirical poems also appeared highlighting the ability of the camera to fool audiences:

But he’s got a khaki camera – it’s the latest thing;
 For absolute straightforwardness the straightest thing.
 You can make a “Scene at Paard-
 Eburg” in your own back yard
 If you understand this truly up-to-datest thing...
 As a fabrication-mill it is the greatest thing:
 Two hundred lies a minute!²²

The extent of the staged footage in circulation is also demonstrated by a comment in another WTC catalogue, which highlights an obvious hypocrisy, that, ‘ALWAYS WAIT FOR GENIUNE FILMS. Do not discredit your exhibits and the general Animated Picture Business by trying to fool the Public with Faked Films. You will be the loser in the long run if you do. The “Warwick War and Films of Topical Events for all parts of the World” are taken on the spot and are not made on Hampstead Heath, New Jersey, France or in somebody’s back yard.’²³ Two producers who made a trade of such films were Mitchell and Kenyon, who produced a series of staged Boer War battles around their base of Blackburn which peddled a patriotic imperial line.²⁴ Most film producers found it necessary to master the technology available in order to stage forgeries, but what motivated them to create such pieces is unclear. One possibility was that they found it difficult to resist public demand for ‘real’ films from the front.²⁵ Nevertheless, whether for profit or propaganda, contemporary articles and comments reveal that film producers and film correspondents were

²¹ *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger* (March 1900); Harding and Popple, *In the Kingdom*, p. 126.

²² Ward Muir, ‘The Khaki-Covered Camera’, *The Photogram* (July 1900); *Ibid.*, p. 132.

²³ Thelma Gutsche, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1992), p.46.

²⁴ Timothy Neal, Vanessa Toulmin and Rebecca Vick, ‘Mitchell and Kenyon: A Successful, Pioneering and ‘Travelled’ Partnership of Production’, Toulmin, Popple and Russell (eds.), *The Lost World*, p. 7.

²⁵ This is certainly true of another obvious lack of scruple in the film world on behalf of W. K-L Dickson who failed to capture the raising of the flag at Pretoria and so reconstructed it himself, and then lied about the event in his record of the Boer War. W. K-L Dickson, *The Biograph in Battle: Its Story in the South African War Related with Personal Experiences* (London, 1901), pp. iv, 237.

becoming increasingly aware of the potential to use the cinematograph as a medium to deceive and therefore as a tool to disseminate propaganda.

This did not escape the attention of both military and public officials. Possibly the first attempt by the British Government to engage with film as a medium of propaganda, just prior to the outbreak of the Boer War, was in May 1899 in Cape Town. *Britannia's Bulwarks* was a film demonstrating the impressive might of the Royal Navy, filmed at the Portsmouth Naval Depot under the supervision of the Admiralty and Charles Urban.²⁶ It was screened at a critical moment in South Africa for the British when attempts were made to put pressure on Kruger and impress upon the South African and British publics the might, and benefits, of the British Empire. The War Office similarly used film to reach a mass audience, an early example being R.W. Paul's *Army Life, or How Soldiers are Made* (1900), aided in its creation by Adjutant-General Sir Evelyn Wood. An introduction to the film in an impressive illustrated brochure created to advertise the series stated that, 'the War Office authorities foresaw that recruiting might well be stimulated by exhibition of films.' Press reviews for the series were almost unanimous in their praise of the 'exceptional merit' of the films, 'combining art and actuality.'²⁷ Other collaborations were soon established, Cecil Hepworth producing films on *The British Army* (1900) and *The British Navy* (1900) and Charles Urban showcasing a recruitment film under the aegis of the War Office as part of a Naval and Military Exhibition.²⁸ Such examples suggest that the Government and military were taking a more active role in using propaganda as a weapon, not only during conflicts, but in the lead up to those conflicts, and film, as a modern, technically advanced medium with an entertaining veneer, provided the most obvious choice.

That film was seen as an increasingly popular medium, is demonstrated by the catalogue of available films from the WTC throughout the years 1899-1902, which reveal the perceived popularity of the Boer War amongst the public. Dozens of increasingly long films appeared in each catalogue ranging from comedies poking fun at Kruger to reproductions of battles and more sobering shots of the ambulance corps at work. Although it is difficult for the historian to uncover the audience reaction to these films, it is clear that the war was a popular subject. Unlike other media which turned to the Chinese labour issue or the new Education Act by 1901, the cinemas maintained a keen popular interest through to the conclusion of the Boer War. Indeed, Dickson's films were still being shown in the Palace as late as June 1902 by which time the chairman of the British Biograph Company had announced profits of over £2000 from the sale of the films.²⁹ The war as a subject allied to film's entertaining nature meant that, 'by means of the living representation of the camera millions could now feel nearer [to big national events].'³⁰ Elizabeth Strelbel's contention that Boer War films were 'primitive propaganda', loses credibility, particularly when she compares them unfavourably to Nazi film propaganda. It is anachronistic and inequitable

²⁶ Gutsche, *The History*, p. 36.

²⁷ Low & Manvell, *The History*, pp. 55-6.

²⁸ 30 May 1901, Urban Papers, Urban 12/9-12, NMM.

²⁹ Dickson, *The Biograph*, p. vi.

³⁰ Low, *The History*, p. 61.

to contrast the two in terms of propagandistic value, as, apart from anything else, the audiences of 1899 and 1939 were a world apart in their level of cinematic sophistication.³¹ The belief in the reality of films of Boer atrocities and British acts of heroism, as well as the delight taken in the more technical, comic pieces such as *Guy Fawkes Day Incident* (WTC, 1900) in which several boys are seen rushing to stab at an effigy of Kruger before burning it, was of immense importance to any potential propagandist, as was the mutually reinforcing effect of the cinema crowd's adulation.

The combined power and novelty of the popular press, music hall and cinema should not be underestimated, but that is not to say that more traditional media did not add to the propagandistically charged environment of the Boer War. As revealed in the previous chapter, pamphlets, literature and caricature all maintained a significant presence during the later nineteenth century and were equally given a renewed prominence by the Boer War. The work of J.S. Galbraith demonstrated how the pamphlet was modernised in this period to meet the demands of the new mass society, especially in terms of the scale of production made possible by technological advances.³² Even before the outbreak of war in 1899, the National Union Gleanings leaflet listed 130 separate pamphlets on a variety of subjects for a two week period.³³ The Boer War called for even greater efforts from central and extra-Parliamentary bodies with impressive results, the Imperial South African Association alone distributed 500,000 pamphlets in 1899.³⁴ Such publications were also modernised in a manner very similar to the new journalism: they became noticeably shorter with bolder headlines, more pictures, cheaper (or often distributed freely) and adopted a style and layout palatable to the 'current-events man'. Unionist pamphlets followed the popular press in terms of content, concentrating on the sensational and adopted a distinctive tone when compared to Liberal publications due to their extreme emotional content.³⁵ This evokes the ideas of Wallace, Hobson and le Bon, since communications were increasingly focussing on emotion rather than rational appeal, linking the theory and practice of propaganda in this period. Although the Liberal, Labour and Radical parties all produced pamphlets in the Boer War period, as shall be seen, their adherence to the traditional tenets of reason and informed debate lost them the battle for hearts and minds amongst the new mass electorate.

The production of books, articles, journals and poems burgeoned during the Boer War. Entrepreneurs and imperial enthusiasts hoped to exploit this ready market and frequently appealed to imperially-minded statesmen for their patronage of a new journal, magazine or book. Harmsworth aided the creation of an imperial novel, *With the Flag* (an illustrated history of the Boer War) in partnership with Sir George Sutton of the Amalgamated Press.³⁶ Alfred Milner was also approached by H. Stuart-Carey, Organising Secretary of the Boys of the Empire League whose literary organ was Howard Spicer's *Boys of Our Empire*, and in fact became involved in the

³¹ Strebel, 'Primitive', p. 47.

³² John S. Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet Campaign on the Boer War', *Journal of Modern History*, 24, no.2 (1952).

³³ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1892/1, DUL.

³⁴ Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet', p. 112.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

³⁶ Alfred Harmsworth to Sir George Sutton, 3 March 1900, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62184 A f.20, BL.

movement as President of the South African Division on the Council for Boys' Empire League.³⁷ Indeed, the war encouraged the growth of juvenile literature, a phenomenon well documented by Mackenzie.³⁸ Poetry was also a notable feature of the war, as Rudyard Kipling increased his fame by penning increasingly jingoistic and imperialistic poems and songs such as 'Tommy Atkins', 'Boots' (both of which became a music hall favourites) and 'Two Kopjes'.³⁹ However, imperial propagandists did not have it all their way as a counter-propagandistic discourse existed through pro-Boer, or at least anti-war, literary works. The books of J.A. Hobson, articles of John M. Robertson and the poetry of A.E. Houseman, T.W.H. Crosland and Thomas Hardy, existed alongside pens from the common soldiery.

Mass consumer society also demanded 'a war that you could see and not just read about'.⁴⁰ As one writer in the *Illustrated London News* commented, 'Sketches and photographs from South Africa, now arriving in profusion, help those who live at home at ease to picture scenes of which the cable or the newsletter has already made them aware.'⁴¹ Indeed, it was the illustrated press in general that benefited from the Boer War desire for pictorial evidence of battles, marches and heroic generals. Such images were often in the style of the traditional military painting of Lady Butler, but far greater in number and covered the pages of the illustrated and daily popular press as well as adorning advertising boards and posters. Photos were incorporated into the popular press using new printing technologies, *Black and White* printing 532 photos and 127 drawings in its pages between January and June 1900. Similarly, illustrated journals became increasingly inventive in attempting to get a pictorial scoop over their rivals, prompting *Sphere* to employ John Schönberg as an undercover war artist in Pretoria to gain a Boer perspective of the conflict.⁴² Such was the demand for images that when there was a drought in pictures from their correspondents in the field, illustrated journals employed staff artists to 'fill in the gaps' using their imagination.⁴³ Obviously this opened possibilities for propagandistic exploitation, especially as these journals were typically imperialistic. Similarly, the traditionally satirical and radical art form of caricature was notably pro-governmental in this period. The pages of *Punch* were filled with atrocity stories aimed at the Boers, celebrations of Baden-Powell and upholding the governmental justification of the war, partly revealing the emphasis on commercial success, as the imperial, pro-war theme sold more copy, but also the connections of *Punch* to the political establishment, established during and after the Crimean War. Goldfarb-Marquis' thesis that the bonds between politicians and the media in Britain lay at the heart of the propagandistic successes of the First World War is undoubtedly accurate, but it needs to be reconsidered in terms of the precedents of these relationships.⁴⁴ As has been argued previously in this thesis, such bonds were clearly forming in the decades before 1914

³⁷ Alfred Milner to H. Stuart-Carey, 28 January 1903, Milner Papers, dep. 181, ff.198-9, BLMC.

³⁸ Especially, MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, pp. 173-228.

³⁹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Five Nations* (London, 1903), pp. 179-82, 185-7.

⁴⁰ Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 9.

⁴¹ *Illustrated London News*, 31 March 1900.

⁴² Peter Harrington, 'Pictorial Journalism and the Boer War: The London Illustrated Weeklies', in Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War*, pp. 224-35.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁴⁴ Goldfarb-Marquis, 'Words as Weapons'.

and are revealed to be fully developed by the time of the Boer War. It is perhaps because of this extant network that the often poorly thought out British propaganda policy in the First World War still operated successfully.

Finally, media dominance of the public space was strengthened by a growth in the ‘ephemera of empire’. Politicians and press barons were not alone in employing the concept of Empire for personal benefit. Businesses saw the potential of imperial imagery to attract the new, patriotic, jingoistic and more ‘economically mobile’ masses. By the late nineteenth century, advertising was a mass industry with its own agents, companies and scientific techniques. The Page Davis School of Advertising had been established in Canada in 1890, and in 1899 S.H. Benson organised the first ‘Exhibition of Advertising’. Such was the perceived sophistication of modern advertising that it was common to talk of a ‘science of advertising’ by the turn of the century. Advertisers rapidly assimilated the youth market, taking advantage of the social revolution caused by the 1870 Education Act. The Boer War epitomised and accelerated this process, especially in terms of generating and utilising imperialism amongst the young. When Ladysmith was relieved Bovril wired the news to headmasters all over the country and thus, ‘a connection was made in many an innocent mind between victory, Bovril and a half-holiday from school.’⁴⁵ One enterprising company satirised two of the most notable Boer Generals (Christiaan de Wet and Louis Botha) in an advertising slogan, ‘Don’t Botha about De Wet, buy a Smither’s Superfire Umbrella’⁴⁶ Companies such as Lemco used the image of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts and the popularity of its drinks with his troops to sell them to a public eager to imitate their Boer War heroes. The employment of such psychological methods and knowledge amongst advertisers reveals that a more general understanding of sophisticated propagandistic techniques was common by the era of the Boer War.

The scale of such adverts and ephemera was quite extraordinary, as John MacKenzie’s research has demonstrated. Postcards, tea packets, chocolate bars, biscuit tins, children’s journals, coins, soap, mugs all carried the imperial message to a ready audience. The Boer War produced a particular surge in children’s goods. Mr and Mrs Ames produced the *A,B,C, for Child Patriots* and *How the Boers Were Beaten in Verse and Pictures*, brimming with xenophobic and patriotic ideology. One baby’s commemorative plate from the period even pictured Generals Kitchener and French and carried the legend, ‘Conquer or Die!’ Imbuing children with a sense of patriotism and imperial spirit was also the aim of many other, more official groups and individuals.⁴⁷ The Education Department issued textbooks of imperialist ideology, and handbooks were written for teachers of history and geography to standardise this educational mode and ensure the inculcation of patriotism and good citizenship as well as the provision of moral training, demonstrating official interest in the use of modernised media for propaganda purposes, as had been demonstrated with the political

⁴⁵ Fraser, *The Coming*, pp. 138-43; Peter Hadley, *The History of Bovril Advertising* (London, 1972) p. 18.

⁴⁶ Warwick (ed.), *The South African*, p. 230.

⁴⁷ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, pp. 26-35.

parties in the previous chapter.⁴⁸ Similarly, in the 1880s the Royal Colonial Institute wrote to public and grammar schools urging courses in colonial studies and instituting prizes for imperial essay competitions.⁴⁹ Journals, magazines and books such as *Boys Empire*, *Boys of our Empire* and *Boys of England*, bred a sense of imperial community in Britain's youth, but also a basic belief in their racial and cultural superiority.

This overview of the media environment in the Boer War has demonstrated how the new mass public were saturated by information and entertainment from a vast array of traditional and modern media, all competing for attention and patronage. Most of these assimilated the principal characteristics of late nineteenth century popular culture – militarism, patriotism and imperialism – and then set about reinforcing them. Significantly a mass public, swept along in a tide of imperialist fervour by a media ever increasing in size and potency awaited the potential propagandist. Imperial historians such as Mackenzie have covered these various media, their imperial themes and audience in great detail. However, this chapter intends to take this further by considering those who potentially sought to benefit from these processes. In Gramscian fashion, it became apparent that those who controlled 'the means of mental production', that is the mass media, education and mass entertainment industries, controlled public opinion and held the reins of power.⁵⁰ War polarised political and public opinion in Britain, as imperialists took up the cause of the defence of the Empire and 'pro-Boers' vilified the war itself and the jingoistic imperialism that embodied and sustained it. This inevitably intensified propaganda, since so much was perceived to be at stake and contemporaries understood that such battles could only be truly won by the conquest of hearts and minds.

The previous chapter demonstrated how political parties in this period were necessarily becoming more interested and involved in using propaganda as a political weapon and were developing internal machinery accordingly. This chapter will now consider how these parties utilised that machinery, as well as censorship and other, extra-Parliamentary resources during the Boer War to disseminate propaganda to demonstrate British and imperial support for that conflict. The election of 1900, dubbed the 'khaki election' due to its being fought by the Unionist Government principally on the back of the Boer War and as 'a climax of the racial and imperial vision of conservatism',⁵¹ provides the most stark example of the culmination of this process. Pamphlets produced from September 1900 by CCO, the National Union and Imperial South African Association all acting in concert and providing support to Governmental propaganda, shifted their

⁴⁸ One obvious example from this period is Joseph H. Cowham's *A New School Method* (London, 1894) which argued that all teaching should be organised around instilling patriotism, imperialism and morality in students; MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, pp. 174-194.

⁴⁹ Porter, *The Absent-Minded*, pp. 180-1.

⁵⁰ S. Humphries, "'Hurrah for England": schooling and the working class in Bristol, 1870-1914', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), p. 172.

⁵¹ Ellis, "'The Methods'", p. 54.

emphasis from a general justification of the war to a ‘raging and tearing invective against ‘disloyal’ Liberals’.⁵² ‘Liberal’, ‘pro-Boer’, ‘little-Englander’ and ‘traitor’ became interchangeable terms as anti-war Liberal and Radical MPs were singled out, unmasked and brutalised as Boer sympathisers and informants. One pamphlet identified Mr John Ellis (a Radical MP) as collaborating with the Boers to vilify the British Government in the Cape adding, “Have nothing to do with such traitors to their countrymen fighting for Britain, but VOTE FOR THE UNIONIST CANDIDATE!”⁵³ Reflecting on the election, Bryce concluded that that, ‘more respectable Conservatives must surely be rather ashamed of the tactics, however they may rejoice in the victory.’⁵⁴ Although there was a noticeable discomfort with crude appeals to emotion that many associated with political propaganda, it was also regarded as increasingly necessary in the modern political context. The Unionist organisation triumphed over the Liberals (who, as will be seen, were notoriously split during the war) by ensuring unanimity of feeling and argument in publications, lectures and meetings. Booklets such as ‘Handy Notes on South Africa for the use of Speakers and Others’ were produced to summarise the Unionist stance on issues ranging from Boer atrocities to the native question.⁵⁵ Such innovations in the organisation and output of political parties were one reason for the success of the Unionist imperial and pro-war propaganda in this period, and their domination of the election polls in 1900 and was certainly perceived to have been so by contemporary Liberal commentators such as Bryce.

The Unionist Government controlled the flow of information by an extension of censorship during the Boer War, building on the precedents and debates of War Office officials and Generals of the previous four decades. However, when Lord Stanley was appointed the first Chief Censor in South Africa, he published a report stating, ‘It is difficult to report on any defects in regulations concerning censors and correspondents or propose alterations to such, as there appear to have been no regulations in existence for either censor or correspondents at the commencement of this campaign.’⁵⁶ This was an exaggeration given the ‘Rules for Newspaper Correspondents at the Seat of War’ which had been revised several times over the 1880s and 1890s. However, the slow progress in designing the apparatus of censorship was another indication of the uneasiness felt by British politicians, especially outside of a military context. Despite protestations from Sir John Ardagh (Director of Military Intelligence) and Sir Evelyn Wood (Adjutant General) in the year before the Boer War that the new era of mass communications demanded a more comprehensive censorship policy and a bill being drafted for the control of the press, the Cabinet ruled that no British government could introduce such legislation in peacetime.⁵⁷ Indeed, even during the war, Chamberlain was cautious about extending Milner’s powers in South Africa arguing, ‘Hitherto we

⁵² Galbraith, ‘The Pamphlet’, p. 115.

⁵³ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1900/61, DUL.

⁵⁴ Lord James Bryce to Goldwin Smith, 29 October 1900, Bryce Papers, dep. 16, f.43, BLMC.

⁵⁵ ‘Handy Notes on South Africa for the use of Speakers and Others’ published by the Imperial South African Association, 1901; Milner Papers, dep. 339(c), item 3, BLMC.

⁵⁶ ‘Report on Press Censorship rendered to the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief by the Press Censor Army Headquarters Pretoria, July 1900’, WO 108/262, NA.

⁵⁷ Badsey, ‘War Correspondents’, pp. 187-8.

have kept this country wholly with us. A false step might endanger our position, and although I am prepared to make every use of all the weapons in my hands I am not yet inclined to throw up the game and go to Parliament for extraordinary and absolutely unprecedented powers.⁵⁸ Until Kitchener extended Martial Law to include the whole of South Africa in 1901 most politicians and officials were only prepared to establish censorship on a voluntary basis. Such a system, however, often proved quite successful because of the informal bonds between the politicians and the press.

Once Martial Law was in place, however, the Government deployed strict rules to prevent 'undesirable' information reaching Britain and affecting public opinion. It allowed for the collation of information on the Boers and their British allies such as presented in the aforementioned pamphlets. The complaints of Bryce's American friend, and ardent pro-Boer, Goldwin Smith serve as testament to the strict implementation of this policy. 'Mr Merriman sends me the cover of a letter addressed by me to him at Capetown, which has been 'opened under Martial Law'...On what pretence do they open a letter sent by me, a law-abiding citizen, to Mr Merriman a member of the Colonial Parliament who has given no cause for legitimate suspicion?'⁵⁹ Similarly, the complaints of British war correspondents about the extent and severity of censorship, especially under Martial Law, reflect both how concerned the British Government had become about public opinion in England, and how far they would go to prevent undesirable information being telegraphed. For example, Lionel James, a correspondent in South Africa for the *Times*, protested:

I think something should be done about this muzzling of the Press. At the present moment news is being deliberately suppressed and censorship, as I explained in cables, is so severe, that I do not attempt to do anything. I am certainly not going to send what I am told to send... The thing has got beyond a joke and I think that representation should be made very clearly to the Secretary of State for War.⁶⁰

Perhaps most indicative of the development of a more centrally orchestrated and efficient censorship was the system created by Lord Stanley and taken on by J.F. Bagot from 1900. Bagot's papers reveal that an extensive network of local censors had been established by 1900 and Bagot, as Chief Censor, quickly became inundated with work attempting to control the number of correspondents in South Africa as well as their output.⁶¹ The scale of the operation and the powers available to the Chief Censor are evident, one message from the chief censor in Natal informing Bagot of a potential issue with messages arriving in the mail from the UK but arguing, 'All censors have been warned. I fear that there is little chance of anything being detected unless the whole of the civil mail from United Kingdom is opened and examined. This would entail extra censors but I

⁵⁸ Chamberlain to Milner, 22 December 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 170, ff.41-46, BLMC.

⁵⁹ Goldwin Smith to Bryce, 1 April 1901, Bryce Papers, dep. 16, f.158, BLMC.

⁶⁰ Lionel James to Leo Amery, 14 June 1901, Papers of Lionel James, NIA.

⁶¹ Papers of J.F. Bagot, CCROA.

can have it done if you consider it necessary.⁶² Although at times an *ad hoc*, undefined and unrefined process, censorship was becoming far more extensive during the Boer War.

Moreover the growth of the telegraph system under government aegis demanded a new *modus operandi*. Hobson commented that telegraphy was the ‘ideal mode of suggestion’ being a voice of ‘mysterious authority, simultaneously acting on the whole public’, and the telegraph, ‘by making public opinion simultaneous, is also making it liable to those delusions, panics and gregarious impulses which transform otherwise reasonable men into a mob.’⁶³ The British Government and military made great use of this system, aided by their control of the principal telegraph offices linking South Africa with the rest of the world at Aden, Durban and Cape Town. Aden was especially important as all telegrams to and from the Transvaal and Orange Free State had to pass through this station. Therefore, by the simple creation of three censorship stations all British and Boer correspondence could be efficiently monitored.⁶⁴ Such telegraphic dominance extended to cables connecting the Dominions to Britain. Although many were still privately owned, there was a growing belief amongst imperialists and telegraphic experts in ‘the benevolent effect of enlightened government intervention’ as a direct means of disseminating imperial propaganda around the world, and the work of men such as Sandford Fleming ensured the continued propagation of such a system after the Boer War. His suggestions assimilated the ideas of Sir Frederick Pollock for the creation of an Imperial Intelligence Department to ‘acquire and systematise information material to the common consensus of the Empire for the use of the Cabinet and the Council, and, so far as might be expedient, for publication.’⁶⁵

Although Fleming’s ideas were not implemented, many in the Colonial and War Offices worked tirelessly to extend the system of censorship throughout the Empire. Chamberlain was certainly involved in these debates and was frequently in contact with colonial officials in an attempt to create a network of civilian censors based at strategic cable points.⁶⁶ Further, a War Office secret report ‘Censorship of cables in Time of War’ stated that, ‘the Admiralty has suggested the desirability of assigning to a definite Minister or Officer the responsibility for the establishment in time of war of a Censorship of cables.’⁶⁷ However, as with Fleming’s ideas, the Boer War had ended by the time such proposals could be acted upon. Significantly, debates emerged regarding the maintenance of a system of overt governmental censorship outside of times of war and, whilst many expressed reservations, the Boer War experience had at least resulted in a belief in the need to control opinion, if indirectly, and promote the ideas of Empire. Censorship had helped this process during the war but, as a letter sent from Walter Hely-Hutchinson (the Governor of Natal) to Milner reveals that the Unionists had developed a far more effective means of ensuring popular support: ‘I am arranging about a Press censorship, and hope to get it organised to-morrow. Meanwhile I have

⁶² G.O.C. Natal to Bagot, 23 November 1900, Papers of J.F. Bagot, 01934, CCROA.

⁶³ Hobson, *Psychology*, pp. 11-12, 120.

⁶⁴ Beaumont, ‘The British Press’, p. 269.

⁶⁵ An ‘all red’ system refers to the cables linking every part of the world map coloured red, the usual colour used for British imperial possessions. Potter, *News*, pp. 62-6.

⁶⁶ Graham Bower to Chamberlain, 9 August 1900, CO 537/431, NA.

⁶⁷ War Office Report, 11 January 1902, CO 537/299, NA.

been doing a little on my own account. You never saw such lies as Bennet Burleigh telegraphs to the D.T. I have got Monypenny to send a correct account... to the *Times*.⁶⁸ As demonstrated in the previous chapter, bonds between officials, politicians and the press had become a more informal method of ensuring a control over the flow of information.

The manipulation and management of those modes of communication was also vital in demonstrating support for the war outside of Britain and aimed to promote the idea of a common bond between nations within the Empire.⁶⁹ The appearance of such unity was paramount to the Unionist Government during the war for the promotion of imperialism at home, the silencing of pro-Boer critics of Empire, and to prevent the rebellion of the Boer states spreading any further within the Empire. One excellent example of how sophisticated Unionist propaganda had become in achieving this goal was campaigns around the sending of 1000 Canadian troops to help Britain fight in the Boer War. The Unionist Government orchestrated a comprehensive propaganda campaign to achieve and then promote this demonstration of unity, whilst maintaining the impression of its spontaneity. Lord Grey (the Director of the South Africa Company) wrote to Chamberlain about the use of Mr Goode in Canada and the United States in his capacity as founder of the British Public Schools and Universities Club at New York:

Mr. Goode went to Ottawa with the knowledge and approval of the War Office; his instructions being to confine himself to making inquiries as to the possibility of obtaining desirable recruits from Canada... It appeared to us that Mr. Goode would do useful work at Ottawa, as he would be able, as soon as the Canadian Govt called for recruits, quite unofficially, through his club position, to give the movement publicity throughout America.⁷⁰

The departure of the 1000 Canadian volunteers to South Africa was also marked by a stirringly imperialistic speech orated by the Canadian Premier, a speech which was reproduced through the popular press, music halls and especially in Unionist pamphlets as proof of imperial fraternity: 'Fellow Countrymen, let it be known that we are at one with our loyal brethren across the sea; let there be no suspicion of agreement with the sentiments of the poor miserable Radical Little Englanders. At this critical time there is but one course to take, and that is to SUPPORT THE UNIONIST Government and to consolidate our glorious Empire.'⁷¹ Such a campaign demonstrates the collaboration between the Unionist Government, extra-Parliamentary groups and media, the intent for a particular propaganda campaign in Canada as well as its successful and speedy dissemination by the Unionist party in England.

Aside from the recruitment of colonial militias, the Unionist Government argued that the imperialist fervour found in the colonies was similar to that experienced in Britain. Articles from

⁶⁸ Hely-Hutchinson to Milner, 4 October 1899, Milner Papers, dep. 212, f.343, BLMC.

⁶⁹ Headrick, *The Invisible*, p. 88.

⁷⁰ Lord Grey to Chamberlain, 19 February 1900, Chamberlain Papers, JC/29/4/7/2, BUSC.

⁷¹ Taken from 'The Transvaal War – The Patriotism of Our Colonies'; The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1899/11, DUL.

newspapers such as the Montreal *Star* printing statements such as, ‘Montreal followed London’s example today and went wild over the relief of Ladysmith.’ However, these ‘spontaneous and widespread expressions of solidarity’ were neither spontaneous nor widespread. In Montreal, the ‘flag riot’ episode indicates that those supporting the war were in fact merely British expatriates from the Anglophone McGill University, whereas the majority, French, opinion was distinctly cool towards the British subjugation of South Africa.⁷² The hand of the Unionist Government in the whole process is confirmed by letters sent by Goldwin Smith to Bryce. Soon after Laurier’s speech Smith wrote:

In Canada Chamberlain, through Minto, pressed Laurier, who moreover was approached by an agent, described by a friend in the Cape as disreputable, of the South African Company. The enthusiasm did not go much beyond Toronto...and the source of the reports on Canadian sentiment by which you are greatly misled...The French Canadians were on the other side and I was told that there was great difficulty in recruiting in Quebec. Of the 1000 volunteers, 600 were members of the Church of England...⁷³

Smith went on to report that Monet, a Canadian MP, had informed him that if a plebiscite were held in Quebec, ninety percent of the population would be against the war, later adding that this is unfortunately immaterial as the people blindly followed their Premier in all things and he had been successfully ‘captured by Imperial titles and flattery’.⁷⁴ Unionist propagandists therefore understood that perception was often more powerful than reality and that often a campaign needed good presentation and dissemination rather than a reliance on the facts.

One of the key problems both Goldwin Smith and Bryce encountered was the nurturing of jingoism by the Unionist Government both in Britain and the Dominions. Jingoism was seen by liberals from Hobson to Bryce as a perversion of public opinion, led astray by unscrupulous politicians and an unfettered popular press. However, jingoism’s volatile nature and reliance on emotion rather than reason was ideal for the modern propagandist desiring to inculcate a passion for the war and Empire in general. For this reason Unionists sought to defend jingoism as a positive new force, Arnold White arguing that it was simply evidence of the survival and extension of patriotic good sense rather than the degeneration of the public.⁷⁵ Similarly the conservative MP G.T.C. Bartley argued in one of the frequent Commons debates on the subject of the disruption of pro-Boer meetings by jingo crowds, ‘I have often seen a great row at meetings’ but, ‘we are delighted by this exhibition of feeling’ and ‘if the other side excite the public to violence the blame is upon them, and not upon us’.⁷⁶ By recognising jingoism as a political force, the Unionist

⁷² Potter, *News*, pp. 36-8.

⁷³ Goldwin Smith to Bryce, 3 December 1899, Bryce Papers, dep. 16, ff.108-9, BLMC.

⁷⁴ Goldwin Smith to Bryce, 19 January 1900, dep. 16, ff.116-8; Goldwin Smith to Bryce, 11 January 1902, Bryce Papers, dep. 16, ff.168-72, BLMC.

⁷⁵ Thompson, ‘The Idea’, p. 271.

⁷⁶ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series 80, cc. 968-9, 1900.

government were able to appropriate it to their own ends of electoral success, support for the war and the growth of popular imperialism.

There were, however, also numerous individuals who were heavily involved in the use of propaganda during the Boer War, and this chapter now intends to analyse the activity of some of those individuals in order to analyse how they were adapting to a modern propagandistic environment, whether they were indeed contributing to that environment, and how they perceived their own actions as propagandists. Two men heavily implicated in the origins and execution of the war were Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner and it is first necessary to consider how their media connections and backgrounds before the Boer War, as highlighted in the previous chapter, had an impact on their later actions.

It was undoubtedly 'Joe's War', with many Liberals arguing that he had provoked the hostilities and many Unionists saw him as the representative of war and the imperial spirit that nourished it. Chamberlain had also earned the respect, and thus support, of other prominent imperialists such as Rudyard Kipling who wrote to Milner after the Boer War that despite being disappointed with Chamberlain's policy at that time, 'Personally – I mean poetically – I am bound to his chariot wheels, because he is all that we have and we owe him gratitude for the past. So I have made – God forgive me – a peaceful and reconciliatory poem of the situation as it ought to be which you will perhaps see in the papers.'⁷⁷ Much of Kipling's (disguised) displeasure was aimed at the half-measures being employed by Chamberlain in the aftermath of the war, and it was this reserve that also makes Chamberlain an interesting subject of study in terms of democratic propaganda. Although Chamberlain saw the necessity of censorship and political communication during the Boer War, he, and the Unionist Government more generally, stopped short of extending its powers of propaganda and censorship before and after the war, preferring to rely on 'good relations' than overt state intervention.

However, these lines could be blurred by both the Colonial Secretary and his High Commissioner who saw that managing public opinion in the lead up to a conflict was both right and desirable, as demonstrated in a letter written by Milner just before the initiation of hostilities:

As far as home opinion is concerned the management of the controversy has been perfect. Seeing how hopelessly dead the British public were to the real issues 4 months ago, it is wonderful where they stand today. Unfortunately, inevitably, the long dragging controversy which has enlightened public opinion at home, has done harm here. It has discouraged many of our best supporters, but, what is worse than that, it has given time for the Afrikaner

⁷⁷ Rudyard Kipling to Milner, 26 February 1903, Milner Papers, dep. 216, f.92, BLMC.

propaganda to produce more and more effect throughout the Colony and has consolidated the Afrikaner party.⁷⁸

This letter provides several interesting insights into the relationship between Milner, Chamberlain and propaganda. Firstly, it is intriguing to see how Milner regards his and the Colonial Secretary's propaganda efforts as 'the management of the controversy' and 'enlightening public opinion at home', whereas similar Boer efforts are regarded as 'Afrikaner propaganda'. Milner was clear that there was a need for propaganda and control of public opinion, but also believed that their mission was one of education and enlightenment, not callous manipulation, underlining the negative image of certain forms of propaganda in this era. Secondly, Milner's policy as High Commissioner since 1897 can be seen as one of imperialist aggression, determined to assert the rights of Britain as the suzerain state in South Africa. This letter can be seen as the culmination of the efforts of these two men to make a war with the Transvaal acceptable to the British public, and then to instigate that war.⁷⁹ Finally, the letter reveals how concerned both men were with the state of public opinion in their respective spheres of influence and they were open both to the use of propaganda and of censorship to control that opinion.

Milner certainly regarded the state of public opinion as pivotal to the success or failure of his policies. His papers reveal a constant stream of inquiries from friends, relatives, politicians, journalists and editors as to how his actions were being interpreted and responded to amongst the masses. Milner inundated Chamberlain with requests as to public opinion in Britain, being preoccupied with the idea that a 'wobble' in opinion could shatter any hope of the successful implementation of his policy. These increased in frequency as the war became protracted and indecorous, and after a year of warfare Chamberlain was moved to reassure Milner that, 'I do not see the slightest sign that the public are in any way shaken or would permit the least deviation from our policy of 'thorough'.'⁸⁰ However, Milner also had a similar array of contacts as Chamberlain, able and willing to disseminate his propaganda to manage that public opinion. Winston Churchill, in Britain on the stump after service in South Africa, wrote to say that he had been touring Britain canvassing the opinion of people 'of all classes and politics' and, 'I have neither influence nor power, but I can reach a wide public, and if there is anything you want said – without saying it yourself -... I should be proud to be your servant. At the present time I can draw an audience of 4000 people in any big town.'⁸¹ Later, when there was a growing body of politicians growing dangerously disillusioned with the war, Churchill wrote to Milner to warn him of their sentiments and to treat mass public opinion 'as one of the factors of the problem'.⁸²

Milner's early career as a journalist with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a propagandist for the Liberal Unionist Committee and as Lord Cromer's protégé in Egypt and also enhanced his array of

⁷⁸ Milner to Chamberlain, 27 September 1899, Chamberlain Papers, JC/10/9/62, BUSC.

⁷⁹ Porter, 'Sir Alfred', p. 329.

⁸⁰ For example, Chamberlain to Milner, 22 December 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 170, ff.41-46, BLMC.

⁸¹ Winston Churchill to Milner, 8 September 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 184, ff.112-114, BLMC.

⁸² Churchill to Milner, 31 December 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 184, f.57, BLMC.

acquaintances and contacts. His background also reinforced a belief in the power of the press as a tool to 'enlighten' public opinion and as a barometer to gauge opinion, as well as highlighting the importance of publicising imperial policies 'in sufficiently attractive form to get readers.'⁸³ Through his contacts, Milner attracted a number of talented journalists and officials to his cause. For example, Percy Fitzpatrick, head of the Wernher, Beit and Eckstein group intelligence department, was brought under Milner's wing early in 1898 and helped to articulate the High Commissioner's justification of the war in his book *The Transvaal from within* (1899) which was in turn promoted by Chamberlain, the *Times* and *Daily Mail*. Fitzpatrick even visited Britain in June 1899 in order to promote Milner's policy through the press and personal acquaintances. G.E. Buckle (editor of the *Times*) wrote to Milner even before the outbreak of war to congratulate Milner on his success in South Africa and informed him, 'Unless I am much mistaken in the temper of the people in this country, you may now count on steady backing here till your policy is put through.'⁸⁴ Similarly, Alfred Harmsworth told Milner 'A careful survey of public opinion leaves me one conclusion. You have the country at your back... Whatever my support be worth it is at your service in any eventuality whatever.'⁸⁵ These constant appeals and reassurances highlight the reverence with which Milner regarded British public opinion, and its perceived potency within the British political system. He knew that to implement any policy in this era of mass politics public opinion had to be understood, respected and manipulated in order that any associated propaganda campaign could be properly orchestrated.

In addition, Milner extended his influence and control over the South African press through his blossoming relationship with F.E. Garrett of the *Cape Times*. Collaborating with the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, itself under the control of the Rand Capitalists, a new editor was selected by Milner for its principal organ the *Johannesburg Star*. Milner's close relations with Buckle at the *Times* enabled him to secure W.F. Monypenny for the editorial post, and also rely on Leo Amery (*Times* correspondent in South Africa) as a firm supporter of Milner during the war. Although protestations as to editorial independence were made, Monypenny was obviously chosen for his imperialist outlook and his papers show a strong bias against the 'treacherous and cunning' Boers.⁸⁶ His control over Monypenny and the *Star* also gave him influence over the Argus Company's other newspapers – the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, *Rhodesia Herald*, *African Review*, *Cape Argus* and *Diamond Fields Advertiser*. Through these newspapers Milner set about preparing British public opinion for the aggressive policy in South Africa he intended to pursue and 'attempted to create a climate of opinion in which his own official dispatches would have the maximum effect and his ideas for a solution most appeal.'⁸⁷ To this end, Milner also cultivated friendships within the Reuter's agency, such as with Vere Stent in Mafeking who worked for the virulently anti-Boer *Transvaal Leader*.

⁸³ The phrase is Cromer's; Evelyn Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner: The Man of No Illusions, 1854-1925* (London, 1958), pp. 119-20.

⁸⁴ G.E. Buckle to Milner, 18 August 1899, Milner Papers, dep. 211, f.61, BLMC.

⁸⁵ Alfred Harmsworth to Milner, 30 November 1899, Milner Papers, dep. 212, ff.488-9, BLMC.

⁸⁶ Monypenny to Moberley Bell, 20 March 1899, Moberley Bell Papers, NIA.

⁸⁷ Porter, 'Sir Alfred', p. 334.

Although Potter argues that such relations were natural in the news collection and transmission process, reflecting commercial rather than political concerns, Milner's purpose in controlling, if indirectly, most of the information flow out of South Africa was clearly political, a fact that ties in with his obsession with the state of public opinion and political stability back in Britain.⁸⁸

Milner used his private secretary M.S.O. Walrond to liaise with the capitalists through Francis Masey and the press through Monypenny. Indeed, Masey and Walrond became close themselves, liaising about the best methods of stirring up opinion in South Africa in a manner beneficial to both capitalists and politicians. Masey wrote to Walrond expressing his opinions as to the nature of such a campaign before the war, intending to begin with a 'tone of moderation and subdued hopefulness' but, 'then will be the moment to raise an uproar, and it will be all the more effective after a period of comparative quiet. This applies especially to the Press. It is not meant in any way to discourage meetings or organisation, above all, organisation. The time is approaching when, in either event, the organised representation of popular feeling, open, constitutional, but permanent, will be of supreme importance.'⁸⁹ Again it is possible to see a level of understanding within Milner's network as to how best to orchestrate a propaganda campaign, utilising various media, and with an emphasis on the permanence and ubiquity of the propaganda and therefore demonstrating the existence of a modern form of propaganda in this period.

Such campaigns were supported by another method of control utilised by Milner, censorship. It has already been demonstrated that censorship was employed by the British in South Africa to ensure a monopoly of the information flow, but Milner took especial interest in ensuring no 'ill-advised' communications reached Britain. Perhaps the most notorious of these was a letter written to the Chief Censor at Cape Town, Sir Josceline Fitzroy Bagot, arguing, 'I think all references to burning of farm houses should be kept out of telegrams. There is a particular Reuter present with the Lindley column who seems to delight in chronicling every case of the kind. It is folly to do it (in most cases), much greater folly for correspondents to blaze it abroad – thus supplying the agitators here and mad men at home with their most valuable material.'⁹⁰ As this demonstrates, Milner was perfectly willing to directly control the flow of information out of South Africa when his indirect relations, such as that with Reuters, failed him. Typically, however, where one network broke down, another soon replaced it, as Milner enlisted the aid of his contact on the *Daily Telegraph*, Iwan Muller, to contradict and explain any reports that slipped through his nets.⁹¹ It was also Milner who orchestrated the detention of Emily Hobhouse on her ship in Cape Town before she could disembark, ostensibly due to Martial Law, and ensured all correspondence to and from her was rigorously checked by the Chief Censor before deporting her back to England.⁹² With such tight control over the information flow, especially of controversial reports concerning the concentration

⁸⁸ Potter, *News*, pp. 42-5.

⁸⁹ Francis Masey to M.S.O. Walrond, 19 May 1899, Milner Papers, dep. 229, ff.59-60, BLMC.

⁹⁰ Milner to Bagot, 21 November 1900, Bagot Papers, CCROA.

⁹¹ Beaumont, 'The British', p. 281.

⁹² Colonel Cooper (Commander Cape Town District) to Assistant Adjutant General, Cape Colony District, 5 November 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 185, ff.233-235, BLMC.

camps, Milner was able to undermine much of the pro-Boer effort in South Africa. This also marked a significant advance from Codrington's original General Order in 1856 which attempted to control press reporting during the Crimean War in order to prevent the disclosing of information of use to the enemy.

Given the extent of Milner's involvement in journalistic activities and manipulation of the press in general, it is strange that contemporary critics of the war did not expose him as one of the 'knot of politicians, financiers and pressmen' responsible for the conflict. Indeed, in Hobson's eyes, Milner, far from initiating the war, was merely one of the pawns in someone else's game: 'A perusal of the Blue-books shows that Sir Alfred Milner, partly from temperamental Jingoism, partly from deficient power in judging character, allowed himself to become the instrument of wreckers who through him, imposed upon the British Government 'the extreme measures' for which 'British South Africa' was ripe.'⁹³ However, as this chapter has demonstrated, Milner was far more involved in the process than Hobson believed. John Dillon, in a Commons speech made before the outbreak of the war, was alone in pointing to the skilled manipulation of the press by Milner that was aiding Chamberlain's justification of British policy in South Africa, 'The editor of the *Cape Times* calls every day on Sir Alfred Milner, and between them in the study of the latter they concoct articles, which are published and then sent by Sir Alfred Milner to the Colonial Secretary, who issues them in a Blue Book as evidence of the opinion in South Africa.'⁹⁴

Hobson's ideas, however, underline the fact that Milner's relationship with the press was a symbiotic one, and the proprietors, editors and journalists often acted as the primary propagandists. Hobson said of the press during the Boer War that, 'It has injected notions and feelings which, instead of lying in the separate minds of their recipients, have bubbled up into enthusiastic sympathy, and have induced a community of thought, language and action which was hitherto unknown.'⁹⁵ He pointed to the popular press's ability to approach individuals as a mass and therefore branded it 'by far the most potent instrument in the modern manufacture of public opinion'.⁹⁶ Hobson also realised that it was not just politicians and Rand magnates who exploited this potent tool, but the press barons themselves, and his Boer War theses can easily be read as a scathing critique of the Harmsworth press. Press barons, editors and journalists were turning to the same networks of support as the politicians in order to influence public opinion. Indeed, Kennedy Jones suggested that by the Boer War period the press had gained the upper hand in this process, 'with the spread of education and the franchise and phalanxes of readers that run into seven figures, Fleet Street is able to threaten in louder terms.'⁹⁷ As politicians were perceived to be increasingly subservient to the machinations of the popular press, Milner and Chamberlain were treated as 'dupes of the yellow press' in later pamphlets produced by the South Africa Conciliation

⁹³ J.A. Hobson, 'The Proconsulate of Milner', *Contemporary Review* (October, 1900), p. 552.

⁹⁴ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series 75, c.736, 1899; Porter, 'Sir Alfred', pp. 338-9.

⁹⁵ Hobson, *The Psychology*, p. 18.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁹⁷ Jones, *Fleet Street*, p. 197.

Committee (SACC).⁹⁸ If not seen as wholly responsible for the war, then, many contemporaries believed that the press was at least responsible for nurturing the jingoism that sustained the war. A disillusioned Bryce wrote to Goldwin Smith in March 1900:

You would be astonished remembering the England of forty years ago, to see the England of to-day, intoxicated with militarism, blinded by arrogance, indifferent to truth and justice... And in excuse for the mob it must be pleaded that the press has kept them so ignorant of the true facts of the case that their errors are half excusable. We have had a formidable lesson of the power which the press and financial groups can exert.⁹⁹

Bryce's choice of the word 'lesson' is particularly significant as, although many Liberals were appalled at the excesses of the jingoistic masses, the Boer War experience left a lasting impression as to how the popular media could be utilised to manipulate the public. It was an impression in Bryce's case that was to last until his role in the First World War.

Harmsworth certainly saw jingoism as a force both commercially and in generating political support for popular imperialism. As Chalaby states, 'it offered to the newspaper proprietor the possibility of voicing a relatively safe political opinion and to transcend... the political divisions of the vast market of readers.'¹⁰⁰ Harmsworth drew his political power from the mass circulations he commanded and the popular imperialism he espoused, especially from the 'Voice of the Empire' – the *Daily Mail*.¹⁰¹ That power was also expressed through, and was supplemented by, the variety of influential contacts Harmsworth cultivated. His diaries for the period 1898-1902 reveal a startling number of political, media and commercial contacts from Arthur Balfour and Lord Lansdowne to Henry Bourke (secretary of the Imperial South African Association) and Alfred Milner.¹⁰² This, in conjunction with his mass constituency of readers, provided him with the *gravitas* to establish himself as a key political, as well as commercial, figure. He saw it as his mission to 'guide aright the destinies of this great Empire' and did so through his control of the mass press and manipulation of influential contacts. Therefore, although politicians sought to manipulate the press to their own advantage, it should also be remembered that powerful press barons such as Harmsworth were able to utilise the press-political bond to their own propagandistic ends. There were then a growing number of potential propagandists in this period, creating the ubiquity that was highlighted as one of the key characteristics of a modern propagandistic environment.

Another of Harmsworth's notable contacts was Cecil Rhodes, the primary Rand magnate and capitalist singled out as the most belligerent of the imperialist clique by Hobson. Hobson himself saw a direct link between the *Daily Mail* and the 'Rhodesians', stating that the latter controlled the former to their mutual benefit, especially as the proprietors of the *Daily Mail* were shareholders in

⁹⁸ Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet', p. 119.

⁹⁹ Bryce to Smith, 23 March 1900, Bryce Papers, MS. Bryce dep. 17, f.185, Bodleian.

¹⁰⁰ Jean Chalaby, 'Northcliffe: Proprietor as Journalist', in Catterall et al., *Northcliffe's Legacy*, p. 38.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰² Harmsworth's Diaries 1898-1902, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62386-62390, BL.

the Chartered Company and received their information directly from Rhodes' South African press.¹⁰³ Indeed, throughout the war Rhodes, as well as his capitalist peers Beit, Eckstein, Barnato and Harris, established extensive control over newspapers such as the *Cape Times* and *Transvaal Leader* while ensuring visiting journalists toed a similar line. This was evident in Kimberley, Rhodes 'capital' in South Africa, where he ensured that the *Times* published only pro-Rhodes propaganda throughout the siege, promoting the diaries of Mrs Rochfort Macquire (who revered Rhodes unabashedly) as a factual account of events.¹⁰⁴ Rhodes expressed an interest in the use of film for propaganda purposes as a medium for promoting emigration from Britain to South Africa. He met William Dickson on several occasions, having supplied him with letters of introduction and arrangements for 'opening up South Africa with the Biograph'. Rhodes entertained him at his famous residence of Groot Schuur in Capetown where Dickson was asked to supply him with 'every assistance' regarding the uses of the Biograph.¹⁰⁵ It is difficult to assess whether Rhodes attempted to manipulate the media to orchestrate the Boer War as Hobson argues, and it must be remembered that Hobson's critiques were coloured by a barely concealed anti-Semitism. Indeed, Rhodes wrote to Milner in September 1899 that he still believed that a franchise conference would be held with the blessing of both sides. He also added, however, that he intended to set it up as if the idea were emanating from J.H. Hofmeyr and the Bond, not him, in order to legitimise the policy to the likes of Morley and Harcourt in Britain.¹⁰⁶ Either way Rhodes clearly pursued a propagandistic policy in South Africa, exploiting the media to his own commercial and political ends, in particular to fulfil what he saw as his paramount objective – the preservation and consolidation of the British Empire.

A group that Hobson does not identify as propagandists in this period, but who clearly understood and used propaganda to manipulate public opinion during the war were the British Generals. The general alteration in attitudes of many military officials over the course of the forty years between the Crimean and Boer wars is telling, especially in terms of the advance of the military-media dynamic highlighted by Philip Taylor in twentieth century warfare. Two reports written by the newly appointed censors Lord Stanley and Colonel Jones demonstrate the shift in military mentality towards the media, required by the circumstances of modern warfare: 'Correspondents...have, owing to the very justifiable demand of the public for news, become so nearly necessities that it would be well to recognise the fact that for the future every force in the field will be accompanied by a certain number of correspondents, and an endeavour should be made... to give recognised correspondents an improved status.'¹⁰⁷ This course prompted a new degree of censorship, but also created connections between newspapers, editors, journalists and

¹⁰³ Hobson, *The Psychology*, pp. 115-6.

¹⁰⁴ Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 2; Hobson, *The Psychology*, p. 112.

¹⁰⁵ Dickson, *The Biograph*, pp. 7, 193-7, 280.

¹⁰⁶ Rhodes to Milner, 13 September 1899, Milner Papers, dep. 182, ff.215-6, BLMC.

This is a good example of how a propagandist, desiring to influence opinion but not appear to do so, uses a legitimising source to propagate his ideas, or at least points to that source as the origin of the idea. Such an idea can be found in Jowett and O'Donnell's 'legitimising source model', Jowett & O'Donnell, *Propaganda*, pp.20-1.

¹⁰⁷ Beaumont, 'The British', p. 282.

military officials. Generals that failed to adapt to these circumstances risked losing in the battle for hearts and minds and declined in popular support and power.

This was a two-way process. Journalists not adhering to the new rules soon found themselves ostracised from the military networks that quickly formed in the Boer War. For example, Hanbury Tracy-Neilly, a correspondent in South Africa for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, complained to his editor that the censor at Mafeking was treating the correspondents ‘disgracefully’ and was preventing him reporting certain facts about the siege. Neilly’s license was quickly revoked and he was unanimously condemned by his fellow correspondents in Mafeking who agreed to sign a statement in conjunction with the establishment against him,¹⁰⁸ thus heralding a startling level of interaction between the military and media, the latter clearly preoccupied with a fear of ostracism. The papers of Lionel James, correspondent for the *Times*, confirm that censorship was more generally borne as a necessary evil by the journalists in South Africa unless it became overly zealous, but there still existed the innate desire of correspondents to report the facts no matter their nature: ‘My remarks about the fortifications were censored out, not because they were unjust but because they would not allow them through the enemy’s lines – in this latter course they were just. But ultimately the truth must be known and my mission is not to give the white without the black I trust.’¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, even such a sense of duty was overcome by the increasing use of official reports by military officials. These were either released directly to the British public before the correspondents had time to report the event, or were fed to the journalists as factual information thereby removing any scope for journalistic variation.

Much of the censorship prevented any divergence in details reaching Britain. Lord Methuen’s censor in fact told Knight of the *Morning Post*, ‘There is only one thing I will allow you to write – that is a description of the Union Jack which has just been run up over the headquarters.’¹¹⁰ Henry Nevinson, correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle*, dryly noted how the system worked, noting in his diary, ‘The air is full of rumours... Perhaps one finds one atom of truth at the base of them, one puts that atom into a telegram. The military censor cuts it out with unfailing politeness, and a good day’s work is done.’¹¹¹ Given this entry was written on 19 October 1899, it indicates how quickly censorship was established by the military authorities, and therefore the importance with which it was regarded. Even war artists such as Mortimer Menpes of *Black and White* complained of art being ‘sacrificed to exigencies of the military situation.’¹¹² Military officials and commanders in South Africa were therefore imposing the new censorship laws with vigour. In particular, General Kitchener, who commanded the British forces in South Africa during the most controversial period of the war, ensured they were rigorously applied. As the war became protracted he strengthened the embargo on information ensuring that everything now went through his central office rather than

¹⁰⁸ Jacqueline Beaumont, ‘The British Press during the South African War: The Siege of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith’, in Connelly & Welch (eds.), *War and the media*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁹ Lionel James to Moberley Bell, 13 March 1900, Lionel James Papers, NIA.

¹¹⁰ Badsey, ‘War Correspondents’, p. 195.

¹¹¹ Henry Nevinson Diary, 19 October 1899, Ms Eng. Misc e 610/6, BLMC.

¹¹² Harrington, ‘Pictorial Journalism’, p. 233.

local and central censors. His belief that the dogmatism and fanaticism of the British press was adding months to the war prompted him to write to Stanley, 'Harmsworth can calculate from casualty lists what he is responsible for. I think you should institute press censorship at home'.¹¹³ The result in South Africa was, as Gwynne noted in October 1901, 'Censorship now is purely a formality and means to kill the correspondent...'¹¹⁴ Kitchener was no friend of the press, and was recorded as bellowing at gathered correspondents in the Sudan, 'Get out of my way, you drunken swabs!'¹¹⁵ Part of this antipathy was founded in Kitchener's perception that an irresponsible press in England was giving the renegade Boers hope in the guerrilla phase of the war, a feeling demonstrated in a constant stream of complaints to the Secretary of State for War, John Brodrick.¹¹⁶

However, historians such as Morgan do not give sufficient credit to Kitchener's media-mindedness during the Boer War, as, although brash, he understood the power of the media and the necessity of controlling it. His stringent censorship was not motivated by antipathy of the press but rather a progressive understanding that 'modern wars were not just about physically fighting the enemy...[and] winning the war involved not only fighting but also psychologically breaking the will of the enemy to continue.'¹¹⁷ Kitchener saw that to win the war and maintain his reputation he had to win the battle for hearts and minds in Britain as well as South Africa, and his naturally brash manner led him to accomplish this by heavy censorship and a handful of 'uneasily affable relationships' with key correspondents. One of these was Lionel James who developed a respect for Kitchener, writing to Bell that, 'He [Kitchener] is not badly disposed to us at all, and there is some reason in his complaint, that this craving after sensational headlines is handicapping him.'¹¹⁸ Kitchener used James, as well as Gwynne, to target troublesome correspondents such as the *Daily Mail's* Edgar Wallace, and act as his mouthpiece to 'educate public opinion' in Britain. He even asked Gwynne to write a statement in the reporter's name, outlining Kitchener's achievements and obstacles.¹¹⁹ This highlights another aspect of Kitchener's modern approach to the media and use of propaganda, in a campaign of self-promotion and public relations. His papers reveal a desire to be publicised and his version of events circulated by officials in Britain amongst the British public. In a letter to Brodrick, Kitchener repeatedly requested his despatches were published in order to satisfy the 'craving for information' amongst the public.¹²⁰ Another pointed out that false news was still reaching London and appeared in certain journals and suggested that other newspapers should be used to inform the public of the correct version of events using the despatches that he could provide.¹²¹ Both men were aware of how the press could be made to vilify an enemy, arguing, again to Brodrick, that his correspondence with Milner concerning the deportation of Emily Hobhouse

¹¹³ Kitchener to Stanley, 9 August 1901, WO 108/306, No. 1164, NA.

¹¹⁴ Diary entry, 7 October 1901, Ms Gwynne dep 29, BLMC.

¹¹⁵ Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 8.

¹¹⁶ See Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(1-3), NA.

¹¹⁷ Beaumont, 'The British', pp. 286, 288.

¹¹⁸ James to Bell, 27 June 1901, Papers of Lionel James, NIA.

¹¹⁹ Diary entry, 16 November 1901, Ms Gwynne dep 29, BLMC.

¹²⁰ Kitchener to Brodrick, 12 July 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(2), no. 71, NA.

¹²¹ Kitchener to Brodrick, 3 May 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(1), f.179, NA.

would. 'give the public a clearer insight into the sort of lady she is.'¹²² Similarly, Brodrick responded to Kitchener thanking him for his, 'good despatch on Boer atrocities. When it is on the way send me a cable, as I want to allude to it.'¹²³ This theme of vilification is one which will be analysed further later in the chapter.

Even more than Kitchener, however, Field Marshal Roberts seems to have had the most advanced understanding of the media. He established a relationship with William Blackwood of *Blackwood's Magazine* in the 1880s. His many years in India had taught him that such relations were vital to the cultivation of his personal reputation. The 'cult of personality' had become a boom industry in the era of popular imperialism. The creation of popular heroes was, 'inspired by the initial actions of individuals, but made legendary through the increasingly powerful and influential organs of the media.'¹²⁴ War celebrity was especially prominent in film and is often even richly evidenced in contemporary reviews which carefully noted audience reactions to key personalities appearing on screen. Reactions to all of the British Generals, but particularly Buller and Roberts, indicate audience partisanship, and their own bitter rivalry was often played out on the stages of London and amongst the crowds participating in the performance.¹²⁵ Reviews demonstrated to the Generals that public opinion was there to be cultivated and manipulated, and therefore their actions in command needed careful presentation. This was especially the case with Roberts, as Buller was already very popular with the British public as well as the troops when the former took over command in South Africa. One review from the *Manchester Evening News* stated that, 'no 'striking situation' could have awakened more enthusiasm than did a picture of General Buller. The reception given to Lord Roberts when he appeared on screen was cold by comparison.'¹²⁶ A letter from Brodrick to Kitchener outlined that the 'Buller crisis' was causing a great stir in Britain and there was a great problem in removing him from command as, 'He has a great Devonshire following and 'Tommy Atkins' is devoted to him.'¹²⁷

Such motivations underpinned Roberts' South African command. He quickly established good relations with the correspondents there, dubbing them 'a brilliant band' and 'comrades in arms', which naturally inspired loyalty.¹²⁸ He held his own press conferences to ensure that his information was used in every despatch. Just to make sure, Roberts frequently disseminated his own version of events which invariably arrived in Britain first.¹²⁹ His system of 'rewards and restrictions' worked to keep control of the media, whilst giving the correspondents the perception of freedom of action. He ridded himself of the pro-Boer Reuter's manager M.J.M. Bellanye and the capricious Churchill, but those that remained were well treated, and Roberts ensured he formed a tight bond with each of them. The result of this was an obvious degree of self-censoring amongst

¹²² Kitchener to Brodrick, 8 November 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(3), ff.384, NA.

¹²³ Brodrick to Kitchener, 1 November 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(2), ff.377, NA.

¹²⁴ Streets, 'Military Influence', p. 234.

¹²⁵ Simon Popple, "'Startling, realistic, pathetic': The Mitchell and Kenyon 'Boer War' Films", Toulmin, Popple and Russell, *The Lost World*, p.152.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹²⁷ Brodrick to Kitchener, 26 October 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(2), f.371, NA.

¹²⁸ Streets, 'Military Influence', p. 245.

¹²⁹ Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 6.

correspondents, or at least referral to Roberts and his censors prior to sending their despatches. William Howard Russell, who had taken a very different approach to journalism in the Crimea, was appalled by such deferential reportage and wrote to the Roberts' rival Sir Garnet Wolseley,

Well! After all the 'common sense' strategy, the 'spinning of the coils', the 'closing of the net', the 'anaconda fields' and all the rest of the damnable stuff streaking the columns of the great organs that are all set to the same tune 'Gloria in excelsis Bobbibus!' I cannot for the life of me see anything but an abortive attempt to direct 40,000 men, three brigades of horse, 100 guns and six generals to get hold of some 5000 Dutchmen not very far from Bloemfontein...¹³⁰

Although Russell's synopsis of the situation was accurate, Roberts understood that such realities were immaterial as long as they were presented to the public properly.

He diligently managed the public perception of his actions in South Africa by staging events and suppressing rival media. Buller's advance in Natal was rumoured to have been held up by Roberts so that his own advance in the Cape would be lauded by the British press first. He personally accepted the surrender of Kroonstad in May 1900, pulling an entire cavalry division from the front to add drama to the occasion which was reported, photographed and filmed by the correspondents he had invited.¹³¹ Roberts was especially interested in the power of film as a new medium to publicise his image in Britain, and when Dickson asked to capture it for posterity he, 'extended many favours, signed the Cape cart's white flag, and was generally most kind.'¹³² Film correspondents noted his affability in lending assistance with their transportation and filming needs, and the WTC catalogue for 1900 proudly boasted that their two film reporters, Rosenthal and Hyman, appeared on Roberts' WO role of correspondents: 'This is the first instance in history where the Cinematographe is officially recognised by the WO and our Staff of Operators are the only ones accorded the privileges and facilities of regular correspondents during the war with the Transvaal.'¹³³ As Roberts conquered more territory in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, he maintained his control over the information flow by passing control of any telegraph station to military officials and closing pro-Boer press organs such as the *Express* and *Friend of the Free State* in Bloemfontein. These newspapers were then quickly replaced as Stanley asked, 'Ralph of the *Daily Mail*, Gwynne of Reuters, London of the *Times* and F.W. Buxton, late of the Johannesburg *Star* to start a propaganda newspaper for Roberts.'¹³⁴ Through his dual approach of cultivating friendships amongst the correspondents whilst relying on Stanley as his chief censor and private secretary to prevent the dissemination of rival information, and the careful managing of his actions as

¹³⁰ Badsey, 'War Correspondents', p. 199.

¹³¹ Streets, 'Military Influence', p.245.

¹³² Eckardt, 'Pioneers', p. 645.

¹³³ Gutsche, *The History*, p. 45.

¹³⁴ Badsey, 'War Correspondents', p. 198.

commander-in-chief Roberts became one of the few generals to emerge unscathed, and indeed more popular than ever, from the Boer War.¹³⁵

Another man whose popularity was boosted by the war was Lieutenant-Colonel Baden-Powell. As the self-styled ‘defender of Mafeking’, he gained an international reputation as a military commander and devoted imperialist, and with this general acclaim he was able to develop the Scout movement into an international phenomenon. There has been much historiographical debate about the nature and reality of Baden-Powell’s defence of Mafeking, but what is more significant in terms of the development of a bond between the media and military is the manner in which Baden-Powell was established, and established himself, as the epitome of a British imperial hero.¹³⁶ Paula Krebs argues that it was the letters and telegrams of Lady Sarah to the *Daily Mail* concerning life in besieged Mafeking and the character and exploits of Baden-Powell that made him into a legend.¹³⁷ The *Daily Mail* seized upon the opportunity to uphold the ideals of imperialism and military heroism its readers desired and its proprietor revered by exaggerating Baden-Powell’s role in the war. One leader on 24 March 1900 read, ‘It is strange to reflect how a man whose very name six months ago was almost unknown to the British public has now secured the confidence of the whole Empire, so that it firmly believes that no situation, however desperate, will prove too much for his resourcefulness and courage.’¹³⁸ He was equally romanticised by the likes of Kipling and Conan Doyle, and became everything that embodied a British masculine hero – sporty, good-humoured, humane, brave and resourceful. This image filled the pages of the illustrated press and *Punch*, the latter adding to the idealised perception of both Baden-Powell and Roberts in one cartoon in which a bedraggled Mafeking is reassured by a strapping Baden-Powell, ‘All Right! Cheer up! ‘Bobs’ is a man of his word!’¹³⁹

However, Krebs does not give sufficient recognition to Baden-Powell’s own propagandistic ability. As with Roberts, he was a superb self-promoter, understanding the power of the media, and the most suitable methods of utilising it. He used a system of ‘official reports’ from Mafeking designed to satiate the growing desire for news from the siege town and, as he wrote to Vere Stent of Reuters, ‘my business was to write what at the moment the public wanted to believe.’¹⁴⁰ He exploited the local newspapers, especially his own organ, the *Mafeking Daily Mail*, to disseminate the positive rumours and half-truths that were the natural and abundant by-product of a siege. Rival sources of information were quickly suppressed, and Baden-Powell’s personality and image became ubiquitous within Mafeking itself, even to the extent that an emergency issue of postage stamps bore his portrait rather than that of Queen Victoria. He encouraged a caricatured image of himself,

¹³⁵ Indeed, this desire for good publicity continued after the war as Roberts cultivated Leo Amery of the *Times* as a friend as it was Amery who was given the task of writing the *Times History of the War in South Africa*. Streets, ‘Military Influence’, p. 246.

¹³⁶ For a particularly severe view of Baden-Powell including his probable pederasty and undoubted racism. See, Pat Hopkins and Heather Dugmore, *The Boy: Baden-Powell and the Siege of Mafeking* (Rivonia, 1999).

¹³⁷ Paula M. Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 14-21.

¹³⁸ ‘Devoted Mafeking’, *Daily Mail*, 24 March 1900.

¹³⁹ ‘The Eleventh Hour’, 9 May 1900, *Punch, or the London Charivari*, volume 118 (London, 1900), p. 335.

¹⁴⁰ Badsey, ‘War Correspondents’, p. 194.

with his khakis and bush hat, which could also be easily played out in the music halls and cinemas, and through the exposure he was given by those media he achieved iconic status.¹⁴¹ Baden-Powell was aided by general war fervour and jingoism that swept Britain in the early months of the wars, and especially by the perceived tense circumstances of the siege that he commanded, but it was his ability to understand the potential of and manipulate this context that made him distinctive as a propagandist. Such success can best be seen in the contemporary reaction to Baden-Powell's accomplishments in Mafeking. Bertha Synge wrote to Milner at the time of the mass jubilation surrounding the conquest of Pretoria stating, 'Last time I wrote, it was Mafeking and honestly I believe England went wilder over that than over this...'¹⁴² Even more revealing is the correspondence between Chamberlain and Milner on how to treat Baden-Powell after the relief of Mafeking. Milner wrote to the Colonial Secretary stating that the 'defender of Mafeking' had been put in charge of the South African Constabulary, principally because his name acted as a magnet for recruits, but his actual skills of organisation left much to be desired.¹⁴³ Subsequently Chamberlain replied arguing that Baden-Powell could not be passed over as, 'we must carefully avoid treatment which could even be made to appear ungenerous towards one who has done so much to captivate public opinion...'¹⁴⁴ Not only does this exchange reveal that Baden-Powell's skills of command were rather more perceived than actual, but also that this reality did not matter. Politicians and the military authorities were obliged to promote and laud him as his popularity demanded it.

The sensationalism and jingoism that accompanied both military, Unionist and private propaganda during the Boer War was, however, also the target of a forceful, if minority, pro-Boer movement that sought to oppose both the war and the excesses of its promotion. Borne out of a liberal tradition which saw the press as an educative tool, and promoted open discussion over emotionally led reactions, politicians such as Lord Bryce, authors such as John Robertson, editors such as C.P. Scott and campaigners such as Emily Hobhouse desperately attempted to disseminate their own views of the war through the various media. Intellectual reason was perceived as the antidote to the excesses of war fervour, and therefore these groups contributed an antagonistic form of propaganda during the Boer War, an argument that was indicative of one conception of propaganda in the later nineteenth century, but also has clear continuity with ideas found in the post-1918 era. Bryce was in fact not an anti-imperialist but his Liberal background made him averse to any kind of political oppression. As recently as 1896, he had organised a campaign in Britain on behalf of the plight of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. He interviewed exiles, British consuls and missionaries, analysed their statements and then published the details in the press in conjunction with organising various meetings to lecture on, discuss and promote the issues involved.¹⁴⁵ Bryce's experiences in raising awareness of the plight of the Armenians and his expert knowledge of constitutional and legal matters, as well as a distaste for the excesses of jingoism,

¹⁴¹ Morgan, 'The Boer War', pp. 7&10.

¹⁴² Synge to Milner, 6 June 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 17, ff.174-5, BLMC.

¹⁴³ Milner to Chamberlain, 3 December 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 171, ff.43-47, BLMC.

¹⁴⁴ Chamberlain to Milner, 30 December 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 171, ff.89-91, BLMC.

¹⁴⁵ For example see correspondence with W.G. Gladstone, 26 July 1895, Bryce Papers, dep. 12, f.174, BLMC.

enabled him to mount a campaign of resistance against the tide of public opinion during the Boer War. Along with other notable intellectuals such as Frederic Harrison, Frederic Mackarness and Sir William Harcourt, Bryce produced powerful and reasoned articles against British belligerence in South Africa on behalf of the South African Conciliation Committee.¹⁴⁶ Through this group and the Manchester Transvaal Peace Committee, Bryce became involved in the small circle of editors, journalists, authors and intellectuals attacking the war and imperial excesses more generally. To one of the founders of the SACC, L.T. Hobhouse, Bryce was an ideal propagandist to help 'form opinion' in Britain as he had toured South Africa immediately prior to the war and had even written a book about his travels and discoveries.¹⁴⁷

Bryce identified himself with another of the principal pro-Boer editors, W.T. Stead, and the two men planned a raft of pamphlets and other publications based around Bryce's key text, *Briton and Boer: Both Sides of the South African Question*.¹⁴⁸ Bryce was a respected politician, noted for his understanding of public opinion and indeed propaganda. In *Briton and Boer* he had noted that, 'The English, with whom, through centuries of initiation, the press has become such a mighty instrument of combat or propaganda have flooded the world with a mass of publications designed to ruin the Boer cause in both hemispheres.'¹⁴⁹ Bryce therefore understood the power of manipulating the popular press for propagandistic purposes but was reticent about using the very tool that lay at the heart of the jingoistic excesses that were sustaining the war. Stead similarly understood that propaganda lay at the heart of Unionist successes, writing to Bryce after the General Election in 1900 of, 'the influence of the financiers, the organisation of public opinion and the arrogant exultation of the Jingoists.'¹⁵⁰ However, unlike many of his liberal contemporaries, he subscribed to the new popular form of press, being one of the founders of the 'new journalism'.¹⁵¹ Stead himself admitted that sensationalism served a purpose in his newspapers, 'up to the point that it is necessary to arrest the eye of the public and compel them to admit the necessity of action'.¹⁵² Therefore, although angered by the injustice and prosecution of the Boer War, Stead did not feel inhibited in his own propaganda, and frequently resorted to exaggerated atrocity stories concerning the misconduct of British troops. The Unionist reaction to his pamphlets reveal just how effective they were perceived to be, as there were four separate replies to Stead's *Shall I slay my brother Boer?* alone.¹⁵³ Stead even wrote to Cecil Rhodes in an attempt to enlist his support and extricate him from 'the evil crew of Tories and Jingoists' and did not shy from disseminating these ideas more publicly.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁶ E.g. 'Mr Bryce on the Boer rights of belligerence under the law of nations', SACC no.80; Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet', p. 126.

¹⁴⁷ The book was, James Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa* (London, 1897). L.T. Hobhouse to Bryce, 9 November 1899, Bryce Papers, dep. 79, 110-11, BLMC.

¹⁴⁸ James Bryce, *Briton and Boer: Both Sides of the South African Question* (London, 1900).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁰ Stead to Bryce, 29 September 1900, Bryce Papers, dep.140, f.134, BLMC.

¹⁵¹ Ray Boston, 'W.T. Stead and Democracy by Journalism', in Wiener, *Papers*, pp. 91-104.

¹⁵² Hale, *Publicity*, p. 13.

¹⁵³ Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet', p. 119.

¹⁵⁴ W.T. Stead to Rhodes, 22 September 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 184, ff.117-120, BLMC.

The scale of Stead's propaganda campaigns reveal a clear understanding of what could be achieved in the modern media environment, and the necessity of a mass approach. In a series of letters to Bryce, Stead outlined a clear policy for pro-Boer propaganda. Soon after the initiation of hostilities he wrote that the pamphlet 'Shall I Slay my Brother Boer' was sent to, 'every minister of religion, every member of Parliament, every peer, mayor, Chairman of County Council, Boards of Guardians, as well as the leading representatives of the Trades Unions in this Country. It was also sent to all newspapers.' Significantly, he indicated that, although distribution figures for several of his pamphlets had been over 100,000, in a modern media environment this was not enough: 'I quite agree with you as to the mischief that is done by the papers, and the way in which that mischief is effected, and we have got to make up our minds, either to fight the *Daily Mail* and the *Times* on their own ground or to give up the game. The *Daily Mail* has a million circulation at present and the *Times* has a practical monopoly of the ear of the official class, and we are simply left out in the cold.'¹⁵⁵ His suggestion was to set up a newspaper and ensure that all publications matched the *Daily Mail* in style and format to attract a popular readership.¹⁵⁶ Stead was demonstrating that many contemporaries understood the changed nature of the media environment and the necessity of a modernised approach to propaganda in order to get their message across.

As a result, Stead was generally seen as an erratic firebrand by his fellow pro-Boers who saw his tactics as undermining their more equable tone. One pro-Boer propagandist who viewed Stead's methods, if not motives, with antipathy was C.P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian* and one of the founders of the Manchester Transvaal Committee. He fought tirelessly first to prevent the war and then to bring it to as speedy a conclusion as possible by constant coverage in his newspapers and in a series of anti-war speeches. Importantly, as Hampton argues, 'He resisted the effects of a 'total war' on the home front, calling for the preservation of English liberal principles of polite discussion and resolution of conflict. All of these arguments became interwoven within a broader attempt to recapture 'patriotism' from the Conservative party, which had seemingly won that mantle by the 1880s.'¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the idea of 'critical patriotism' became a common theme amongst pro-Boer propagandists, many of whom claimed that far from being unpatriotic in their stance against the war, were actually trying to maintain the integrity of Britain and the Empire through their accusations. However, Scott's resistance of the 'total war' effect and adherence to the traditional liberal views of the 'educational ideal' of the press kept his ideas from mass circulation and therefore from influencing public opinion.

The different tactics used are mirrored in the array of pro-Boer groups that were established throughout the war. The 'Stop the War Committee', founded in 1900, was organised by Stead and attracted such principal Labour figures as Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald, but was thought by many liberals to do a disservice to the anti-war cause with its overly emotive approach. Scott rather aligned himself with the 'League Against Aggression and Militarism' whose members also included

¹⁵⁵ Stead to Bryce, 9 December 1899, Bryce Papers, dep.140, ff.129-47, BLMC.

¹⁵⁶ Stead to Bryce, 18 January 1900, Bryce Papers, dep.140, f.131, BLMC.

¹⁵⁷ Mark Hampton, 'The Press, Patriotism, and Public Discussion: C.P. Scott, The *Manchester Guardian*, and the Boer War, 1899-1902', *The Historical Journal*, 44, no.1 (2001), p. 184.

Lloyd-George and Hobson. The 'Transvaal Committee' and SACC were frequented by high-minded Liberals from John Morley to Bryce, and naturally took an intellectual approach. With so many of the members of these organisations also being MPs, the rifts were reflected in the Liberal party itself, and characterised by the *bifrons* stance of Campbell-Bannerman, satirically depicted in the *Punch* cartoon, 'Bannerman Exhorteth Campbell'.¹⁵⁸ The Liberal leader found himself in an impossible situation, as however he phrased his opposition to a well-publicised and popular war, it would sound unpatriotic and anti-imperial, a position which could lose him the support of the British public. The Unionist victory at the 1900 election only served to confirm the rifts within the party, especially, as one informant wrote to Milner, as the 'moderates' and Liberal Imperialists had come out firmly in support of the Government.¹⁵⁹

The Labour Representation Committee (LRC), formed in February 1900 as an alliance of the Hardie's Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the trade unions, was similarly ineffective as an oppositional force during the war. Initial diplomatic caution, or cowardly inaction, of the Liberals was mirrored by organised Labour, which proved highly disorganised in its opposition to the war. Hardie certainly believed in the power of propaganda and the necessity of approaching the masses. He wrote in 1895 that the ILP would succeed by, 'Independent representation of the people in the House of Commons and in all legislative, governing and administrative bodies, and by propaganda by means of literature and public meetings.'¹⁶⁰ Shortly before the war he even declared that the Liberal party had become politically obsolete as, 'Its purpose was drawn from a political and social state that has gone; its principles of propaganda, the sentiments to which it appealed...stand no longer in the forefront of progressive forces... The party as a propagandist and educating body must remain as heretoforth Socialist.'¹⁶¹ Hardie's belief in the need for modern propaganda under the aegis of a Socialist party was evident, but unfortunately for the pro-Boer movement, it prevented him from a full alliance with the anti-war Liberals. He published numerous pamphlets against the war and subscribed to the views of the SACC, John Burns (a peer of Hardie) writing 'The views of a Labour member on the justice of the war' for that body in 1900.¹⁶² The leftwing press tended to subscribe to the ideas of 'new journalism' in their desire to approach the masses, and, although meeting limited success in this nascent period of the party, circulations did improve during the Boer War.¹⁶³ The criticisms of Hardie and the ILP were often muted by his more general desire not to rock the boat whilst concentrating on the creation of the LRC. However, it is significant that from its foundation, the LRC both saw propaganda as an integral part of their continuation and success and outlined that belief in publications from the period.¹⁶⁴

One pro-Boer campaign that had some success for a variety of pro-Boer propagandists was based around the revelations of Emily Hobhouse concerning the concentration camps established by

¹⁵⁸ 25th October 1899, *Punch*, volume 117 (London, 1899), p. 203.

¹⁵⁹ James M. Rendel to Milner, 26 October 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 213, f.268, BLMC.

¹⁶⁰ J. Keir Hardie, 'The Independent Labour Party', *Nineteenth Century* (January, 1895), pp. 1-14.

¹⁶¹ J. Keir Hardie & Ramsay MacDonald, 'The Liberal Collapse', *Nineteenth Century* (January, 1899), pp. 21, 27.

¹⁶² SACC, no. 19; Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet', p. 120.

¹⁶³ Deian Hopkin, 'The Left-Wing Press and the New Journalism', in Weiner, *Papers*, pp. 225-237.

¹⁶⁴ G.R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 289-90.

Kitchener during his 'scorched earth' policy to incarcerate Boer women and children. Her discoveries were a shocking indictment of the government's prosecution of the war, and in early June 1901 she informed Campbell-Bannerman of the, 'wholesale burning of farms... the deportations... a burnt out population brought in by hundreds of convoys... deprived of clothes... the semi-starvation in the camps... the fever-stricken children lying... the appalling mortality.'¹⁶⁵ It was at this meeting that the Liberal leader supposedly coined the phrase 'methods of barbarism' that was to become a rallying cry for the pro-Boer cause. Extracts from Hobhouse's despatches began to appear in the *Times* from April 1901 and, although often moderated with phrases such as 'in many respects the recommendations have already been adopted by the authorities', many others were able to employ them as a means of exposing the Government's poor prosecution of the war, whilst not appearing to indict the army in general.¹⁶⁶ Articles, books, lectures and pamphlets emerged from Liberal authors, for once united in their opinions. Pro-Boer newspapers began to appear in London and the provinces, and previously neutral liberals took up an anti-war stance. The bare facts of the concentration camps offered the chance for Radicals such as J.M. Robertson to attack popular imperialist authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle who had attempted to devalue the significance of Hobhouse's findings.¹⁶⁷ Liberals in the Commons, emboldened by a perceived swing in public opinion, began forceful and damning indictments of the Government's prosecution of the war, Welsh Liberal Lloyd George stating that the Conservatives felt, 'nothing except merriment in the burning of Boer homes...!' More generally, Bryn Roberts argued that there was no war in Britain's history that was so famous and infamous, 'the fame will rest with the Boers, the infamy with us.'¹⁶⁸ Pro-Boer poetry circulated, especially through poets such as T.W.H. Crosland and poems such as 'Slain' which offered an ironic invocation of the adage 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' long before Wilfred Owen.¹⁶⁹ The emboldening of the Liberal campaigns highlights the contemporary perception that propaganda needs fertile ground on which to work, but, more than this, that there was a dialogue between the propagandist and public opinion, each having an effect on the other.

The comments of both political and military officials certainly point to a growing concern that public opinion was turning against the more extreme measures utilised by Kitchener to bring the war to a close. Salisbury wrote to Brodrick in November 1901, 'In view of the present state of opinion here and the probable effect later on the memories of the Boers of unwise measures, I think it is safe to lay down: 1. That the guilt of breaking rails and telegraphs must be established by some depth of proof to the satisfaction of the General. It must not be simply presumed from proximity. 2. Burning his house is not a suitable punishment to inflict on a Boer.'¹⁷⁰ However, despite the protracted pro-Boer efforts to attract public opinion away from jingoistic imperialism

¹⁶⁵ Pakenham, *The Boer*, pp. 503-4.

¹⁶⁶ For example, *Times*, 19 June 1901.

¹⁶⁷ J.M. Robertson, *The Truth of the War: An open letter to Dr A. Conan Doyle* (London, 1902), p. 38.

¹⁶⁸ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series 89, cc.409, 535, 1901.

¹⁶⁹ M. van Wyk Smith, *Drummer Hodge: The Poetry of the Anglo Boer War, 1899-1902* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 112-4.

¹⁷⁰ Salisbury to Brodrick, 22 November 1901, Papers of 1st Earl Midleton, PRO 30/67/8, NA.

and support for the war, there was little tangible success. Most noticeable were the Liberal losses at the polls in 1900. Whilst it is difficult to gauge whether factors other than the war and the inculcation of patriotic feeling were the cause, this was certainly the contemporary perception. As C.P. Scott commented, the Unionists timed the election purposefully as, ‘An attempt to turn patriotic feeling to party purposes, to hide the shortcomings of politicians at home behind the hard-won successes of our soldiers abroad... and to ride into power for six years more on a vote taken amid the heat and excitement of a great conflict.’¹⁷¹ Bryce, having been safe in the Commons for years, very nearly lost his Aberdeen seat to his Unionist rival due to his position on the war.¹⁷² The circulation of Scott’s *Manchester Guardian* declined from 49,000 in 1898 to 42,000 by 1902 as his position remained staunchly pro-Boer.¹⁷³ However, this decline was not just a result of Scott’s stance on the war. It was also characteristic of his refusal to adapt his newspapers to accommodate the ‘Harmsworth revolution’ and advance of the popular press.

Searle argues that the ‘Achilles heel’ of the pro-Boer movement was its lack of convincing leadership.¹⁷⁴ Certainly both the Liberal and Labour parties in this period lacked cohesion and a consistent policy, but this can only partly explain the lack of effect of such powerful arguments. At the heart of the problem was the Liberal distaste for the forms of propaganda adopted by the imperialist politicians, generals and individuals. Their adherence to traditional forms of reasoned debate, in the hope that public opinion would itself be educated by them and adopt them, did not take into account the new era of mass politics and media. Frederic Harrison, one of the most celebrated Liberal authors of the era, wrote: ‘The levity and apathy with which this formidable change in the position of every citizen has been ignored can only be explained by the general ignorance of law and the passions roused by war. There is too much readiness to give any license to those who are fighting the Boers and to approve any weapon that can be used against them...’¹⁷⁵ However great the documentation and literary quality of the pro-Boer arguments, they were of questionable value against the modern propaganda techniques of the Unionists, a factor especially revealed by an analysis of the audience targeted by the Unionists and the success in appealing to that audience.

It is clear that the Boer War was an intense propaganda environment due to the diversity of the propagandists and their use of the mass media. Although it has been argued that the intent of propagandists is the principal determining factor in whether their actions were propagandistically modern (or indeed propaganda at all), the audience they deemed it necessary to approach is also of significance. Geoff Eley, in his authoritative study of German nationalism after Bismarck, focuses

¹⁷¹ Hampton, ‘The Press’, p. 184.

¹⁷² John Seaman, *A Citizen of the World: The Life of James Bryce* (London, 2006), p. 190.

¹⁷³ Wadsworth, ‘Newspaper Circulations’, p. 25.

¹⁷⁴ Searle, *A New England?*, p. 289.

¹⁷⁵ Frederic Harrison, *The Boer Republics*, South African Conciliation Committee Pamphlets, no. 21 (London, 1900).

heavily on the factor of audience when discussing the modernity, or otherwise, of German nationalist propaganda: 'Exactly how the Navy Office and other state apparatuses defined their own political audience in relation to these large efforts has a crucial bearing on the 'modernity' or otherwise of their efforts.' Another defining factor was the difference between formal and informal propaganda, the latter often being unconsciously perpetuated messages and consensual values, devaluing intent as a determining factor of propaganda.¹⁷⁶ A study of late nineteenth century Britain reveals that the growing cognisance and practice of propaganda augmented the process of its modernisation, this thesis primarily identifying with propaganda theories which designate intent as the decisive factor in assessing the modernity of propaganda. However, Eley's analysis prompts questions about this period as to who comprised the new political audiences, why they were targeted and with what success. One facet of modern propaganda was the ability and intent of the propagandist to reach new, mass audiences and therefore what must now be addressed is the identity of these audiences and the success with which they were addressed.

An illuminating starting point is the historiographical debate sparked by Richard Price about the nature of the adherents to popular imperialism in the Boer War centring on whether the working classes were targeted as an audience for imperial propaganda, why, and with what success.¹⁷⁷ Through a review of working men's clubs in the Boer War years he contends that imperialism was not a concern of the working classes, and the jingoism, nationalism and xenophobia sparked by the war was the preserve of the middle classes. For Price therefore, it was middle class patriots who disrupted the pro-Boer meetings and participated in the Mafeking celebrations. Those working class families that did join such popular demonstrations did so because the war had become personal, since their sons had gone to fight, and had only done so out of a need for work – not imperialist zeal. Such arguments certainly carry some weight, particularly as other researchers into working class ideas and beliefs in this period have identified similar trends. Standish Meacham highlights that, from the pinnacle of organised Labour to the individual working class soldier there was no interest in or enthusiasm for imperialism or the war. The Trades Union Congress spent little time debating the Boer War at all, being more interested in the domestic situation. One former warehouseman wrote back from the front to his *Workingman's Club Journal*: 'I did not care tuppence about the merits of the dispute, and the rubbish about fighting for the 'dear old flag', and our desire to kill Boers or anything else... the best part of the men went away from the same cause...it was to escape for a time the monotony of existence, and if other volunteers were only to speak the truth they would tell you the same thing.'¹⁷⁸ Such a comment is significant when compared with Unionist Party pamphlets such as 'Rally Round the Old Flag: A Loyal Song', 'The Union Jack' and election campaigns run on slogans such as 'Vote for the Unionist Candidate and

¹⁷⁶ Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (Michigan, 1980), pp. 210-11.

¹⁷⁷ Price, *An Imperial*.

¹⁷⁸ Meacham, *A Life Apart*, p. 197.

the Fair Fame of the Old Country'.¹⁷⁹ Such publications would not have appealed to this working class author. Meacham maintains that this is because the working class operated very much within their own boundaries and reacted to events on a personal rather than national level making them immune to the grandiose statements of Empire, a factor which lasted well into the twentieth century.¹⁸⁰

More recently Bernard Porter has supplemented these theories, contending that it is necessary to concentrate on the 'demand' rather than the 'supply' side of imperial propaganda and that such a study reveals a distinct lack of working class concern for Empire: 'There is no direct evidence that this great majority of Britons supported the Empire, took an interest in it, or were even aware of it for most of the century, and the circumstantial evidence points the other way.'¹⁸¹ He also argues that the patriotism of Hobson's infamous music halls was only tenuously linked to empire. 'Jingoism went down well, because it was exciting and an excuse for celebration. But it was...very superficial. It can hardly ever have led to a thoughtful or joined up imperialism on the part of the jingoes.'¹⁸² Imperialism remained an 'entity which was nonetheless not very *important* to them.'¹⁸³ Certainly in the few extant working class memoirs, diaries and letters, the Empire scarcely figures, which Porter claims either means that these writers were unconscious of it in any sense, or at least it did not figure as important enough to mention.¹⁸⁴

Such an argument is at least partially borne out in Jonathan Rose's influential work *The Intellectual Life of the English Working Classes*. He contends that many working class comments on the Boer War reveal that their attitudes were shaped by a profound instinct of loyalty, but that it was familial not imperial. Few knew what the war was all about and why they were fighting, one resident of Digby in Lincolnshire recalling, 'But for George Brown [a native of Digby who fought in South Africa] the Boer War might have passed unnoticed in the village... We were very conscious of the honour and responsibility which had been thrust upon us. We were now personally represented, and it became Digby's war.'¹⁸⁵ However, when war fervour had taken hold, the residents of Digby became fully active participants in the war, readily absorbing the imperial propaganda in their new thirst for information. The Digbian continued, 'everybody took a lively interest in the fighting... Everything in the village was now on a war footing. The women had sewing meetings to make Army comforts. The children learned patriotic songs... Children were even christened with the names of war heroes.'¹⁸⁶ Similarly a Birmingham glass-blower's son recorded the triumphal return of their local hero: 'The whole street prepared to give him the welcome befitting to a public hero. Flags and streamers linked up every window, and excitement ran high when the news flashed round that the hero had arrived... I was among the drummer-boys who tapped tin-cans and marched to patriotic

¹⁷⁹ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1889/59, 1892/25, 1902/5.

¹⁸⁰ Meacham, *A Life Apart*, p. 198.

¹⁸¹ Porter, *The Absent-Minded*, p. 194.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

¹⁸⁵ Rose, *The Intellectual Life*, p. 336.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

singing...¹⁸⁷ Evidently workers and labourers participated in the imperial experience, if on a localised basis. Such documentary evidence demonstrates that the aims of the propagandists were of great importance. Were they attempting to approach the working classes to generate such attitudes and allegiances? If so, what was the aim of the propaganda – to inculcate a sense of imperialism within the masses, or, more specifically, to generate support for the Boer War and an understanding of the justice of that war? Rose's evidence seems to demonstrate some level of engagement with imperialism amongst the working classes, whilst indicating little success in generating support for the Boer War within that imperial context.

On the other side of the historiographical debate, John M. MacKenzie has argued that the imperial propaganda of the late nineteenth century was so intense that the working classes must have not only been targets but also recipients. There was a 'spectatorial fascination' with colonial warfare amongst the working classes and this was reflected and amplified in the burgeoning mass media.¹⁸⁸ This is ratified by the work of Robert Roberts and his recollections and analysis of *The Classic Slum* in which he reveals how especially working class boys desired to ape their middle class contemporaries.¹⁸⁹ MacKenzie has also undermined some of Price's arguments by highlighting the fact that the Working Men's Clubs of this period were almost totally depoliticised and many were being converted into music halls – halls which were so successfully propounding the imperialist message.¹⁹⁰ Such a view is confirmed in the work of T.G. Ashplant on the character and composition of the London Working Men's Clubs. He argues that by the 1890s a marked change was occurring in these clubs as politics was being replaced by 'patriotic entertainment', in effect becoming popular music halls.¹⁹¹ Michael Blanch has also effectively countered Price's arguments, demonstrating that increasing working class involvement in military activities as a source of recreation, from rifle clubs to drill units in factories, brought the masses into contact with imperial militarism.¹⁹² More recently Andrew Thompson has forged something of a middle ground between these two historiographical strands, arguing that the obvious trappings of popularity of Empire demonstrated both a popular awareness of imperialism as well as an acceptance, and that this amounted to less than enthusiasm but more than indifference or ignorance.¹⁹³ Thompson makes reference to the fact that, 'we should not downplay forces which shaped people's lives simply because they were unaware of them.'¹⁹⁴ In this light, and as this thesis has demonstrated, it is perhaps still as important to study the supply of imperial propaganda as the demand.

Further debate has centred on the Mafeking celebrations. Contemporary commentators certainly saw the 'mafficking' crowds as principally working class in composition. Hobson believed that it was the urban working classes who adhered most zealously to the 'course patriotism' that 'passes by

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 337.

¹⁸⁸ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁹ Roberts, *The Classic*, pp. 160-2.

¹⁹⁰ MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, pp. 61-2.

¹⁹¹ Indeed, Ashplant quotes that in 1888 62 percent of London clubs were political, declining to 47 percent by 1903. T.G. Ashplant, 'London Working Men's Clubs, 1875-1914', in Yeo, *Popular Culture*, pp. 249-65.

¹⁹² Michael Blanch, 'British Society and the War', in Warwick, *The South African War*.

¹⁹³ Thompson, *The Empire Strikes*.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

quick contagion through the crowded life of cities, and recommends itself everywhere by the satisfaction it affords to sensational cravings.¹⁹⁵ He therefore forwarded that the British nation had become a crowd, and its ‘crowd mind’ had become exposed to the suggestions of the new popular press. The ‘masses’, particularly in urban centres, had been instructed in the art of reading since the 1870s, but ‘without acquiring a adequate supply of information or any training in the reasoning faculties such as would enable them to give a proper value to the words they read.’ It was the result of such ‘uneducated lust of animalism’ that gathered them together on Mafeking night in such large numbers.¹⁹⁶ Similarly C.F.G. Masterman, another contemporary analyst of jingoism, wrote that the working classes had ‘crept into daylight... [and was] straightening itself and learning to gambol with heavy and grotesque antics in the sunshine.’ Price cites these comments as evidence that the concept of ‘mafficking’ made middle-class contemporaries very nervous that their own social position was under threat.¹⁹⁷ The excesses of Mafeking night, and the Boer War in general, seemed to confirm their fears as to the rise of the mob, but did not take into account low working class representation at these gatherings. Porter adds that it mattered little what the composition was as Mafeking night and similar demonstrations were brief aberrations, more to do with a single outburst of joy and a desire for entertainment after a British victory than an expression imperialist camaraderie.¹⁹⁸

However, clearly contemporaries saw something unusual in the celebrations of 18 May 1900. The *Illustrated London News* emphasised the variety of classes represented on the streets of London recalling, ‘A vast crowd of butchers sweeping down Piccadilly, all in their blue smocks, many of them with stencil portraits of B-P painted on their backs...[and] a huge procession headed by Kensington Art Students in white smocks, dragging a triumphal car surrounded by a fine bust of the hero of Mafeking, beneath which was a massive model of the British Lion.’¹⁹⁹ T. Wemyss Reid, a contemporary critic of the popular press and columnist for the *Nineteenth Century*, identified a mass ‘public’ involved in the Mafeking celebrations, but dividing them into those in ‘the streets’ and those in ‘the clubs’.²⁰⁰ Such publicly expressed emotion was certainly seen as unprecedented. Lady Stanley wrote of the months building up to the relief, ‘The excitement and the gloom passes anything one has ever seen or known before.’²⁰¹ Alfred Harmsworth wrote in his diary on 19 May that, ‘the Mafeking Jubilations formed a remarkable sight on the road.’²⁰² The hysteria clearly continued for some time as Bertha Synge wrote to Milner nearly a month after the celebrations that, ‘Every kitten, rabbit, calf, lamb and baby in England is called ‘Bobs’ or ‘B.P.’!’²⁰³ Even music hall impresarios were staggered by the popular displays of emotion at the relief of Mafeking, despite their working in an industry that thrived on such enthusiasm. One performer, Albert Chevalier, was

¹⁹⁵ Hobson, *Psychology*, p. 8.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 18-19.

¹⁹⁷ Price, *An Imperial War*, p. 134.

¹⁹⁸ Porter, *The Absent-Minded*, pp. 195-6, 234-6.

¹⁹⁹ ‘Mafeking Celebrations’, *Illustrated London News*, 26 May 1900.

²⁰⁰ Krebs, *Gender*, pp. 10-12.

²⁰¹ Beaumont, ‘The British Press’, p. 1.

²⁰² Diary Entry 19 May 1900, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62388, BL.

²⁰³ Synge to Milner, 6 June 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 17, ff.174-5, BLMC.

able to write three years later of his song 'Mafekin' Night', 'I quite look on this song as I used to look on the 'Old Kent Road' – a safe number with which to wind up my entertainment.'²⁰⁴

Clearly the legacy of Mafeking was an enduring one, and both contemporary imperialists and pro-Boers seem to have identified a cross section of society represented during those unprecedented displays. It is difficult therefore to refute the idea that the working classes were not at least involved in the Mafeking celebrations, but what is less clear is their motives for such involvement. Krebs argues that the reasons for participation are unimportant, the important factor being that the celebrations were entirely orchestrated by the popular press. The tension and frenzy of speculation and half-truths propagated through the mass press kept the British public on edge and fascinated with the exploits of Baden-Powell, himself cultivating the frenzy with his own manipulated information. Therefore when news of the relief reached London there was an inevitable release of pent up emotion.²⁰⁵ Large-scale public support for imperialism had become necessary when Britain embarked on a colonial war with a white nation and the mass media generated that mass support. If it was the middle classes who were the predominant advocates of new imperialism, public opinion more generally seems to have supported the Boer War at least until the middle of 1901 and that public opinion was cultivated by the use of modern techniques of propaganda.²⁰⁶ Even Porter admits that, 'There can be no disputing the fact that the imperialists were propagandising' and 'most of the forms of propaganda were new: certainly the incidence and intensity of them were.' To Porter, studying the context in which the propaganda was received was vital in considering the likely impact of that context on the reception of the propaganda.²⁰⁷ As has been highlighted, his conclusion is that Empire 'was not a widespread preoccupation', especially with the working classes as their context did not allow it to be.²⁰⁸ However, whereas Porter, Price and Mackenzie have taken the impact of Empire on British society and the success of imperial propaganda in infiltrating that society, this chapter has rather considered the impact of Empire on the development of modern propaganda. In this context, the significant factor is not necessarily whether imperial propaganda was received and imperialism inculcated into the masses, but that there was a perception amongst a growing number of propagandists that a more modern form of propaganda had become increasingly necessary and desirable in the imperial context of the later nineteenth century.

This is not to say that the reception of that propaganda is unimportant. There is a convincing argument that it did have some success in accessing a cross-section of British society. The involvement of the working classes in the imperial experience is in some cases borne out through the media, and although the attendance of a music hall performance or the purchase of a *Daily Mail* is not proof of opinion, it does at least reflect the pervasive transmission and dissemination of imperial ideology to the working classes. Hobson's 'potent educator', the music hall, was popular amongst the working classes, and Summerfield's compelling analysis of the Effingham Arms has

²⁰⁴ Senelick, 'Politics', p. 178.

²⁰⁵ Krebs, *Gender*, pp. 29-30.

²⁰⁶ Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 10.

²⁰⁷ Porter, *The Absent-Minded*, pp. 174-5, 179, 193.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

revealed ‘the triumph of Empire’. Those members of the working class who attended performances of Kipling’s famous Boer War song, ‘The Absent-Minded Beggar’ were informed

Cook’s son – Duke’s son – son of a belted Earl –
 Son of a Lambeth publican – it’s all the same today!
 Each of ‘em is doing his country’s work...²⁰⁹

The last line of this chorus epitomises the belief in the ‘uncritical participation in coercive imperial policies’ characterised by the working classes in the Boer War. The imperial songs that were selected and the expansion of the halls that nurtured them suggests that such views could not have been autonomously generated within the working class, pointing to the formation of opinion in the halls if not always its reflection.²¹⁰ Oron Hale goes further, arguing that music halls in this period were ‘stimulating and expressing the robust sentiments of the lower classes.’ After the Kaiser sent his infamous ‘Kruger telegram’ there was an abundance of performances of anti-German, pro-Jameson songs. One reporter for the *Standard* wrote of the reception of Alfred Austin’s ‘Jameson’s Ride’ at the Alhambra theatre, ‘As the concluding words were said, a remarkable scene ensued. Cheer after cheer rose from all parts of the house, and an occupant of one of the front boxes shouted out, “Three cheers for Dr. Jameson and his men.” A great burst of cheering followed.’ Prime Minister Salisbury, who had made Austin poet laureate, was nervous as to the poem’s effect on the working classes and their participation in foreign affairs through that poem. He wrote to Queen Victoria in January 1896, ‘Unluckily it is to the taste of the galleries in the lower class of theatres, and they sing it with vehemence.’²¹¹ The narrow lines between patriotism, imperialism and jingoism were reflected in the music halls, and the multifarious audiences were exposed to each of these sentiments. The Boer War merely acted as a catalyst in this development, and perhaps also its zenith, as the new imperialism and new journalism transformed the violent working class street mob into ‘a cheery middle-class (or perhaps classless) party.’²¹² This is not to say that the crowd was no longer working class in any real sense, but rather that it was of a different character.

This process was also augmented by the adverts that were found in increasing numbers not only in the pages of newspapers but also in shop windows, on billboards, on cigarette cards and in a plethora of other places. The effect of advertising ephemera on the working classes can be seen in Roberts’ description of the ‘culture of the streets’ which included the mass market of posters, advertisements, cigarette cards and newspapers which became a primary source of news and information, and therefore of militaristic and patriotic propaganda.²¹³ As the adverts carried overtly imperialist messages, the working classes were exposed to such signs and symbols on a daily basis,

²⁰⁹ Written by Kipling in 1899 to help raise money for the troops in South Africa, and no doubt to help propagate his beloved imperialism. Summerfield, ‘The Effingham Arms’, p. 236.

²¹⁰ Summerfield, ‘The Effingham Arms’, pp. 236-7.

²¹¹ Hale, *Publicity*, pp. 121-3.

²¹² Krebs, *Gender*, p. 22.

²¹³ Roberts, *The Classic Slum*, p. 168.

made all the more powerful by a reliance, or at least preference, for visual stimulation. During the Boer War, Robert Machray confirmed the appeal of such pictorial propaganda, writing in *Windsor Magazine*, ‘The man in the street, who perhaps serves behind a counter, none the less knows and feels with pride that he belongs to a conquering race. And so he calls and clamours for the brush and pencil of the war artist to make real and vivid presentments for him of the various aspects of the conflicts in which the fighting men of that race of his have been or are engaged.’²¹⁴

Owing to the saturation of the public space with imperial ideology by a variety of media and of propagandists, James Thomson has argued that many conceptions of public opinion in the period of the Boer War underestimated, ‘the simple fact that most of the public approved of the war’, such a public including the newly politicised mass of the working class.²¹⁵ However, despite the aforementioned evidence, and the fact that the working classes undoubtedly were targeted by and received imperial propaganda through their exposure to the mass media, it is impossible to know what their reaction to that propaganda actually was. As Porter argues, ‘we shall never know how empire-aware or imperialistic the working classes were as a whole, or how solid and useful that imperialism was, if it existed.’²¹⁶ Such a problem was astutely observed by a contemporary, Kennedy Jones, and it was a problem that affected Downing Street as much as Fleet Street: ‘No matter how clever and cunning you may think yourself, how carefully you may prepare your ground beforehand, you cannot predict the effect a statement will have on a mind, because there will be present factors unknown to you which may yield a result as often as not distinctly opposite to the one you anticipate.’²¹⁷ For these reasons, *Daily Mail’s* mass circulation does not provide the historian with evidence of mass support for the ideas it propagated. Perhaps the best evidence of this is the 1906 election which was won convincingly by the Liberals despite a massive, and seemingly popular, campaign in the Northcliffe press on behalf of the Unionists and tariff reform. This is a stark reminder of the difficulties associated with studying the success of a particular campaign or ascertaining the reasons as to its efficacy. Similarly, Galbraith points out that there is little evidence to suggest that the vast array of Unionist pamphlets he analysed in any way contributed to the 1900 election success or imperial propaganda in general.²¹⁸ Why, for instance, did a campaign of similar ferocity not achieve similar results in 1906? It would be wrong to assume that because the Unionists apparently had a more modernised system of party propaganda, especially under the aegis of Middleton, that their propaganda was any more successful.

This of course leaves a historian studying reception in an era before the likes of opinion polling and Mass-Observation in a very difficult situation, only able to infer and surmise from audience figures, voting habits and readerships. However, perhaps this is to miss the point. As Koss states, ‘The fact remains that readers and writers alike believed not only that such influence existed, but

²¹⁴ *Windsor Magazine*, (April, 1900), p. 263.

²¹⁵ Thompson, ‘The Idea’, p. 270.

²¹⁶ Porter, *The Absent-Minded*, p. 217.

²¹⁷ Jones, *Fleet Street*, p. 291.

²¹⁸ Galbraith, ‘The Pamphlet’, p. 123.

also that it was pervasive... Mistaken or not, this conviction created its own reality.²¹⁹ The concentration of authors such as Price and Porter on whether the working classes were involved in the imperial process, received imperial propaganda and were inculcated with a belief in Empire has meant that not enough attention has been given to the reality perceived by contemporaries. It is just as important, given the problems associated with reception, to understand whom contemporary propagandists saw as their audience, why, and how they approached them, than to attempt to uncover the reality of the reactions of those audiences. From those perceptions, it is still possible to uncover important details of how propaganda was developing in this period which has been the focus of this thesis.

During the Boer War, it was the very scale of the audience that necessitated much of the propaganda and altered its nature as recognised by contemporaries. During, and as a direct result of, the Boer War 'public opinion' began to include 'the man in the street', but simultaneously the ideas of Gustave Le Bon and Gabriel Tarde were making contemporaries aware of numerous 'crowds' and 'publics' which could absorb these newly politicised, but often bovine, individuals.²²⁰ Women were also being included in these publics and audiences, especially as sections of the popular press became specifically targeted at a female clientele. Many newspapers printed a 'women's page', and Harmsworth even established *Women at Home* in 1893 which ran successfully for the next twenty-seven years.²²¹ Women were politically active during the Boer War, being prominent on such bodies as the SACC and Stop the War Committee.²²² Moreover, the new audience was perceived to be international as communications technologies and the Empire developed in tandem. The desire for coverage of the Boer War resulted in a complex and wide range of audiences around the Empire, and this need was met by the burgeoning flow of information through a fledgling imperial press system.²²³ For Hobson, such a system, orchestrated by the press engines of the South African 'goldbugs', created an imperial audience united by the one-sided information they were being fed.²²⁴ Although few contemporaries followed Hobson's logic during the Boer War, many perceived unanimity of feeling between Britain and her Dominions, and the work of men such as Sir Sandford Fleming on extending the imperial press system reveals how important such an imperial audience was perceived to be.

The most common theme, however, was that of the perceived necessity to approach and propagandise the working classes in the new political environment, not just in imperial terms but in order to secure support for any policy or idea. As revealed in the previous chapter, it was increasingly seen as necessarily for the Unionist and Liberal parties to attract the support of the working classes owing to the novel context of the later nineteenth century. However, it has also been demonstrated that Hardie's Labour party understood the necessity of targeting the masses

²¹⁹ James D. Startt, 'Good Journalism in the Era of the New Journalism: The British Press, 1902-1914', in Wiener (ed.), *Papers*, p. 289.

²²⁰ Thompson, 'The Idea', pp. 231, 253.

²²¹ Wiener, 'How New', p. 55.

²²² Morgan, 'The Boer War', p. 11.

²²³ Potter, *News*, p. 38.

²²⁴ Hobson, *Psychology*, pp. 119-22.

with a new form of propaganda, but their own analysis of the frequent failure of this propaganda in the face of imperialism is equally illuminating. Even before the ardent jingoism of the Boer War one of its organs, the *Labour Leader*, was complaining that the working class were more interested in celebrating Omdurman than supporting the Welsh coal strike.²²⁵ There was obviously a perception that the working classes were being swept up in the popular imperialism propagated by the popular press and Unionist politicians, and it was deemed necessary to combat such a loss to the Labour movement with counter-propaganda. This perception is revealed in the creation of a propagandistic cartoon, aimed at pulling the workers away from the 'bright lights of imperialism' to domestic concerns.²²⁶ If the working classes were not perceived to be influenced by the propaganda of imperialism, why would the Labour Party consider it necessary to disseminate such propaganda of their own?

More generally individual politicians and officials were beginning to understand how the 'great mass of the people' were to be feared and revered in politics. Chamberlain and Milner went to great lengths to approach and manipulate the opinion of the masses with imperial ideology, an appeal which seems to have met with some success as perceived by Bryce who wrote to Goldwin Smith, 'To my regret, I cannot yet report any substantial change in public opinion on this deplorable war...He (Chamberlain) has in fact gained mass popularity...with his own defiant talk and rhodomontade about the military tendencies of the Empire.'²²⁷ Even more fascinating is the opinion of the Colonial official, Sidney Shippard, who was director of the South Africa Company and an associate of Rhodes

The centre of political power in this country has been shifted till it is now practically in the hands of the working men of England; and the British workman has become an Imperialist while his Radical guide, philosopher and friend has been slumbering... If it were any part of my business to engage in a political propaganda in this country it would be to the working man exclusively I would address myself... His own vital interests and those of his children are at stake in the question of the empire, as he well knows.²²⁸

It seems inconceivable that such ideas would not have been acted on by Shippard's contemporaries. Whether this perception was justified is another matter. While the actual reception of such propaganda is notoriously difficult to measure, this only places an even greater premium on the study of perception. Perception must be taken as at least one of the tools for studying public opinion, audience and reception in this period, as it ensures that the historian views these concepts from a contemporary standpoint, discovers illuminating evidence about how contemporaries understood their own periods and theories, and avoids the dual danger of retrospection and misinterpretation.

²²⁵ Blanch, 'British Society', p. 216.

²²⁶ 'Socialism and the Imperialistic Will O' the Wisp', c.1902.

²²⁷ Bryce to Smith, 14 February 1900, Bryce papers, dep. 17, f.183, BLMC.

²²⁸ Sidney Shippard, 'Are we to Lose South Africa?', *Nineteenth Century*, (September, 1899), p. 347.

In order to reveal exactly how propaganda worked within this period and demonstrate the modern propagandistic environment that had been established by the time of the Boer War this chapter will now turn to two themes, common to most wartime propaganda, in more detail – justification and vilification. These themes offer the opportunity to consider further the issues around the operation of propaganda in democracy, and therefore uncover correlations with similar propaganda campaigns of the twentieth century. Both justification and vilification were central to the imperialist pro-war propaganda campaign, but were also employed by the pro-Boers as a basis for their opposition. Justification of a war has always been influential in its initiation and prosecution, but the nature and number of people involved is subject to change. By 1899 the majority of the British public were actively engaged in the political process and able to participate in, or at least observe, British foreign policy. Clearly, if British public opinion was to be made to feel that war was necessary then a ‘justice motive’ had to be employed by the Unionist Government. As David Welch argues, such a motive would simplify the whole process of understanding the war and its origin and invoke a powerful sense of injustice which would in turn create an obstinately supportive public.²²⁹

This was especially true of the Boer War, as justifying its initiation and unforeseen longevity was problematic for the Unionists. Not only was it a war promoted as unnecessary by many Liberals and Radicals in Parliament, but it was also markedly different in nature to the wars Britain had been fighting since the Crimean War. The Indian Mutiny, Persian wars, Chinese wars, Ashantee wars, Abyssinian War, Zulu wars, Afghan War, Egyptian War and Sudanese expedition were all perceived as imperial wars of ‘civilisation’ against an ‘inferior’ race for the purpose of conquest and progress. The Boer War was fought against whites of European origin who had created a relatively developed, unified nation which was under the dubious suzerainty of Britain, established at the contentious Treaty of London in 1884. Such problems were further exacerbated by the debacle of the Jameson Raid in 1895, which had cast strong, and probably justified, suspicion on the motives of the Colonial Secretary and Rand capitalists. As the crisis in the Transvaal inevitably deepened after the Raid, the Government’s diplomacy and policy was put under greater scrutiny making the justification of any war that ensued all the more difficult but also increasingly necessary. Chamberlain was aware of these problems, and they occupied his mind leading up to the war. Indeed, Campbell-Bannerman had asked in a speech to Maidstone Liberals shortly before the war, ‘What is it that we are going to war about?’²³⁰ A legitimate answer to this question was vital in order to extract an extra ten million pounds from Parliament and to ensure a united British public opinion.²³¹

²²⁹ Welch, *Justice*, p. 31.

²³⁰ John Wilson, *CB. A Life of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* (London, 1973), p. 311.

²³¹ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 111.

Chamberlain's papers disclose a generally well disguised policy of pulling Kruger into a war by provoking him to the first action, thereby justifying British military intervention. This was partly achieved through more official channels, and by the creation and promotion of official documents making it appear that Kruger had pushed for war and Britain had pushed for peace. The first of these was the report of a commission of inquiry into the Jameson Raid of which Seaman wrote, 'Not only did the committee so bungle its investigation as to call into question its own impartiality, it also effectively politicised the Raid, making any quiet, diplomatic resolution of the simmering Anglo-Transvaal conflict impossible.'²³² As previously mentioned, Milner generally constructed such official documents in concert with the deferential press and they were then released into the public arena in order to offer a contrast with Kruger's apparently aggressive stance and policies, and highlight the peaceful ends Chamberlain and Milner had pursued through a persistently calm diplomacy. Quotes from and comments on these publications were then reproduced in the mass media. Newspapers offered verbatim reproductions of the salient facts, and journals debated the matters arising. F.E. Garret even wrote in the *Contemporary Review* that such documents had highlighted the war in South Africa as a crime, but that Kruger, not Milner or Chamberlain, was the criminal responsible. A year later Garret wrote again that it was no longer even necessary to debate the Blue Books as to any candid reader their message was clear and far from indicting Milner, reveals him as a man of 'eminent fairness, justice, and prudence'.²³³

Similar action was taken with regards to forcing Kruger's hand with a carefully phrased, publicly available ultimatum. Chamberlain wrote to Salisbury in August 1899 that he was preparing an ultimatum for the Boers, transferring troops from India to South Africa and organising 30,000 more to be sent from Britain and acknowledged that these actions would most likely prompt Kruger to military action.²³⁴ When the document was drafted by Chamberlain in October, he obviously went to great pains to ensure that it was a document that could be used to justify the war to the British public. It clearly underlined the idea that the British Government had done everything diplomatically possible to prevent war, but Boer antagonisms had left them no choice but to retaliate. It was also circulated to a variety of key political individuals each of whom gave their blessings and interestingly many even gave advice as to alterations based on its probable reception by British public opinion.²³⁵

Official documents were used to bolster Chamberlain's justification for war, both in terms of Britain's pacifistic diplomacy and Kruger's belligerence, but they could only ever affect a relatively small audience, specifically Parliament. However, the Unionists used their numerous media contacts to ensure that the basic messages of the official documents were disseminated to as wide an audience as possible both before and during the war. Harmsworth noted in his diary that he met

²³² Seaman, *A Citizen*, p. 182.

²³³ It is interesting to note, however, that Milner had worked closely with Garret in his days as a journalist on the *Pall Mall Gazette* and his support therefore is not very surprising. F.E. Garret, 'The Inevitable in South Africa', *Contemporary Review* (July-December, 1899), p. 481; F.E. Garret, 'Sir Alfred Milner and his Work', *Contemporary Review* (July-December, 1899), p. 154.

²³⁴ Chamberlain to Salisbury, 15 August 1899, Chamberlain Papers, JC/303/9/9, BUSC.

²³⁵ Various to Chamberlain, c. October 1899, Chamberlain Papers, JC/30/3/12/10-20, BUSC.

with Lord Selbourne, Chamberlain's deputy in the Colonial Office, and George Wyndham, under-secretary to Lord Lansdowne at the War Office, to discuss the policy of 'Firmness in the Cause of Peace', a title taken up in the *Daily Mail* of 23 September.²³⁶ A week later the *Daily Mail* declared, repeating Balfour's stern vow, 'The Transvaal has made this war; if in this hour it still defies Great Britain, upon the heads of Mr. Kruger and his corrupt cabal be the innocent blood.'²³⁷ This speech was also repeated throughout the provincial press, one Birmingham newspaper reporting the sentiment that the Government had 'shown the utmost measure of long suffering and moderation.'²³⁸ Although such propaganda undoubtedly helped prepare the public for the idea of war, it was ultimately Kruger's own ill-considered ultimatum that created the necessary justification, demonstrating that propaganda often relies on context and circumstance for its success. Indeed, if Chamberlain's principal biographer is to be believed, on receiving the news the Colonial Secretary sat up in bed and shouted, 'They have done it!' Clearly he had been 'working up a crisis' in the Transvaal and his policy of goading Kruger into war had finally paid off.²³⁹

However, justification continued to play an increasingly important role after the initiation of hostilities, especially as the war proved longer, harder and more unconventional than any of the protagonists had at first anticipated. It was deemed necessary to constantly remind the public and Parliament that the war was just and vital for British interests through the £200 million, 22,000 British lives and nearly three years of hard fighting and embarrassment that it cost. The Unionist propaganda machine produced numerous pamphlets covering every aspect of Unionist policy during the war, and many were concerned with its justification. The series 'Why We Are At War' in fact began in October 1899 with a clever piece of legitimising propaganda. The war aims of the Unionists were clearly laid out in bold as, '(i.) For real reforms instead of sham reforms, which were all the Boers would give. (ii.) To protect British subjects in the Transvaal. (iii.) To ensure our position as paramount power in South Africa being maintained.' Readers were provided with three pages of quotes from Radical and Liberal speakers revealing that they actually agree with each of these statements, thereby discrediting the pro-Boer position and ratifying the Unionist justification.²⁴⁰ Another pamphlet entitled, 'What are we Fighting About?' directly answered Campbell-Bannerman's question to Chamberlain prior to the outbreak of war, arguing that it was the lack of civil rights and breaking of the Convention of 1884 that led to conflict. It then recorded a conversation between Kruger and Sir Hercules Robinson in 1881 where Kruger promised equal rights to the Uitlander and juxtaposes this with the reality of South African life for British citizens.²⁴¹

²³⁶ Harmsworth diary entry, 22 September 1899, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62387, BL.

²³⁷ *Daily Mail*, 29 September 1899.

²³⁸ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 29 September 1899.

²³⁹ J.L. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. III (London, 1934), pp. 471-2.

²⁴⁰ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1899/8 (October, 1899), DUL.

²⁴¹ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and leaflets, 1900/50 (January, 1900), DUL.

Such pamphlets continued throughout the war, culminating in Conan Doyle's 156 page booklet, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Conflicts* which attempted to collate arguments previously released in pamphlets, leaflets, Blue-books and tracts in one volume from an 'independent standpoint'. Conan-Doyle was a good choice of author, since he was already a popular novelist but also an ardent imperialist with connections to both Chamberlain and Milner. His comments in the Preface as to the intended audience of the pamphlet are also illuminating, as it was sold at a nominal fee in order to put its contents 'in reach of all.' He continued, 'Our further ambition is, however, to translate it into all European tongues, and to send a free copy to every deputy and every newspaper on the Continent and in America,' demonstrating the perceived need to disseminate such propaganda to widely as possible.²⁴²

One common theme in these pamphlets was the rights of the Uitlanders in South Africa, and how they had had their civil rights destroyed under Kruger's regime. This was reinforced throughout the mass media, and revealed the strength of connections between the media and politicians. *Punch*, in a series of cartoons, such as *All the comforts of a home*, pointed to the grievances of the Uitlanders as just cause for British intervention in the Transvaal.²⁴³ The *Times*' female colonial editor, Flora Shaw, was also an instrumental force in emphasising the plight of the Uitlanders before and during the war, arguing that Boer actions had made conflict inevitable.²⁴⁴ Harmsworth met with Cecil Rhodes to discuss the matter on 5 May 1899, and the day after the *Daily Mail* printed a similarly forceful statement that it was 'England's Duty' to 'Take the Uitlander's Case in Hand.'²⁴⁵ Such imperialist propaganda was made even more necessary when arguments were refuted by anti-war and pro-Boer writers who concentrated on two other motives for war – the desire for the new found gold of the Transvaal, and the perceived capitalist, Jewish conspiracy to subjugate and control the area. These ideas found intellectual currency in books such as J.A. Hobson's *The War in South Africa*, and Frederick Harrison's *National and Social Problems*, both denying any *casus belli* could be found in the Uitlanders' grievances.²⁴⁶

To counter this Chamberlain similarly used the suggestion of Boer rearmament and aggressive propaganda as a *casus belli*, arguing that the British had been forced to defend themselves against Boer belligerence, especially since 1895. A series, 'Arming of South African Republic' was produced and published as proof of Boer rearmament and belligerence in South Africa,²⁴⁷ while the *Daily News* also published a series of facts about Boer rearmament since 1894.²⁴⁸ This idea was reinforced in an article by Theodore Wirgman who argued that it was Mr. Reitz's political propaganda that had

²⁴² The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1902/44, DUL. For details of the 'deflecting source model' see, Jowett & O'Donnell, *Propaganda*, pp. 20-1.

²⁴³ See the extensive editorial comments and news reports under titles such as 'Crisis in the Transvaal', *Times*, September – October 1899; *Punch*, Volume 116 (5th April, 1899), p. 163.

²⁴⁴ Beaumont, 'The Times', p. 77.

²⁴⁵ Harmsworth diary entry, 5 May 1899, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62387, BL; *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1899.

²⁴⁶ J.A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London, 1900); Frederic Harrison, *National and Social Problems* (London, 1908).

²⁴⁷ 'Transcripts of official communications and Government publications relating to South Africa for the year 1896-1900' (1900), Chamberlain Papers, JC/29/6/11/18, BUSC.

²⁴⁸ *Daily News*, 24 January 1900; extract found in Chamberlain Papers, JC/29/6/11/21, BUSC.

forced the war and recalls the last conversation between the Transvaal State Secretary and Schreiner after the breakdown of relations as far back as 1884 stating,

Thus the conversation ended, but during the seventeen years that have elapsed I have watched the propaganda for the overthrow of British power in South Africa being ceaselessly spread by every possible means - the press, the pulpit, the platform, the schools, the colleges, the legislature - until it has culminated in the present war of which Mr. Reitz and his co-workers are the origin and the cause.²⁴⁹

Boer propaganda was clearly seen as a potent force by the British, and Milner highlighted its growing effect on British and Dutch residents shortly before the outbreak of the war.²⁵⁰ This apparently sincere distaste for the methods of Boer propaganda came to the fore when Wirgman's analysis could so easily be applied to the British efforts for the opposite end. A British distaste for 'propaganda', and a more ready identification with 'enlightenment' or 'education', was certainly visible after the First World War. However, this was evident before the events of 1914, demonstrating that contemporaries of the later nineteenth century were engaging with a specific idea of propaganda that bridges both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although the chapter on the etymology and theory of propaganda in the nineteenth century shows a more complex picture than simple distaste and distrust of propaganda, such comments as those propounded by Wirgman offer an insight into the genesis of the general feelings towards propaganda that have remained in Britain since the First World War.

Wirgman's concern about the 'overthrow of British power in South Africa' points to another common theme in the British propaganda of justification – the defence of the Empire. Indeed, Badsey has argued that propaganda of Empire itself was integral to imperial defence.²⁵¹ The Unionist Government placed a premium on creating unity amongst the Dominions and advocated the necessity of war in defence of that unity, particularly as the battalions of volunteers were raised in Canada, Australia and New Zealand and the fear of other imperial possessions following the Transvaal's lead took hold. The imperial press system disseminated a sense of unity based around a kinship of the global 'British race', echoing the words of the Australian journalist 'Banjo' Patterson on the outbreak of the Boer War, 'Those who fight the British Isles must fight the British race!'²⁵² Unionist machinations in Canada, specifically their exploitation of Laurier, allied to the promotion of these ideas in the popular media helped to justify the war in terms of imperial cohesion. These sentiments were echoed in the popular press including the provincial press, the *Birmingham Daily Post* reporting 'Colonials Eager to Assist' in Toronto, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Montreal and even New York. Ubiquitous demonstrations of loyalty were apparently only marred by the fact that,

²⁴⁹ Theodore Wirgman, 'The South African Conspiracy Against British Rule', *Nineteenth Century*, (January, 1900), pp. 41-50.

²⁵⁰ Milner to Chamberlain, 27 September 1899, Chamberlain Papers, JC/10/9/62, BUSC.

²⁵¹ Badsey, 'Propaganda'.

²⁵² Potter, *News*, p. 5.

'Some French Canadians sympathise with the Boers, but these malcontents are in a decided minority', which provides a pronounced contrast compared with Bryce and Smith's own aforementioned conclusions on this matter. The press placed more emphasis on the threat posed by Kruger's ambition in South Africa as a justification for the war. The popular press leapt on the idea of this new threat to England's territory, rapidly converting it into a crusade fought to preserve 'Britishness' and the Empire. Such sentiments were also echoed in the new medium of film, audiences being informed of Kruger's malevolent imperialist intentions in films such as R.W. Paul's *Kruger's Dream of Empire*.²⁵³ Charles Urban's Warwick Trading Company promoted the idea of imperial unity in films such as *The Australian Mounted Rifles Marching Through Cape Town*, showing the popularity of these volunteers with the crowds there.²⁵⁴ As Strebel argues, the shots of a continuous line of marching troops holds little interest to the modern audience but, 'The succession of the various colonial regiments underscored the solidarity of Empire.'²⁵⁵

Unity was even stretched to include the United States as part of the 'English-speaking races' as, despite their status as a Republic who had thrown off the British yoke, many Americans and Britons saw the utility of a kinship between the two nations. The idea of an alliance between 'Uncle Sam' and 'John Bull' was disseminated in the music halls through songs such as F.V. St. Clair's 'John Bull's Letter Bag' when an American sings,

We are proud to know your blood runs through our veins.

John Bull we'll be with you in your losses and your gains.²⁵⁶

Films similarly represented this bond, and Urban's 'Set-To Between John Bull and Paul Kruger' sees 'Britain' and the 'Transvaal' in a boxing match the former being seconded by Uncle Sam, the latter by France and Russia.²⁵⁷ This was vital to Britain during the Boer War given the hostile reception British military involvement in South Africa had received in Europe. The continued warm relations between the two nations became a justification in itself in a similar fashion to the use of imperial support, as well as an important legacy for the First World War when attracting American support became a key battle for British propagandists.

This relationship, and the justification for the war in general, was further augmented by disseminating the idea that the British were emancipating the native population of South Africa from the brutal rule of the Boers. Such a campaign could perhaps be seen as a paradoxical extension of the 'civilising' mission of the British Empire, but within the unusual confines of a war against a white population. It was perhaps inevitable given the scale of native involvement in the war in the employ of both protagonists. William Nasson has estimated that 120,000 Africans aided the British during the war, with as many as 50,000 armed, and the Boers used 10,000 as labourers

²⁵³ Strebel, 'Primitive Propaganda', p. 47.

²⁵⁴ From Warwick Trading Company Catalogue, 5526 (22 December 1899), Urban 10/23, NMM.

²⁵⁵ Strebel, 'Primitive Propaganda', p. 46.

²⁵⁶ Senelick, 'Politics', p. 177.

²⁵⁷ Strebel, 'Primitive Propaganda', pp. 46-7.

and 14,000 as armed *Agterryers* to reinforce the commandos.²⁵⁸ Even before the war started, Chamberlain wrote despatches and speeches condemning the Boers' uncivilised approach to the natives in the Transvaal,²⁵⁹ and Salisbury had used it as one consolation in a war he had always been uneasy in waging.²⁶⁰ The natives themselves hated the depredations of the Boer commandos, one town Headman writing to a local newspaper, 'Imvo Zabantsunda', after the execution of a black scout that there was a general 'arousing of our blood' and 'sharpening of our tempers' against the Republican guerrilla forces.²⁶¹ Indeed, Milner reported to Chamberlain that the British victories in March 1900 had been greeted with 'the unrestrainable and positively frenzied jubilations of the Coloured people.'²⁶² Resultantly the Unionist propaganda machine reinforced these feelings, especially through the publications of the CPD. One pamphlet included quotes from missionaries and Churchmen in South Africa underlining the need for British rule in, 'the interests of the Kingdom of Christ, especially in relation to the Native races.'²⁶³

Ramsay MacDonald, in his retrospective analysis of the Boer War, *What I saw in South Africa*, reflected, 'It is well known that a nation will not fight except for a cause in which idealism is mingled. The *Daily Mail* supplied the idealism for the South African War by telling lies about the flogging of British women and children.'²⁶⁴ The various strands of justification all combined to idealise the war in South Africa, but MacDonald also points to a more potent form of justification during the war – the vilification of the enemy. One problem faced by the Unionist government was a growing respect amongst the British public for the Boers, their way of life and especially their courageous resistance. One solution was to anathematise them and their barbarous methods of war. This prompted a widespread dissemination of fabrications, half-truths, stereotypes and distortions through the mass media resulting in stories such as those in the *Daily Mail* as described by MacDonald. There is a degree of precedent in such atrocity propaganda, and there are certainly notable correlations between the Crimean and Boer Wars in this respect, but it was the scale and sophistication of this campaign that made the Boer War such a novel experience and demonstrates how propaganda in this period had become increasingly modern, by approaching an increasingly large audience, with more material through a greater variety of media.

One theme that is seen repeated throughout the media was the idea of the Boers misusing the 'white flag' and 'red cross'. One cleverly constructed Unionist pamphlet argues that the Boers were, 'Guilty of every treacherous, dirty, and vile trick known!!', and uses the evidence of Mr. W. Allen of Newcastle to substantiate these claims. Allen was noted to be a 'fighting ex-Radical MP', and as such acted as a perfect legitimising source for the Unionist cause. His report, printed first in the *Newcastle Guardian*, stated that Boers were shooting Tommies bearing the white flag, but themselves

²⁵⁸ William Nasson, 'Africans at War', in Gooch, *The Boer War*, p. 127.

²⁵⁹ 'Diary of the Colonial Office Departments: Diaries of the South African Department' (1898), Chamberlain Papers, JC/29/1/1/3/1, BUSC.

²⁶⁰ David Steele, 'Salisbury and the Soldiers', in Gooch, *The Boer War*, p. 7.

²⁶¹ David Nasson, 'Africans at War' in Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War*, p. 135.

²⁶² Milner to Chamberlain, 8 March 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 170, f.75, BLMC.

²⁶³ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1900/95, DUL.

²⁶⁴ Ramsay MacDonald, *What I Saw in South Africa* (London, 1903).

using white flags as cover before shooting the soldier advancing to receive the surrender, adding that Boer women had been known to shoot Australians from under that cover. This last comment was particularly useful to the Unionist cause, feeding the Dominions with atrocity propaganda to further ensure their support.²⁶⁵ Such accounts were echoed and reinforced throughout the media, and the press expanded upon reports of the abuse of the white flag. One *Times* leader argued that the 'facts' had revealed that, 'in the Boer army are not a few who habitually use the white flag as a ruse wherewith to gain an advantage', and that soon it would be impossible to prevent a retaliation by British troops.²⁶⁶ Similarly a *Punch* cartoon, 'The Sullied White Flag', represented the Boers as cowardly, using the flag of truce to conceal a hidden weapon and reinforced the message that the British forces would be forced to retaliate if such practise did not cease.²⁶⁷

Other media were even less discriminating in their view of the Boer misuse of the white flag. Films such as *Set-To between John Bull and Paul Kruger* featured Kruger's use of a white flag during the boxing match only then to kick John Bull whilst his back is turned. Other films in this period employed the sacrosanct image of the Red Cross to vilify the Boers. Mitchell and Kenyon's *Shelling the Red Cross* (1900) depicts a nurse receiving wounded British soldiers at a Red Cross tent whilst a Boer hides behind it. The Boer then throws a bomb in front of the tent and runs away, leaving the nurse and many others casualties inside.²⁶⁸ Such films had particular poignancy when contrasted to depictions of the heroic work of the Red Cross, such as in the Warwick Trading Company's *Ambulance Corps at Work* and R.W. Paul's *His Mother's Portrait or the Soldier's Vision*. Comparisons between civilisation and barbarism could also be found in advertising. Adverts for 'Guinea Gold' cigarettes in the *News of the World*, published in the wake of Robert's magnanimous amnesty, depicted a smart, authoritative British officer standing over a dishevelled, stooped Boer who is handing over his rifle. Buried underneath them are a maxim gun, dynamite and a large pack of Ogden's 'Guinea Gold' sporting the slogan, 'He's buried all he cares for.'²⁶⁹ Such images placed key messages of Boer treachery, dishonour and barbarism within the realm of popular culture, to be absorbed by the mass market at which they were aimed.

Depictions of Boer barbarism served to dispel the belief that they were simple, honest, courageous farmers defending their land. Atrocities reported from the front were eagerly taken up by the Unionist campaign, often with a flagrant disregard for verification. Information sent by the Governor of Natal, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, to Chamberlain about the actions of General de Wet at Koornspruit when his commando crept up on a team of British wagons outside the town demonstrates such use of reports: 'They did considerable execution. Guns were mixed up in the train of wagons. The drivers tried to turn out of the column, but the Boers shot down the gun

²⁶⁵ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1901/15, DUL.

²⁶⁶ *Times*, 20 November 1899.

²⁶⁷ 'The Sullied White Flag', 20 December 1899, *Punch*, Volume 117 (London, 1899), p. 295.

²⁶⁸ Mitchell and Kenyon, 'Shelling the Red Cross' (1900). This film was not filmed on the veldt, of course, but most likely in the Blackburn area. See, Popple, 'Startling', Toulmin, Popple and Russell (eds.), *The Lost World*, pp. 150-2.

²⁶⁹ Glenn R. Wilkinson, 'To the Front': British Newspaper Advertising and the Boer War', in Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War*, p. 211.

teams. There were no armed men with the wagons. There were men on the wagons, unarmed – I think Army Service Corps men.²⁷⁰ The shooting of unarmed civilians subsequently became a recurring theme within Unionist party pamphlets. *How the Gentle Boers Treat the Unarmed British Refugee* gave a series of quotes from telegraphs and news reports concerning the maltreatment of British citizens in the Transvaal, stating that Britons in Durban had been foraging for food, ‘but were attacked in the street by eight mounted burghers, who charged and thrashed them unmercifully with leather sjamboks...’²⁷¹ Another described, ‘Women and children packed into cattle trucks... babies snatched from their mothers’ arms and flung back with insults (one child died) – men buckled arm to knee (one of them went mad with torture) – these are the fiendish acts which the Boers have been committing on defenceless British subjects.’²⁷²

Many of these stories were made credible by reference to several newspapers or telegraphic messages. In this way, atrocity propaganda was deflected onto other, more trusted, legitimising sources, reinforcing the message. Reports from correspondents such as Edgar Wallace of the *Daily Mail*, became so sensational that Kitchener demanded a more comprehensive censorship system, one report describing the mass shooting of wounded British soldiers by the Boers at Vlaktefontein and made the front page of the *Daily Mail*. It is unlikely that Wallace’s report was factual but, as Kitchener pointed out to Roberts, the point was not that private soldiers were passing on sensational tales to journalists, but that ‘it is on such [reports] that the British public are regaled with sensational news by the *Daily Mail*.’²⁷³

The dehumanisation of the Boers continued with reports of the Boers’ use of exploding bullets, an accusation that again filtered through the media. Pamphlets such as ‘The Gentle Boer and his Brutal Bullet: Inhuman Warfare’²⁷⁴ and ‘The Simple-Minded Farmer’s Method of War’²⁷⁵ attempted to undermine the prevalent idea that the Boers were honourable, unsophisticated farmers. Legitimising sources and references played a key role in this process. The evidence of Mr Treves, Consulting Surgeon with the British Forces, for example, was transmitted through and verified by Reuters: ‘a considerable proportion of the wounds received by our men in the fighting at Hlangwane, Colenso, and Pieters were caused by soft nosed bullets. He thinks that the Boers, being incensed by the repeated British successes, have resorted to these measures out of sheer vindictiveness.’²⁷⁶ W.K-L. Dickson commented in his diary that the British Government in South Africa openly stated that they would not countenance the use of certain weapons, especially

²⁷⁰ Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 1 June 1900, Chamberlain papers, JC/29/3/2/31-33, BUSC.

²⁷¹ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1900/49, DUL.

²⁷² ‘Outrages on Refugee Women and Children’, The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1900/87, DUL.

²⁷³ Kitchener to Roberts, 17 August 1901, Roberts Papers, 7101/23/33, National Army Museum; Beaumont, ‘The British press’, p. 285.

²⁷⁴ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1900/67, DUL.

²⁷⁵ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1900/65, DUL.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

explosive rounds owing to the horrendous wounds that they caused.²⁷⁷ The British Government was able again to draw a contrast between the barbaric Boers, and their own civilised soldiers. This separation extended to the maltreatment of prisoners, especially after the revelations about the concentration camps and the apparent barbarism of the British towards Boer women and children. Chamberlain connived to ensure any report or rumour as to Boer maltreatment of prisoners was fully disseminated both in Britain and within the international community. A letter sent by Lord Lansdowne's Assistant Private Secretary to Mr Craig-Sellar, stated that the maltreatment of British prisoners in Pretoria was being reported to the Red Cross and 'central bureau at Berne.'²⁷⁸

This strategy was underpinned by the cooperation and consideration of military officials. Lord Roberts wrote to Kitchener in 1901 that Edgar Wallace of the *Daily Mail* had complained of his telegrams concerning the killing of wounded British soldiers by the Boers being mutilated by military censors. Roberts referred to the stir that the story in the *Daily Mail* caused amongst the British public: 'It is not very likely that the Government would tell you to keep such matters as killing our wounded secret, or that you would kill anything which would be unfavourable to the Boers.'²⁷⁹ Both Generals understood that feeding the Government and British public with news aimed to vilify the Boer enemy was necessary to the war effort. Indeed, Kitchener replied to Brodrick a few months later offering a despatch of Boer atrocities to which the Secretary of State replied, 'I am glad you will let me have a good despatch on Boer atrocities. When it is on the way send me a cable, as I want to allude to it.'²⁸⁰ These are two examples of the propaganda process in action, information on a particular campaign being fed from the front either directly from the military or through a controlled media to officials in Britain and out to a media able to disseminate the information to a ready public. Government officials such as Brodrick saw the importance of collating such propagandistic material for the public and can be identified as a key propagandist since they fulfilled the principal criteria of any definition of propaganda, intent. Although the media could act as propagandists in their own right, it was increasingly the case that politicians and military officials fed propaganda into the media to then act as deflecting and legitimising sources. The Harmsworth press frequently acted in such a capacity creating sensational headlines such as, 'The Transvaal: Suicide of a Prisoner' from information being fed both from their own correspondents and from information received more centrally.²⁸¹

Chamberlain's machinations were not limited to the maltreatment of British prisoners. He used the maltreatment of the natives to highlight the lack of civilisation amongst the Boers. Once again, he demanded information from Milner that would feed such a campaign:

²⁷⁷ Dickson, *The Biograph*, p. 135.

²⁷⁸ Sir Henry William Watson McAnally to Mr. Craig-Sellar, 24 September 1900, Chamberlain Papers, JC/29/4/10/18, BUSC.

²⁷⁹ Roberts to Kitchener, 13 July 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/20 (no.29), NA.

²⁸⁰ Brodrick to Kitchener, 1 November 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(2), NA.

²⁸¹ Chalaby, 'Northcliffe', pp. 34-5.

The other day a General recently home informed me that it was a positive fact that the Boers had castrated the natives...It was the first that I had heard of any such brutality, and I enquired why if, as he said, this outrage and others had been commonly perpetrated we had not been informed on it officially. My suggestion applies to every outrage committed by the Boers. If we are really asked to authorise greater severity, a case must be made for us, and it seems extraordinary that cruelty of any kind should not be immediately reported...The result of this strange with-holding of necessary information is that the pro-Boers are able to talk of the 'methods of barbarism' practised by British Generals with the approval of the British Government, and we have no information at our disposal which would enable us to justify the shooting of a single Boer.²⁸²

Such ideas were then disseminated in pamphlets such as 'The South African Question. Opinions of Ministers of Religion' and 'The Evils of the Boer Government: How the Gentle Boers Treat the Natives Under It', which took direct quotes from prominent religious figures and newspapers to verify the barbarous treatment of the natives by the Boers.²⁸³

In his letter to Milner, Chamberlain referred to the increasingly successful pro-Boer campaign to vilify the Unionist Government and Kitchener's strategy of 'scorched earth'. This particularly applied to revelations of the concentration camps, a campaign which became a source of great discomfort for Milner and Chamberlain. Milner himself felt uneasy about Kitchener's tactics, writing to Chamberlain late in 1901, 'If we can only get over the Concentration Camps, none of the other attacks upon us alarm me in the least.'²⁸⁴ Salisbury too found the idea 'an uncomfortable novelty' and warned John Brodrick at the War Office that they would have to be careful not to let such measures upset British public opinion.²⁸⁵ Brodrick relayed this fear back to Kitchener: 'What will really trouble us most is the rising feeling at the death rate in the concentration camps.'²⁸⁶ Such fears were not unfounded as the SACC produced more than fifty pamphlets on the horrors of the camps alone between 1900 and 1901.²⁸⁷ Further campaigns centred on the maltreatment of Boer prisoners in general, especially those sent to the infamous camps in India. Indeed, one of the few films of this era to tarnish the imperial image was the WTC's *Detachment of Boer Prisoners arriving and detraining at Attamadagar* showing the prisoners, 'detraining, some looking very dilapidated, and having no shoes on their feet...'²⁸⁸ Such stories also seem to have had an effect abroad, and therefore concerned Milner and Chamberlain, Lord Ampthill informing the latter, 'It is their [the pro-Boers] utterances which have made the foreigner believe that there is truth in reports of British

²⁸² Chamberlain to Milner, 4 November 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 171, ff.81-88, BLMC.

²⁸³ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1900/52 and 1900/53, DUL.

²⁸⁴ Milner to Chamberlain, 17 December 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 171, f.53, BLMC.

²⁸⁵ Salisbury to St. John Bodrick, 22 November 1901, Papers of 1st Earl Middleton, PRO 30/67/8, NA.

²⁸⁶ Brodrick to Kitchener, 1 November 1901, Kitchener Papers, PRO 30/57/22(2), NA.

²⁸⁷ Galbraith, 'The Pamphlet', p. 123.

²⁸⁸ From the WTC catalogue; Strelbel, 'Primitive Propaganda', p. 46.

‘atrocities’ and it is difficult to contain one’s wrath against men can thus injure their own country.²⁸⁹

Further weight was given to the pro-Boer argument by Stead and Bryce who published their own atrocity broadsheets. ‘British Atrocities in South Africa: An Appeal to the Christian Church’ was sent to Bryce by Stead to proof read along with confirmation that its facts had come from ‘numerous letters from soldiers at the front as well as an officer in the field.’ Its content highlighted the iniquity of Kitchener’s policy in command, especially relating to the torture and starving of Kafirs and the burning of Boer homes, the former aiming to nullify the effect of British propaganda against Boer maltreatment of the native population, and the latter to add fire to the growing indictment of Kitchener’s scorched earth policy.²⁹⁰ Other pro-Boer authors such as John M. Robertson wrote convincingly on the fact that Unionist propaganda was merely varying degrees of falsification ranging from ‘Comic Opera Evidence’ to ‘No Evidence’ against the Boers.²⁹¹ Hobson was especially quick to emphasise the fallacy of believing the atrocity stories, arguing that every war had seen similar propaganda but these stories were given such treatment as to make people believe that such atrocities were singular to both the Boers and the Boer War.²⁹² Most notably the SACC made a point of exposing the more obvious falsifications by producing pamphlets such as ‘Fiction and Fable which have fanned the flame’. This pamphlet publicised the fact that an Uitlander who had been reported shot dead by the Boers for refusing to fight with them had subsequently turned up none the worse for his experience.²⁹³ It was then a short step, the pro-Boers argued, to understand that most stories produced by the Unionists were at best deceptive, at worst pure fiction.

The problem for such pro-Boer campaigns, however, was the scale, flexibility and efficacy of the pro-war propaganda. Accusations against the government merely sparked an even greater propaganda effort on behalf of the Unionist and the imperial cause in general, stifling the pro-Boer message. For example, David Lloyd George spoke forcibly and convincingly in the Commons in February 1901, attacking Brodrick for the policy of starving the women in the concentration camps whose husbands were on commando. He even had a telegram of evidence to substantiate his claims and referred to it in the debate, much to the detriment of Brodrick’s arguments. However, all that appeared in the *Daily Mail*, and many other newspapers, the following day was the fact that Mr. Brodrick had refuted Mr Lloyd George’s claims and the latter had then ‘continued his tirade’. The *Daily Mail* reader, therefore, never learned of the reduced-rations debate or the supporting evidence.²⁹⁴ They were, however, fed with a diet of whitewashed official reports on the concentration camps such as the ‘Report of the Royal Commission appointed to consider and report upon the Care and Treatment of the Sick and Wounded during the South African Campaign’

²⁸⁹ Lord Ampthill to Chamberlain, 12 December 1901, Chamberlain papers, JC/30/3/6/13, BUSC.

²⁹⁰ Stead to Bryce, 3 November 1900, Bryce Papers, dep.140, ff.135-9, BLMC.

²⁹¹ Robertson, *The Truth*, pp. 28-9.

²⁹² Hobson, *Psychology*, p. 27.

²⁹³ Galbraith, ‘The Pamphlet’, p. 124.

²⁹⁴ *Daily Mail*, 19 February 1901. See, Krebs, *Gender*, pp. 43-4.

(1901) and the 'Report on the Concentration Camps in South Africa by the Committee of Ladies Appointed by the Secretary of State for War' (1902) which quelled the fire of the pro-Boer arguments.²⁹⁵

Further, the Unionists augmented their vilification campaign by revealing an internal enemy, conflating both the enemy 'without' and the enemy 'within', the latter being the British pro-Boers. The Unionists were able to associate the evils of the Boers with the Liberal and Radical politicians vying for the public vote at home, which served foreign and domestic policy simultaneously. Milner actively pursued such a policy by collecting evidence, mostly from documents seized when the British captured Pretoria in June 1900, and making it available for use in Unionist pamphlets and the wider media environment. Shortly before the election in 1900, Milner wrote to his associate at the *Daily Telegraph*:

We have conclusive evidence (vis today's Cape Times for such incidents of his career) that Mr E.T. Hargrove received £1000 from the Netherlands Ry at Kruger's request. The documents are in our possession. They cannot be published yet (premature disclosure would spoil much fun) but they will certainly appear sooner or later).

The effect of this discovery, when it bursts upon the world, would be greatly heightened by a little record of the proceedings of the gentleman in question. You will find reference to him in the Blue Book just issued.²⁹⁶

Such evidence formed the basis of the campaign orchestrated by Chamberlain that claimed that any vote for the Liberals was a vote for the Boers. The Unionists broke all the unwritten rules of electioneering in their attempts to stigmatise their opponents in the 1900 election by merging domestic and foreign enemies. Churchill ran in Oldham with the tag-line, 'Be it known that every vote given to the radicals means 2 pats on the back for Kruger and 2 smacks in the face for our country.' Gerald Balfour capitalised on the popularity of Kitchener and Baden-Powell by depicting them on a poster next to the slogan, 'Our Brave Soldiers In South Africa Expect That Every Voter This Day Will Do His Duty... Remember! To Vote For A Liberal Is A Vote To The Boer.' One political cartoon, issued by the CPD, even showed Liberals cheerfully supporting the Boers in the firing line.²⁹⁷ Such election posters reveal centralised orchestration in the 1900 election campaign, with these sentiments echoed, often verbatim, in the more official Unionist publications.

Those Liberal or Radical politicians and journalists who had some limited success in articulating their opposition to the war were especially targeted for vilification by the Unionist party machine. C.P. Scott and many others like him were singled out for their lack of patriotism. One pamphlet dedicated its entire four-page length campaigning against Scott (who was standing for election in Leigh) solely on his opposition to the war and alleging that his lack of the sympathy for the

²⁹⁵ Chamberlain Papers, JC33/3/1&4, BUSC.

²⁹⁶ Milner to Mr. Ivan Müller, 9 August 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 170, ff.175-177, BLMC.

²⁹⁷ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 466.

Uitlanders was because, ‘they were only Englishmen, and not Mr. Scott’s friends the Boers.’²⁹⁸ Any article written by a pro-Boer, especially those vilifying the Unionists for the prosecution of the war, was immediately refuted. One, by Mr Augustine Birrell in the *Essex Telegraph*, claiming the British were responsible for ‘slaughtered babes’ was countered by the pamphlet ‘The Concentration Camps: An Infamous Radical Misstatement’ which employed a series of apparently far more credible sources and eyewitnesses such as Col Sir C.E. Howard Vincent.²⁹⁹ Liberals and Radicals became pro-Boers and pro-Boers became traitors in the Unionist propaganda, and such ideas permeated public consciousness by way of the popular media. Music hall performers ridiculed Liberal politicians for opposing the war, the *Daily Mail* railed against the ‘Little Englanders’ who cared nothing for the Empire and *Punch* cartoons depicted a cowardly, two-faced opposition.³⁰⁰ Speeches in Parliament, from the platform and pulpit all joined in a chorus vilifying the political opposition as an enemy within intent on forcing a dishonourable peace on Britain. In this way the Boers and pro-Boers became a conflated, maligned enemy in contrast with the conflated image of a patriotic Unionist Government and its heroic army.

It was within this simplified framework that the Unionists and Imperialists fought their propaganda war, and it was a framework that seems to have had mixed success. Winston Churchill reported to Milner that, ‘Most people either take a hard view of the Boer, as a creature unfit to live, treacherous [and] unworthy of sympathy or else hold their tongues.’³⁰¹ One working class woman recalled that it was, ‘a story-book sort of war: George and the Dragon stuff. We heard bits about individual bravery, but we really had no idea why it was being fought and we thought the Boers were a lot of stupid savages not wanting to be in the Empire.’³⁰² The framework of the war and propaganda of vilification had permeated through to the working classes, but the justification of the war had not. However, vilification itself provided much of the justification for many people, with Boer atrocities feeding the seemingly ubiquitous jingoism that took hold in the first years of the war. Atrocity propaganda was seen as a potent force capable of compelling the British public to hate a white, respected enemy, and by extension all those politicians who supported them. Propaganda did not perhaps instil a staunch, thoughtful imperial dogma in the working classes, but created the support necessary for the exigencies of the war. This is one reason why the Unionists were able to maintain support for a war over several years, thousands of miles from home with mounting casualties and an increasingly vociferous opposition.

However, such propaganda could only thrive in the unnatural state of war, and, as early as January 1901, Chamberlain and Milner were turning their attention to the rehabilitation of the Boers and the peaceable reconstruction of South Africa. It is significant that one of the first ideas mooted by the Colonial Secretary to accomplish this involved a very different form of propaganda:

²⁹⁸ Hampton, ‘The Press’, pp. 184-5.

²⁹⁹ The Archives of the British Conservative & Unionist Party, series 1, Pamphlets and Leaflets, 1902/5, DUL.

³⁰⁰ Thompson, *Northcliffe*, pp. 77-9; ‘Bannerman Exhorteth Campbell’, 25th October 1899, *Punch*, Volume 117, p. 203.

³⁰¹ Churchill to Milner, 8 September 1900, Milner Papers, dep. 184, ff.112-114, BLMC.

³⁰² Rose, *The Intellectual*, p. 336.

I am telegraphing to you officially as to the possibility of some sort of educational propaganda among the prisoners both in South Africa and in Ceylon & St Helena. If they go back as ignorant as they went and embittered by the supposed indifference to their welfare on the part of their captors, they will at one form a dangerous element. It has been suggested that many of them on grounds of self interest would be glad to learn English, and that their teachers might gain influence with them and point out to them the opportunities that they will have under the new regime. At present there seems to be no one to tell them about the future.³⁰³

Milner agreed and later wrote to Chamberlain that, 'I think there can be no question that we ought to send Government emissaries to the prisoners. It will be easy to do this without the appearance of seeking to proselytise.' Such emissaries would be able to

get on good terms with the prisoners and elicit a large amount of confidential private information, indeed I should instruct them, whenever possible, to compile a secret dossier of every man, letting us know, as far as may be, his disposition towards the new Government, whether he would be willing to take the oath of allegiance, to take office again if an old official etc etc. A great deal can be got I am certain, if the matter is approached properly. The emissaries would go to the people as friends, the precursors and harbingers of repatriation.

He suggested that loyal South Africans and camp chaplains would be vital in ensuring the cooperation of the prisoners, and that a Boer delegation be sent to England on a purely agricultural learning mission to promote mutual benefit and understanding.³⁰⁴

Such a policy is intriguing for the propaganda historian for several reasons. Firstly, Chamberlain used the word 'propaganda' itself, but only in conjunction with its more palatable associate 'education'. Milner himself chooses the older form 'proselytise', but not in its typical religious sense. This underlines the very mixed view of propaganda that emerged in this period, as all Chamberlain and Milner's other references to propaganda had been in accusation of the underhand and seditious methods of the Boers. When applied to British activities in support of the Empire, the practice became 'educational'. Secondly, Milner's comment about 'not seeming to proselytise' suggests an uneasiness with the idea of propaganda in this period, or at least an understanding that a Government should not be seen to be openly propagandising. As with much of their more callous propaganda, Chamberlain and Milner were intent on using legitimising and diverting sources in the camps to deflect their identity as the propagandist. Thirdly, it is significant that such propaganda was to focus especially on the prisons given the scandals surrounding the concentration camps and Indian holding camps disseminated by the pro-Boers. Chamberlain and Milner understood that propaganda was the most potent tool to combat such accusations. Finally, the aim of this

³⁰³ Chamberlain to Milner, 25 January 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 171, ff.66-69, BLMC.

³⁰⁴ Milner to Chamberlain, 13 August 1901, Milner Papers, dep. 171, ff.33-36, BLMC.

propaganda was to promote imperial values amongst the dissident Boers in order to assist the reconstruction of South Africa and ensure the future of the Empire there. Therefore, propaganda was utilised to promote relations between the Dominions and Britain in the years after the Boer War, but this was just one of many legacies.

This case study has attempted to understand why the Boer War was fought in such unprecedented circumstances, and how those circumstances created such an unprecedented, propagandistically charged environment. It was fought within the ready fervour of Empire and became to many the zenith of popular imperialism and put to test all the developments in education, politics, technology, the military and media since the Crimean War. The result was modern propaganda, and the ubiquity, permanence, sophistication, theorisation and centralisation of that propaganda in this period are borne out by the vast array of media utilised by the increasing number of propagandists. More traditional media were adapted to suit the changing circumstances, and novel media such as film and the music hall were rapidly seen for their propagandistic potential and absorbed into the propagandist's armoury. New audiences were identified and approached on an unprecedented scale, and, although it is impossible to assess the success of these approaches, the masses were now undoubtedly involved in the propaganda process.

As has been seen, although this period was one of reactive but advancing centralisation, a single propaganda body is not readily identifiable in the Boer War, there rather being a plethora of separate propagandists including the political parties, individual politicians, press barons, editors, pressure groups and private individuals. What makes the process even more confusing is the seeming lack of cohesion or orchestration amongst these different propagandists. However, this informality was one of the qualities of British propaganda in this period, and one that lasted into the twentieth century. Editors and pressure groups were not directly told what to say or write, but were rather absorbed into a more general propaganda effort either by a process of assimilation or by the informal bonds that existed between Fleet Street and Downing Street. Hale has pointed to this as a key contrast between Germany and Britain in the years prior to the First World War, drawing the analogy of British politicians and press acting in concert in a theatre, whereas the German system kept the officials on stage with the press as an unaccountable audience. Thus Britain better answered the question posed by the modern era of how to tackle foreign policy in a state composed of citizens, not subjects, with obvious consequences in the First World War.³⁰⁵ Such a contrast, embodied by the Boer War, was one of the many legacies this period bequeathed to the twentieth century.

³⁰⁵ Hale, *Publicity*, pp. 3&10.

Winston Churchill was to comment of the events of 1914-1918, 'I date the beginning of these violent times in our country to the Jameson Raid... the progenitor of the South African War.'³⁰⁶ For many historians, the Boer War was a military precursor to the First World War both in terms of staff and tactics. Generals such as Lord Kitchener and Majors such as Douglas Haig (chief staff officer to the cavalry hero Major-General French) became the Field-Marschals of the First World War, operating with the precedent of the conflict in South Africa in mind. The adoption of trench warfare and the 'cult of the offensive' in the Boer war were of course to be applied with horrific consequences in the First World War.³⁰⁷ The military continuities are certainly strong, but the propagandistic links between the Boer War and First World War have rarely been explored. Perhaps one reason for this lack of historiographical concentration is the rapid mythologizing of the war by both contemporaries and historians.

Just as Baden-Powell's accounts of the numbers of Boers surrounding Mafeking in 1900 grew as the years progressed,³⁰⁸ so those who fought in and observed the 'scorched earth' period of the war increasingly remembered it as 'The Last of the Gentleman's Wars'.³⁰⁹ The events of 1914-18 prompted the British public to remember the Boer War as the last hurrah of a glorious imperial period marked by an celebrated imperial victory. The triumph of Baden-Powell at Mafeking and the wild celebrations of 18 May 1900 were remembered by the era of Second World War with affection and pride. The 1939 Shirley Temple film *A Little Princess* saw the young Sara Crewe wake the residents of Miss Minchin's Female Seminary with a cry of 'Mafeking is relieved!' before patriotically dragging them into the celebrating throng on the streets of London. Frances Burnett's original novel never actually mentioned the Boer War or the celebrations but, as Krebs argues, 'If a film was to inspire transatlantic loyalties, to remind American audiences of the kind of stuff those Brits were made of, then Mafeking night was the perfect image to use. Mafeking...still meant wartime hope, British pluck, and home-front patriotism.'³¹⁰ Similarly one Mass-Observation report recorded a grumbling housewife to say, 'This isn't like the last war or the Boer War – it's not cheerful. I remember dancing on a table in the street the night Mafeking was relieved. You'd never get that in this war.'³¹¹ Even as late as 1999, Morgan argued that the media representation of the Boer War as a 'sanitised gentleman's war' remained intact.³¹²

To many people therefore, the Boer War marked the end of an era, but propagandistically it should be seen far more as a beginning. Despite the mythologizing process, there was a sensible reaction to the various propagandistic experiences of the Boer War. It had demonstrated to the political parties, pressure groups and various individuals that propaganda was a necessity in the era

³⁰⁶ Donal Lowry, 'The Boers were the beginning of the end?: the wider impact of the South African War', in Lowry (ed.), *The South African*, p. 227.

³⁰⁷ Keith Jeffrey, 'Kruger's farmers, Strathcona's Horse, Sir George Clarke's camels and the Kaiser's battleships: the impact of the South African War on imperial defence', in Lowry, *The South African*, pp. 195-6.

³⁰⁸ Brian Gardner, *Mafeking: A Victorian Legend* (London, 1966), p. 230.

³⁰⁹ The title of Major-General Fuller's 1937 book; Morgan, 'The Boer War', p.14.

³¹⁰ Krebs, *Gender*, p. 1.

³¹¹ Mass-Observation Archive, File Report no. 1496, 'Tube Investments Ltd Investigation', November 1942, p. 73.

³¹² Morgan, 'The Boer War', pp. 15-16.

of mass politics. The war could not have been fought, maintained and successfully concluded without the censorship of conflicting information and the manipulation of public opinion in the widest possible sense. Such conclusions drove the Unionist Government and Liberal opposition, as well as numerous other individuals, to adopt a more forward-thinking approach to propaganda, reflected in their continued utilisation and development of propaganda after 1902 and especially during the First World War. The novel circumstances in which the Boer War was fought resulted in an understanding and acceptance of the scope and utility of modern propaganda. Resultantly propaganda became more theorised and occupied a more prominent, and permanent, place in British politics and society. The experience of its potency and its link to the excesses of jingoism concerned many contemporary Liberals, and such unrestrained behaviour was to be orchestrated and repeated in 1914. However, more generally propaganda began to be seen as a useful and necessary process in the modern, democratic world. The First World War added further impetus to this process, and many of those individuals influenced during the Boer War were to extend their propagandistic activities further in 1914. However, to separate the Boer War from the twentieth century in terms of propaganda is to disregard the place it occupies both as a modern propaganda war and as a precedent for much propagandistic thought and activity over the next century.

Conclusions

This thesis began with a quote from a nineteenth century article concerning the manipulation of public opinion.¹ Although the author never used the word propaganda itself, two significant arguments emerged which have relevance to an understanding of the development of propaganda in this period. Firstly, there was a perceived rise in the size and potency of public opinion; and secondly, there was a growing need to influence and direct that opinion. To the historian of propaganda, the significance of this lies in the fact that the idea of propaganda was now being recognised and considered by contemporaries of the later nineteenth century. This recognition was based on the perception of an emerging and novel set of contextual circumstances that both necessitated and offered opportunity for propaganda. Jerrold's article, and the theory behind it, brings the two key themes of this thesis together; the etymology and theorisation of propaganda. Both were essential ingredients in, as well as evidence of, propaganda's development, and the importance of context in driving that development forward. The central premise of the thesis, therefore, has been to understand what is meant by 'modern' propaganda, and to demonstrate that its link solely to the period of and after the First World War is erroneous. The idea of a different, more modern, form of propaganda is not rare amongst propaganda historians, but the modern understanding of the word, its theorisation and scientific application has rarely been attributed to the nineteenth century.

The etymological survey revealed the complex array of individuals using the word propaganda, as well as the number of contexts in which the word was used and the variety of connotations it carried. These ranged from the religious to the political, foreign to the domestic and educative to the seditious. There is a clear line of precedent to the twentieth century in the political, pejorative sense of the word and as such helps to establish a much-needed dialogue between these centuries on the nature and operation of propaganda. The correlation between the understanding and use of propaganda in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also attests to the idea that modern propaganda is not an anachronism in the nineteenth century, as often advanced by modern scholars. However, the nineteenth century also offers something unique due to the way propaganda emerged as a complex and varied word and idea, untarnished by the memory of the World Wars. The analysis of those often subtle connotations, as well as contemporary theories, provide the historian with an insight into the context, culture and society in which they were being used. In turn, this can explain why propaganda itself operated as it did in that period, and as such an understanding of the actual use of the word 'propaganda' and its contemporary theorisation uncovers the many faces of the phenomenon in this and indeed in any other period.

The idea that propaganda could be both a beneficial tool to educate the masses and simultaneously refer to the seditious output of revolutionaries and authoritarian regimes also reflects Jerrold's quandary. Whilst arguing that, 'to tamper with the free and healthy growth of

¹ Jerrold, 'On the Manipulation'.

public opinion is to weaken and pollute representative institutions at their base,' he was simultaneously able to see a place for influencing and manipulating that opinion when organised as a form of education. Discussing a growing trend in Britain for mock Houses of Commons to emerge on a localised basis, he quoted the words of one of the local premiers, 'Whilst these societies aim at training the young in the practice of debate, and in educating the members in the political questions of the day, it has often occurred to me that they should be utilised to a much greater extent than they have been in influencing public opinion.'²

There is, then, a paradox in the operation of propaganda in a democracy, which both sees its increased need as the democracy grows, but also presents an ethical dilemma for those seeking to use it. This is, of course, a problem found throughout the twentieth century, and even in the First World War propaganda was considered, 'utterly repugnant to our feelings and contrary to our traditions'.³ However, the etymology of propaganda reveals that this same revulsion was felt in nineteenth century Britain. This thesis has demonstrated, through the revelation of a complex and uncertain etymology of propaganda, the fear and concern over its use expressed by the early propaganda theorists, as well as its often reluctant and cautious adoption by central authorities, and that this dilemma was first found in the nineteenth century at the point where Britain democracy began to burgeon. As the number of voters and their access to and influence on political affairs grew, politicians of all parties, relying on concepts of 'mass psychology' and marketing, began to debate how to access voters' emotions and what forms of media were most efficient at achieving this goal. As Corey Ross argues of modern Germany, 'Modern propaganda, like the bulk of commercial entertainments on offer, was thus concerned primarily with the manipulation of emotions.'⁴ It was precisely this reliance on arousing and appealing to emotion rather than reason that many of the nineteenth century theorists were concerned with and fed into arguments around the corruption of the public, the excesses of popular imperialism and mob mentality. It was far more of a necessity in democracy than in the authoritarian and revolutionary regimes against which the negative connotations of propaganda were often used. Again, as Ross has argued in his study of the mass media and its relationship with the development of modern Germany, 'a dictatorship can ultimately fall back on coercion, whereas a democracy cannot... in the final instance, democrats have a greater need for effective persuasion.'⁵

Politicians, groups and other individuals, therefore, had to tread a careful line between the obvious attraction of propaganda in a growing democracy, and the belief that propaganda could also be used as a force to corrupt and destroy democratic traditions. It was perhaps for this reason that the educational connotations, so often attributed in a British context, became more common in this period as individuals and groups tried to cope with this dilemma. The issue is still a current one, but this thesis has also shown how, despite the pejorative connotations and reluctance of many

² Jerrold, 'On the Manipulation', pp. 1085, 1088.

³ P.M. Taylor and M.L. Sanders, *British Propaganda During the First World War* (London, 1982), p. 249.

⁴ Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford, 2008), p. 220.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

individuals, propaganda necessarily developed in spite of and as a result of democracy. The key reason for this was context, and one of the reasons for the large timeframe chosen was that it provided a clearer picture of how much society, politics, education, technology and the media changed. As a result, the thesis has aimed to demonstrate how contextual progress mapped onto the remaining key characteristics of modern propaganda as highlighted in its definition: the ubiquity and permanence of propaganda; the presence of a mass media; the presence of a mass audience; an increasing number and variety of propagandists; and a systematic and organised approach to its operation. Contrary to the belief of most propaganda historians, the nineteenth century fulfils these criteria, each contextual circumstance running concurrently, reacting with, and pushing the development of another and, as a whole, leading to the increasing necessity and possibility of a modern form of propaganda. Political and social reform created a mass audience of 'actively enquiring, socially omniscient citizens of the world' in Escott's words.⁶ That audience increasingly desired more information and more participation in national events which acted as a catalyst to developments in the media, catering for the mass audience in tone, style, scale and variety. Media developments were enabled by technological advancement in the period, both directly in terms of print technologies and the invention of the cinematography, and also indirectly in terms of quickening the flow of information around the world with steam, railways and electric telegraphy. News and information were now able to reach both the media and its audience far faster than before which in turn created a ubiquitous and permanent media environment, the public being in kept constant touch with domestic and foreign events.

The opportunities this afforded to access, manipulate, inform and even create public opinion did not go unnoticed. An increasing range of propagandists emerged in reaction to the opportunity and necessity to access and manipulate the public. The media could act as a powerful propagandist in its own right, as demonstrated by the likes of Delane and Harmsworth. However, by building on the tradition of a bond between press and politics, many others, including central political parties and other groups, could deploy the media for their own propagandistic ends. Given the rise in the power of the press and other emerging media, that bond also had to shift in emphasis and sophistication. Overt control of a newspaper of the early nineteenth century mutated to Palmerston's 'compelling' and then onto increasingly informal and social bonds that saw mutually beneficial relationships emerging by the turn of the century. These relationships were also forced to develop due to the pressure of a burgeoning democracy, as the explicit control of previous eras became increasingly impractical, forcing the development of more complex bonds that were eventually to culminate in the social connections of the First World War highlighted by Goldfarb-Marquis.⁷ Further still, a similar organisation and sophistication of propaganda can be seen as political parties which, out of necessity and opportunism, created the machinery to produce and disseminate propaganda for their own cause. Although the centre undoubtedly began to absorb propaganda and propagandists from the periphery, these were never central propaganda

⁶ Escott, *Social Transformations*, p. 194.

⁷ Goldfarb-Marquis, 'Words as Weapons'.

departments on the scale of a Ministry of Information, but this thesis has argued that more important was the fact that parties, officials and the extra-Parliamentary groups they helped to create recognised the need to approach a mass audience, on their terms, through a multitude of media and on an increasing scale. Importantly, they also saw the need to debate and contest the efficacy of various forms of propaganda resulting in innovative methods of propaganda from the mass poster campaigns of 1895 to use of the cinematograph a decade later. *Chamber's Journal* of that year highlighted that, 'a new use has been found for animated photography in the production pictures to illustrate the views of election meetings... In a circular issued by the proprietors of the venture, the cinematograph is described as a new weapon in the hands of the propagandist.'⁸ In terms of the definition offered at the start of this thesis, therefore, modern propaganda did develop in Britain in the sixty years prior to 1914.

However, this development was far from smooth. Jon Lawrence highlighted that the transition from popular politics to a centralised, modern political party system was neither linear nor teleological. Similarly, the modernisation of propaganda was generally not directed, but rather a series of reactions, responses to circumstance and opportunism. This non-linear progress was also partly due to the ethical dilemma of engaging in and with propaganda in a democracy as the operation of censorship demonstrated. Emerging in military terms as a result of the media exposure of the Crimean War, discussions concerning its use continued throughout the period, especially as the flow and availability of information became quicker, easier and more varied through technological advance. However, it was made almost unanimously clear that censorship would only be employed at times of war, with officials limited during peacetime to writing new drafts of 'rules for correspondents' and establishing protocols for the operation of censorship in future conflicts.

It is also for this reason that the two case studies in the thesis are based in times of conflict. The upheavals of the Crimean and Boer Wars did much to promote the development of propaganda. This thesis has argued that, although evidence of modern propaganda is scarce in the Crimean War itself, the context in which that war was fought, its own tumultuous events, and the ingenuity of individuals such as Delane and Russell, forced both politicians and military officials to recognise the need to approach and mould public opinion, as well as to accept the participation of the media. The importance of the bonds between the media, politics and the military were laid bare by Russell's stark dispatches, relayed to a public able and willing to receive them in tandem with a growing number of other media. It was then the unusual exigencies of war that forced propaganda and censorship onto the political and military stages, provoking debate and action on both.

The dynamics of conflict also emerge as central to the second case study of the Boer War which attempted to understand how that conflict was fought amidst the advances in education, politics, technology, the military and media since the Crimean War, and what effect they had on the further development of propaganda. The result was a highly charged propagandistic environment, and the ubiquity, permanence, sophistication, theorisation and centralisation of propaganda in this period

⁸ 'The Cinematograph in Politics', *Chamber's Journal*, 25 November 1905.

are prevalent. More traditional media were adapted to suit the changing circumstances, and novel media such as film and the music hall were rapidly seen for their propagandistic potential and absorbed into the propagandist's armoury. New audiences were identified and approached on an unprecedented scale, but more than this, were now actively engaging in the propaganda process, interacting with the communications emanating from the variety of propagandists operating in this period. The masses were now undoubtedly involved in the propaganda process.

The Boer War has often been seen as the end of an era. It was the culmination of a great number of advances in the latter half of the nineteenth century and saw many of the changes to the political and military perception of propaganda, first initiated in the Crimean War, come to fruition. However, in many ways, the Boer War was, in terms of propaganda, the beginning of an era too. This is borne out by the number of similarities, precedents and links between the operation of propaganda and identity of propagandists in this conflict and the twentieth century more generally. The reciprocal relations of the press and political spheres during the Boer War, epitomised by the Northcliffe press, were strengthened in the preceding years and successfully utilised during the First World War. Northcliffe himself continued his role as 'press baron in politics' and was even brought inside the government as head of the British War Mission in the United States in May 1917. His influence was clearly only augmented by his role in the Boer War as Bryce was to complain (in a remarkably similar tone to his letters of 1900) in 1917, 'It is no good omen for the future of England or of democracy that the press of one man, speaking with many voices to the mob of the streets and that of the clubs should play the part of King-maker.'⁹ The Boer War was also a formative experience in imperial propaganda for prominent members of Milner's 'kindergarten' such as Leo Amery and Lionel Curtis and Milner himself became an influential member of Lloyd-George's new Cabinet in 1917.¹⁰ The creation of, or at least promotion of, an 'imperial community' was also greatly advanced by the Boer War experience, the Unionist propagandists portraying the Empire as loyally rallying to the call of the mother country. This idea became a central propaganda theme during the First World War when Britain was required to draw on its vast imperial resources.

In terms of the wider media, the Boer War established film as a prominent propagandistic tool. One of the 'film barons' of the Boer War period, Charles Urban, was to be the editor of the most successful propaganda film of the First World War, *The Battle of the Somme*, and later helped bring the United States into the war with newsreels such as his *Official War Review*.¹¹ Similarly Urban wrote to Earl Roberts in 1914 enthusing about the role that film could play on a local and national basis in terms of recruiting, and offering his services to work on and disseminate the films.¹² The growth of film during the Boer War was also to have its effect on Harmsworth as he recorded his fascination by a performance of the biograph war pictures at the Palace in his diary.¹³ During the First World

⁹ Bryce to G.O. Trevelyan, 22 January 1917, Bryce Papers, dep. 19, ff.125-6, BLMC.

¹⁰ Lowry, 'When the World', p. 6.

¹¹ McKernan, *A Yank*, pp. 80-2.

¹² Urban to Roberts, 31 August 1914, Urban Papers, Urban 4/1/1-3, NMM.

¹³ Diary entry, 26 March 1900, Northcliffe Papers, Add Ms 62388, BL.

War, he took an interest in the newsreel industry, noting that people forgot what they read in the newspapers day to day, ‘but no one can forget what he has seen on the screen.’¹⁴ The music hall, pamphlets, leaflets, popular press, literature, and art, developed as modern propaganda media during the Boer War, were all put to the test again in 1914.

Interestingly, it was also the prominent pro-Boers who were to have a notable impact on First World War propaganda, both in seeing its necessity and actively participating in its creation. Lloyd-George, as Prime Minister from 1917, was to bring a sense of order, urgency and cohesion to the propaganda system established in the First World War. He also aided in constructing the primary ‘justice motive’ for Britain’s participation in the war – Belgian neutrality and the ‘Rights of Small Nations’. This campaign bears a striking resemblance to the ‘Methods of Barbarism’ campaign that had been the primary focus of pro-Boers in the latter half of the Boer War. As Ellis argues, ‘First World War propagandists represented the ideology of German “barbarism” in similar terms to those that had once been used by pro-Boers to define the New Imperialism of British Conservatives.’¹⁵ C.F.G. Masterman, another prominent pro-Boer and analyst of working class jingoism, was to head the War Propaganda Bureau at Wellington House from 1914, and Lord Bryce penned the infamous ‘Report of the Committee on alleged German Outrages’ (1915). This was a remarkable piece of propaganda with little substantive evidence or rigorous investigative work, and was undoubtedly a primary factor in securing American military support in 1917. It was ironic that Bryce’s major contribution to the war was a notorious piece of propaganda, and subsequently attempted to acquit himself of any wrongdoing in publishing the report. Certainly Bryce seems to have had reservations about the evidence, regarded by one of his fellow commissioners as ‘mere hysterical fiction or delusion’, but it was nonetheless published and ratified by Bryce in the full knowledge of its propagandistic potential. He even went onto to disseminate other articles in the United States for propagandistic purposes, one of which was to ‘reach the States with the obvious marks of a French origin upon it.’¹⁶

Bryce’s experience of propaganda during the Boer War had clearly had an impact and put them into practice more effectively during the First World War. His uneasiness about such propaganda is revealing, since it correlates with the experience of Chamberlain, and others, during the Boer War. As has been seen, the Colonial Secretary was anxious about the use of unprecedented and extreme methods until absolutely necessary, rejecting the approach of Reuters as a propagandistic aid and preventing the extension of censorship until Martial Law was deemed essential. This was undoubtedly due to a concern for the domestic reaction to such measures, but also perhaps to a more general idealism as to how propaganda should operate in Britain. Mass propaganda and censorship did not fit easily into the ‘educational ideal’ that had dominated British Liberal philosophy and politics throughout the Victorian age. As Hampton has argued, this ideal did not envision, “education” in a manipulative or heavy-handed sense, as captured in the twentieth

¹⁴ Anthony Aldgate, *Cinema and History* (London, 1979), pp. 54-90.

¹⁵ Ellis, ‘The Methods of Barbarism’, p. 65.

¹⁶ Seaman, *A Citizen*, pp. 208-12.

century concept of 'indoctrination'. Instead they assumed the truth of their own ideals... and assumed that only workers' ignorance could prevent them from reaching the same conclusions.¹⁷

The educational ideal had to give way to the practicalities of the mass age and the need for modern forms of propaganda, but that is not to say that the Victorian aspiration of forging an 'educational propaganda' within the confines of democracy was shattered by the experience of the Boer War. In fact, for some war only served to promote this idea and the creation of official lecture campaigns, 'open government', information divisions in each government department and the centralisation of propaganda in the Stationary Office all followed in the years after the war.¹⁸ Censorship re-emerged as an issue in the War Office as early as 1904 in response to its perceived role in the Boer War and increasingly necessary place in twentieth century politics.¹⁹ Even during the Boer War itself, the marriage of propaganda and a 'moral education' was muted by various authors as desirable in the increasingly complex and uncertain mass era, as J. Hereford argued

In proportion to our need amid the blinding, traditional, materialistic and selfish interests that are continually acting on men, in a complex industrial and commercial civilisation... it may be taken as beyond question that one of our special needs is a far more systematic propaganda of social and political ethics, a propaganda led, informed, directed by a central ethical association, with its active local branches in all the great centres of provincial life.²⁰

The many links between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, provide further proof that the propagandistic environment in the former century was neither inchoate nor 'pre-modern'. This thesis has determined the meaning of 'modern' in terms of propaganda and demonstrated how contemporaries themselves considered this force to be novel to their own time, underlining the importance of considering contemporary perceptions and understanding of an idea. Ideas of 'science' and 'mechanisation' were bound to this contemporary belief in the fact that they were witnessing something exceptional and powerful in the developing form of propaganda. Indeed, Jerrold noted that, 'the manufacturers of public opinion are a scientific body', and, 'the political machinery of our time includes men who assume the position of spokesmen for the million.'²¹ Clearly something innovative was perceived by contemporaries of the nineteenth century as reflected in their use of the word propaganda and in their adoption of its techniques, and their voices should not be lost by an over-emphasis on twentieth century propaganda. Most importantly, this kind of study reflects the modernisation of Britain as a whole, and especially its democracy in the uneasy and irregular adoption of propaganda, as Hereford's work revealed. This is a challenge as pertinent to those studying propaganda in the twenty-first century as it was to those in the

¹⁷ Hampton, *Visions*, p. 51.

¹⁸ Grant, *Propaganda*, pp. 25-7.

¹⁹ 'Control of Censorship of the Press. Question of Responsibility for enforcement of regulations', 1904/5, WO 32/7140, NA.

²⁰ J. Hereford, 'The Slow Growth of Moral Influence in Politics', *Nineteenth Century*, (August, 1900), p. 234.

²¹ Jerrold, 'The Manipulation', pp. 1081, 1085.

nineteenth, and one of the aims of this thesis has been to open a much-needed dialogue between the nineteenth and subsequent centuries in terms of the development of propaganda. As has been demonstrated by the work of historians such as Ross, the importance of understanding the development of modern propaganda, and its significance in terms of understanding propaganda in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, is not unique to Britain. There is still, however, a great deal left to study in this area of propaganda history. This thesis has not attempted to cover the correlation between developments in other countries, nor has it explored in depth the similarities and differences between the operation of propaganda in the nineteenth and subsequent centuries. However, it has sought to demonstrate that the nineteenth century was a far more complex, unusual, dynamic and, above all, modern propagandistic environment than previously imagined and by doing so opened it up to further analysis and comparison with other centuries and other nations.

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